

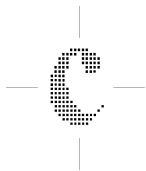
Conflict Policy Research Project (CPRP)

The Netherlands and Afghanistan

Dutch Policies and Interventions with
regard to the Civil War in Afghanistan

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Abbreviations and Glossary

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
AIG	Afghan Interim Government
ASG	Afghanistan Support Group
CAP	Consolidated Appeal
CHA	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
CPRP	Conflict Policy Research Project
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of OECD
DANIDA	Danish Agency for Development Assistance
DCH	<i>Directie Crisisbeheersing en Humanitaire Hulp</i> (Dutch Directorate for Crisis Management and Humanitarian Aid)
DCH/CP	DCH/ Section for Conflict Prevention
DCH/HH	DCH/ Section for Humanitarian Aid
DMP	Directorate of Multilateral Development Cooperation and Special Programmes
DMP/NH	DMP/ Section for Emergency Aid
DMV	<i>Directie Mensenrechten en Vredesopbouw</i> (Dutch Directorate for Human Rights and Peace-building)
DMV/HH	DMV/ Section for Humanitarian Aid
DMV/MR	DMV/ Section for Human Rights
DMV/VG	DMV/ Section for Peace-building and Good Governance
ECHA	Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs of the UN
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN
HH	<i>Humanitaire Hulp</i> (Humanitarian Aid)
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (Pakistan)
<i>Jihad</i>	Holy War
<i>Jirga</i>	Decision-making body at the village level, made up of village elders and other notables, presumably based on consensual decision-making, mainly found in Pushtun traditional areas

KAP	<i>Klein Ambassade Project</i> (Small Embassy Project)
<i>Madrassa</i>	Islamic religious school
MFO	<i>Mede-financierings Organisatie</i> (Co-financing Organization)
MIDAS	<i>Management Inhoudelijk Documentair Activiteiten Systeem</i> (Management Contents Documentary Activities System)
MSF	<i>Médecins sans frontières</i>
<i>Mujahideen</i>	Fighters in a holy war
<i>Mullah</i>	Traditional prayer leader
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCP	Principled Common Programming
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
<i>Shariah</i>	Islamic Law, based on the Koran, the Sunna (the practices of the Prophet), the <i>'ijma</i> (consensus of opinion among Islamic theologians) and the <i>qiyas</i> (reasoning by analogy)
<i>Shura</i>	Council of state-leaders; operates very much like the <i>jirga</i> , although its structure is looser
<i>Ulema</i>	Men of religious learning who interpret <i>shariah</i> law
UNDHA	United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCA	United Nations Office of the Coordinator for Afghanistan
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
UNSMA	United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

This case study analyses Dutch foreign policies towards the conflict in Afghanistan since 1989. It investigates the efforts that the Dutch government has undertaken to contribute towards ending hostilities, the results of these efforts and the lessons that can be drawn from Dutch interventions in the conflict. Chapter 2 outlines the background and causes of conflict in Afghanistan, the major parties involved and the dynamics of the conflict. The analysis points to a multiplicity of factors underlying the conflict. From a historical point of view, the Afghan state lacked coherence and suffered from the struggle of traditional communities against state control. The Soviet invasion and continued infighting eroded the political balance among the various ethnic groups. At another level, the rise of the *Taliban* also resulted in a struggle over the nature of society. At the same time, regional factors also fuel(led) the conflict.

Chapter 3 sketches the nature of interventions undertaken by external actors other than the Netherlands. Despite intense negotiations the conflict has continued. Efforts at mediation since the departure of the Soviets failed for several reasons. The Geneva Accords of 1988 were mainly an agreement to settle the external factors in the conflict and were not linked to a political settlement at the domestic level. Efforts to set up an interim government failed, because of limited interest by the international community to enable its implementation, a lack of commitment by the local parties, and the lack of basic state institutions to facilitate the process. The rise of the *Taliban* did not alter this situation. Mediation efforts failed, as, expecting a complete victory, the *Taliban* were not willing to negotiate. Secondly, they rejected interventions by external mediators who represented a contesting ideology of state and society. Due to support from neighbouring Pakistan, and the resources available to the *Taliban* through narcotics and arms smuggling, the international community has little leverage over them. To influence the situation in Afghanistan through assistance-related instruments, the donor community developed a new administrative structure for international assistance, which aimed to support peace through linking assistance with diplomatic and political instruments. It appears, however, that it was insufficiently linked with the context in Afghanistan, and posed moral dilemmas to donors.

The analysis in Chapter 4 of Dutch policies and instruments as used *vis-à-vis* the Afghan conflict shows the Dutch insistence on linking humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance and conflict prevention. This came to expression in the Dutch funding of projects focusing on these concepts, and their active international promotion of the 'development-for-peace' concept. However, this went too far for many actors in the international donor community. Moreover, application of the concept proved very difficult in the Afghan situation.

Chapter 5 lists the lessons learned from this case study. Firstly, it emphasizes the importance of a thorough understanding of the conflict in order to make a meaningful contribution to its ending. Secondly, in order to have influence at all on the development of conflict through development

assistance, one needs to be aware of the possibilities and limitations that one has as an outsider. Thirdly, it highlights the necessity of making fundamental choices, or of weighing short-term humanitarian goals against longer-term conflict management goals. Fourthly, it proves how difficult it is to come to consistent and thus well-informed principles that adequately relate to the conflict situation. A fifth lesson is not to rely too heavily on concepts in conflict interventions, and that too much focus on coordination may even obstruct the effectiveness and timeliness of assistance. Those lessons apply particularly to the Dutch development-for-peace approach, which is not automatically a success story, but requires adequate analysis and instruments, monitoring of the impact of interventions and continued analysis of the dynamics of the conflict.

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Objective

This study was executed within the framework of the ‘Conflict Policy Research Project’ carried out by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’ for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim of this project is to formulate a model for conflict prognosis as well as identifying policies and instruments (the ‘policy mix’) for interventions related to intrastate conflict. These goals are to be achieved on the basis of a review of relevant literature, a study of the policies and practices of selected major other-donor countries, and in-depth case studies into the specific Dutch policies and practices in six countries in or emerging from conflict.

The present case study focuses on the Dutch foreign policies towards the conflict in Afghanistan and attempts to answer the following research questions:

- What are the Dutch policies for conflict-related interventions in Afghanistan?
- Which instruments have been used to realize these policies?
- Which specific (Dutch-supported) interventions have been executed in this connection?
- What are the results of these interventions?
- What are the experiences of other donors regarding conflict-related interventions in Afghanistan?
- What lessons can be drawn from Dutch and international interventions in the conflict in Afghanistan?

The remainder of this chapter will outline some conceptual aspects with regard to conflict interventions. Chapters 2 and 3 will present a description of the causes and eruption of the conflict, the actors involved and the dynamics of the conflict, and the nature of the interventions undertaken by external actors other than the Netherlands. Chapter 4, which constitutes the core of this study, will analyse Dutch policies and instruments as used *vis-à-vis* the Afghanistan conflict. Major findings and lessons learned for policy will be presented in chapter 5.

1.2 Conceptual Aspects

The concepts and terminology used in the policy documents and literature on the subject of conflict-prevention in intrastate conflict are not unequivocally clear. One will observe that words such as peace, conflict, conflict prevention, humanitarian action, rehabilitation, and a whole array of notions derived from traditions in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation are, in fact, used in a very imprecise manner. Apart from cultural, disciplinary and epistemological reasons, this is caused or at least aggravated by the situation on the ground, which in many of these countries cannot be grasped

easily by referring to neat categories or typologies. Most situations in countries with intrastate conflict are extremely unstable, fluid or transitional. Some countries move between peace and war, depending on the region or the season.

Moreover, situations do not only differ according to the specific conditions encountered in the field but also for each actor involved, varying from the government and parties in the country concerned, to particular donor countries and their governments, departments, agencies, civil or military authorities and non-governmental organizations. All these actors have specific interests, backgrounds and perceptions. This makes the description and analysis of the situation, an assessment of policy actions and corresponding lines of action extremely complicated. The same ambiguities and questions affect Dutch policy formulation and implementation.

The following basic distinctions are important for this study. The two concepts of ‘conflict’ and ‘intervention’ are central to this research project. Although the conflict in Afghanistan had already started before the retreat of Soviet forces in 1989, the analysis will focus mainly on the dynamics of the conflict and the interventions since then. The Soviet retreat set an end to some major external factors fuelling violence and marked a new phase in the conflict. With the waning influence of the superpowers, the stage was prepared for fighting among the political factions that were once united in their resistance against the Soviet Union. It was in this context of internal competition for state power that the communist government was ousted and an interim government installed, and that the *Taliban* made their renowned appearance. At a more general level, however, attention will be paid to the pre-1989 period as well.

The concept of ‘intervention’ requires more detailed discussion. One definition refers to intervention as a ‘portmanteau term which covers a wide variety of situations where one actor intervenes in the affairs of another’.¹ While this naturally begs the question of what actually constitutes the intervening act, this definition has the advantage that it may be interpreted as encompassing various forms of activity by one actor *vis-à-vis* another. International law relates intervention to other concepts such as ‘internal affairs’ and ‘domestic jurisdiction’. In view of the domestic jurisdiction clause of the United Nations Charter (art. 2.7) it has been pointed out that one can only speak of ‘intervention’ if the activity involved goes further than mere ‘talk’, *i.e.* oral and/or written communication between an actor and the target of its intervention.² In this study, however, any legal connotations and linkages to terms such as ‘domestic jurisdiction’ and ‘internal affairs’ are discarded. In recognition of the fact that the instruments of intervention are now much more refined and sophisticated than in the past – transforming intervention into a more pervasive phenomenon than ever before³ – this study considers a range of activities as falling under the concept. Thus not only military actions are interpreted as intervention, but also activities in other areas such as economics, development cooperation and, indeed, even ‘mere’ communication between one actor and the object of its intervention. This approach has the benefit that it underlines the importance of gradualism and incrementalism as features of the intervention concept. In this sense the intervention concept does not necessarily have to involve a rupture from conventional or ‘normal’ behaviour of one actor towards another.⁴ Even the contention that the target of intervention should be the structure of government⁵ is

1 G. Evans and J. Newnham, *Dictionary of World Politics: A Reference Guide to Concepts, Ideas and Institutions* (New York, 1990), p. 198.

2 See I. Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law* (Oxford, 1979), p. 294.

3 Evans and Newnham, *Dictionary of World Politics*, p. 200.

4 Evans and Newnham, *Dictionary of World Politics*, p. 200.

5 Evans and Newnham, *Dictionary of World Politics*, p. 200.

not followed here, as interventions may be focused on NGOs, the civil society and sometimes the population at large.

Yet our definition of intervention, while allowing for any kind of activity (military, economic, political, diplomatic, cultural or other), is linked to *conflict* and the intention of the intervening actor to affect that conflict. Thus, intervention is taken to mean or involve any activity in the above-mentioned areas which is intended to influence the course, intensity or scope of hostilities, and/or activity geared at attenuating the effects of conflict. In this sense, intervention amounts to *conflict-related intervention*.

Such conflict-related intervention may thus involve, firstly, interventions that are aimed at influencing the hostilities (*i.e.* course, scope and intensity of the violence) – defined here as *direct* conflict-related intervention. Such interventions include, for example, political and diplomatic efforts to mediate a settlement, military interventions to end the conflict, or the imposition of economic or military sanctions. Direct conflict-related intervention may, however, also involve activity geared at affecting the ‘dispute’ – *i.e.* pre-hostilities – phase (which is conflict prevention in the strict sense) or the post-conflict – *i.e.* post-violence – situation.

Secondly, conflict-related intervention may involve interventions that are aimed at attenuating the effects of a conflict, defined here as *indirect* conflict-related intervention. Such intervention involves the provision of aid to war-stricken areas and populations to help them survive the hostilities. This includes both relief aid, which is assistance given during or immediately upon the permanent or temporary conclusion of hostilities, and ‘rehabilitation’ or ‘reconstruction’ aid, *i.e.* assistance given after the conflict has ended and aimed at helping to reconstruct the country and the populations’ livelihoods.

Furthermore, for the Netherlands, development assistance can also be considered as a conflict-related instrument. The reason is that development efforts per se may contribute to increased tension or even overt conflict on the one hand, and help to reduce tension on the other. In addition, development projects may consciously be used or designed to affect peace. Examples include the so-called development-for-peace projects. However, not all ODA is evidently relevant in that it is meant to contribute to solving, managing or preventing intrastate conflict. For the purpose of this study, conflict-related ODA is all aid that aims at influencing the course or intensity of a conflict, or the possibility of escalation or reoccurrence of conflict, and includes:

- Projects aimed at finishing or de-escalating conflict;
- Projects aimed at cooperation between the conflict parties and peace-building;
- Projects promoting ‘good governance’ and democratization with the aim to finish, mitigate, or prevent conflict and to manage societal tension and conflict in a peaceful, non-violent manner.

The Dutch Directorate for Crisis Management and Humanitarian Aid (DCH) comprises two sections: humanitarian aid (DCH/HH); and conflict prevention (DCH/CP).⁶ Humanitarian aid comprises relief and rehabilitation aid, while conflict prevention aims at reducing the susceptibility to conflict and at reducing the influence of conflict-escalating factors. In practice, it also is seen to include a number of conflict-resolution measures. Whereas relief, rehabilitation, development and prevention were earlier

6 This Directorate and its sections were in existence while this study was carried out. As of the first quarter of 2000, however, there is a new Directorate for Human Rights and Peace-Building (DMV) with separate sections for Humanitarian Aid (DMV/HH), Human Rights (DMV/MR) and Peace-Building and Good Governance (DMV/VG).

seen to constitute very distinct activities related to corresponding phases in the conflict, it is now acknowledged that there is not a necessary, logical, and temporal order between these activities and that they may occur simultaneously or be linked in other ways in nearly any phase of the conflict. Preventive activities have to be undertaken in several phases of the conflict cycle, at least with a view to preventing the re-emergence of conflict after a first, often fragile, settlement has been reached. Similarly, development aid may already be provided during conflict.

Likewise, the distinction between humanitarian aid, conflict prevention and 'normal' development aid is fluid and may vary per country. The distinction may sometimes be argued on the basis of content (the nature of the activity concerned), but often only reflects the simple decision of from which budget a project was initially paid. In the latter case an administrative logic finally determines what is to be considered as humanitarian aid, what as conflict prevention and what as 'normal' development aid.

Finally, interventions can be distinguished in a number of broad categories: diplomatic and political initiatives, civilian (conflict-management) initiatives, military measures, economic and social measures, political development and governance measures, judicial and legal measures, communication and education measures. The boundaries between these categories are somewhat arbitrary, and in practice many projects and programmes combine several of these different measures.

1.3 Methodology

The study is based on a perusal of relevant literature, and on files (see Annexe 1 for an overview of files consulted) at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch co-financing agencies. Study of the files at the Ministry was undertaken by Stijn van Bruggen, who published a report on his findings,⁷ and chapter 4 on Dutch policy and interventions in Afghanistan is largely based on his work. The authors are grateful to Jaïr van der Lijn for his inventory and analysis of Dutch government assistance programmes (see Annexes) to Afghanistan and for his contributions to the collection of relevant literature.

7 Stijn van Bruggen, *Case-study Afghanistan: een onderzoek naar Nederlandse beleidsinterventies in Afghanistan 1989-1998* (Den Haag, Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', August 1999).

2 An Outline of the Conflict in Afghanistan

2.1 Background and Causes

Few historical events of the last decade have carried such a symbolical connotation as the September 1996 capture of Kabul by the *Taliban*. Either regarded as a culmination of radical Islam or the ultimate disintegration of a state, it brought the world's attention back to Afghanistan, which it had lost since the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1989. The end of the Soviet occupation had initially seemed to introduce peace to the troubled country, but with hindsight it can be concluded that it instead introduced a new phase of conflict with new dynamics.

Any explanation of the background of the current conflict likely starts from the internal divisions, which proved to be an enormous obstacle for attempts to develop an 'Afghan' nationhood. Afghanistan is characterized by ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. The issue of ethnic identity is complex. None of the main ethnic groups are homogenous in internal composition or social structure, as they are composed of a large number of tribes and sub-tribes. Although 99 per cent of the population is Muslim, a similar diversity can be observed in religious affairs. Relations among Sunni and Shia sects have never been harmonious. The issues of ethnicity, religion, state and political power in Afghanistan also have a regional context, because all major ethnic groups spill over into the territories of neighbouring countries. This has frequently resulted in foreign support for groups with whom such relations of kinship exist.

Secondly, the Afghan conflict includes international elements. Afghanistan is strategically situated at the crossroads of three regions (Central Asia, South Asia and South-West Asia), and historically was therefore located on the invasion route into South Asia. While Afghanistan was the high-priced trophy at stake between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War, more recently, internal developments are closely followed by neighbouring countries seeking for strategic alliances. Observers from outside the region continue to have an interest, frightened as they are by the implications that the conflict might have for regional instability, international criminality, and terrorism.

This chapter aims to put the foreign and Dutch interventions in the Afghan conflict in their proper context. It focuses on the different actors and dynamics of the conflict since 1989, the year in which the Soviet forces retreated from Afghanistan. However, the analysis also refers to historical developments dating back to earlier periods, as these are essential for an adequate understanding of contemporary developments.

A Country of Diversity

By starting an introduction on the conflict in Afghanistan with a description of its various (ethnic) groups, one risks that the reader is tempted to believe that the root causes of the conflict are purely of

an ethnic character. However, ethnicity only grew into a major political issue over the last two decades of the twentieth century. Traditionally, a sort of political balance evolved among the different groups, in which all of them had allocated spaces in the hierarchical system. Since the system was also authoritarian, ethnicity remained confined to identity and was not expressed politically.⁸ The following description of the different groups is consequently not meant to introduce the major factions in the conflict, but instead it tries to give a short overview of Afghanistan's geographical, historical, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, in an attempt to set the scene for analysis of the conflict.⁹

Pushtun

By far the largest group in Afghanistan are the Pushtun. The Pushtun mainly live in the southern part of the country around the central Hazara area and alongside the Durand line. This rather contrived border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which resulted from an agreement between the Afghan ruler Abdur Rahman and the British in 1893, separates the Afghan Pushtun from the Pushtun-inhabited areas in Pakistan. Resulting from resettlement policies of this same Abdur Rahman, aimed to get rid of opponents among Pushtun tribes in the south, enclaves of Pushtun can be found scattered among other ethnic groups in the northern and western regions. The Pushtun mostly speak Pashto, and are generally Sunni Muslims (although there are some Shia Muslim groups as well). For the larger part they make their living from animal husbandry, agriculture and trade. Tribal and sub-tribal divisions have been a source of conflict among Pushtun throughout their history. Even today, the Pushtun political parties are divided along tribal lines and occasionally fight one another.

Since its foundation, Afghanistan has traditionally been dominated by the Pushtuns. However, the refugee flows as a reaction to the 1979 Soviet invasion and war considerably changed the composition of the population. Before 1978 (the date of the last reliable census in Afghanistan) the Pushtun represented 40 per cent of the population. About 85 per cent of the approximately six million Afghan refugees who fled to Iran and Pakistan during the Soviet occupation were Pushtun. Consequently, the percentage of Pushtun in Afghanistan's population diminished to about 13 per cent (in 1987), implying that the Pushtun were no longer the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. However, their (temporary) minority status, in combination with the preferential treatment of the Soviets towards the northern regions, has seriously affected ethnic politics in post-Soviet Afghanistan. This will be touched upon in the following paragraphs. The return of many refugees in the mid-1990s restored the balance, and by 1998 the Pushtun again constituted about 38 per cent of the population.¹⁰

Tajiks

The Tajiks are the second largest group. Before 1978 they constituted 23-30 per cent of the population. Most Tajiks remained in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation. During this period they constituted about 33 per cent of the population, and at the moment about one-quarter of the population. For the larger part they live in the north-east and in the west. A minority lives in Kabul. They speak Persian, and are mostly Sunni Muslims (with a minority of Ismaili Shia Muslims). Those living in rural regions engage in agriculture and herding. As a result of their relatively better education and wealth, their political influence is considerable and they are the traditional rivals of the Pushtun for political power.

8 Rasul Bakhsh Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan: Ethnicity, Religion and Neighbours', *Ethnic Studies: Report*, 17(1), 1999, pp. 1-19, at p. 2.

9 For the convenience of the reader, a map of Afghanistan can be found in Annexe 2.

10 Jonathan Fox and Kathie Young, *Pushtuns (Pathans) in Afghanistan*, Minority at Risk Project, University of Maryland, 1994, 1995, 1999, <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/afghpash.htm>.

Apart from two brief periods, one in the fourteenth century and one of ten months in 1929, they have never ruled their region. The unity of the Tajiks did not erode during the Soviet occupation, hence leaving them in a better position to challenge Pushtun dominance afterwards.¹¹

Hazaras

The Hazaras are mainly Shia Muslims, although some adhere to Sunni Islam. They speak the Farsi language. In 1998, the percentage of Hazaras in Afghanistan was estimated at 19 per cent. The Hazaras historically suffered from Pushtun expansionism and Sunni prejudices of Pushtun, Tajiks and Uzbeks against Shia Islam, and they were driven from their traditional homeland to the barren dry mountains of central Afghanistan (the Hazarajat). They are primarily sedentary farmers, practising some ancillary herding. Many Hazaras migrated to the major towns, particularly Kabul, where they came to occupy the lowest economic ranks.¹²

Uzbeks

The Uzbeks are Sunni Muslims, and their language is Turkic. They occupy most of Afghanistan's arable land in the north. They are ethnically related to the majority Muslim population living in the Central Asian states across the border to the north. Their far ancestors came as invaders from Turkey in the sixteenth century, and many of them are descendants of Uzbeks who fled from Soviet Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s. They were involved in Afghanistan's earliest industrial enterprises and many have also reached high-level posts in the government bureaucracy. Because of their economic wealth, the Uzbeks were not dependent upon the central government and maintained a considerable degree of autonomy. Yet they have always allied themselves with the central government. The Uzbeks formed about 13 per cent of Afghanistan's population before 1978, about 19 per cent until the mid-1990s, and now they constitute about 6 per cent.¹³

Smaller minorities

There is a great variety of minor ethnic groups apart from the groups mentioned above. These include: the Aimaqs (who live in the west); the Turkmen (living alongside the border with Turkmenistan); the Baluchis (living in the southern part of Afghanistan, bordering the Pakistani province of Baluchistan); the Nuristani and Panjshiris (in the north-east), and the Kirchiz (in the far north-eastern Wakhan corridor, which points as a forefinger to touch China's back).

A Short History of State Formation

Afghanistan became a united state in 1747 under the leadership of Ahmed Shah Durrani, a Pushtun. This leader from the southern city of Qandahar first united the various Pushtun tribes and then, as his power increased, conquered the Hazara, Uzbek and Tajik areas. His kingdom, however, began to disintegrate within two generations. The Pushtun tribes were only reunited when they faced a common enemy during the first Anglo-Afghan war (1839-1842). This war was started by Britain, which, to protect its Indian empire from Russia, tried to establish authority in neighbouring Afghanistan. From

11 Jonathan Fox and Kathie Young, *Tajiks in Afghanistan*, Minority at Risk Project, University of Maryland, 1994, 1995, 1999, <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/afghtaj.htm>.

12 Jonathan Fox and Kathie Young, *Hazaras in Afghanistan*, Minority at Risk Project, University of Maryland, 1994, 1995, 1999, <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/afghhaz.htm>.

13 Jonathan Fox and Kathie Young, *Uzbeks in Afghanistan*, Minority at Risk Project, University of Maryland, 1994, 1995, 1999, <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/afghuzb.htm>.

that moment, the tribal leaders started to recognize the king as their sovereign, although his power remained limited. In return for their recognition, the king had to accept that the tribes continued to be administered by their local chiefs. In fact, a sort of political balance evolved among the various groups. This order may have implied a hierarchical system in which Pushtun royal clans provided the rulers, but at least all groups occupied positions within the system. The authoritarian, hierarchical system succeeded in keeping group grievances, demands and aspirations under control.

Successive efforts by Afghan leaders since the late nineteenth century to reduce the dependence on the tribes and their leaders and to transform Afghanistan into a 'modern state' have failed. King Amanullah Khan (1919-1928), for example, tried to open up Afghanistan. He established modern educational institutions, recruited and trained a state elite, and founded a military academy for the army. He tried to increase the state's capacity by raising revenues. His policies aimed at restricting the power and privileges of the clergy, as well as promoting education for women and their participation in nation-building. However, his wide-ranging reforms struck at the power of the traditional landed, tribal, conservative and religious elite and provoked rebellion and his overthrowing.¹⁴

For a short time, power came into the hands of Bacha-e-Saqqa, a Tajik. Some writers on Afghanistan mark this Tajik intermezzo, short as it was, as the beginning of the still continuing battle for power between the (Durrani) Pushtun tribes and the other ethnic groups in the country. However, although ethnicity certainly came to play a role during, and especially after, the Soviet occupation, at that particular time discord was instead at the interface between the Durrani elite and other Pushtun. Over the preceding two centuries, the Pushtun Durrani tribe had held power. The Durrani elite, however, became detribalized and urbanized. As a result of these processes the elite became more 'cosmopolitan' and less inhibited about recruiting Uzbeks and Tajiks into the bureaucracy, or Hazaras and Nuristanis into the army. This implied that the linkage between the Durrani elite and the other Pushtuns became more tenuous, as Pushtuns were no longer the only group from which manpower for the army was conscripted. The tribal discord promoted the development of Marxist and Islamist ideas within the non-Durrani Pushtun population.¹⁵

Rather than as an ethnic schism, the years leading to the 1978 revolution and the coming into power of the communists can be characterized as a period of contested modernization, in which the introduction of radical change was faced with an ultra-conservative rural society.¹⁶ Under the reign of Muhammad Zahir Shah (who reigned from 1933 to 1973)¹⁷ new attempts at modernization and constitutional reform were made. A benchmark was the 1964 constitution, which provided equal rights for both men and women and gave precedence to the secular legal system over *shariah* law, although Islam remained 'the sacred religion of Afghanistan'. According to the new constitution, an elected parliament and provincial councils had to be set up. Women gradually entered the urban workforce. Attempts to modernize Afghanistan resulted partially from the economic and military aid given by the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries the British had aimed to make Afghanistan a strong-enough buffer

14 Rasul Bakhsh Rais, 'Afghanistan: Country Paper', in: K.M. de Silva (ed.), *Causes of Conflict in Developing Countries: South Asia – Regional Report* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', and Kandy, Sri Lanka: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1998), pp. 457-458.

15 Richard S. Newell, 'Post-Soviet Afghanistan: The Position of the Minorities', *Asian Survey*, 29(11), November 1989, pp. 1090-1108, at pp. 1093-1101.

16 P. Marsden, *The Taliban: War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan*. Politics in Contemporary Asia series (London, New York: Zed Books; Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 21.

17 For an overview of political leaders since 1933 see Annexe 3.

state to protect the Raj from a possible Russian attack. During the Cold War both the United States and the Soviet Union provided development aid in order to win the support of the leaders in Kabul. However, attempts by external powers to promote the process of state-building never took root in Afghan society. Strong dependence on foreign aid even isolated the state from society, as it created a foreign-educated elite longing for modernist change that no longer had its cultural roots in Afghanistan.

The 1964 constitution generated a period of political unrest and growing radicalism. Young people coming from all parts of the country to enjoy the expanded opportunities for education in Kabul were dissatisfied with the still highly elitist state system that helped the traditional elite to perpetuate its social and political control. The discontent resulted in the expansion of radical movements. Some found their claims for a much faster process of reform represented by the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Others opposed the changes that had already taken place and argued for a return to Islamic values and the creation of an Islamic state based on *shariah* law. These socialist and Islamic movements became stronger in voicing their discontent, and the unrest culminated in a military *coup* and the deposition of King Zahir Shah in 1973. The *coup* was led by Lt. Gen. Muhammad Daoud Khan, who had been Prime Minister ten years earlier.¹⁸ Daoud proclaimed a republic, of which he became President. He initiated further processes for reform, including land reform, cautiously tacking alongside the conservative rural opinion. To get rid of political opponents, the Islamist parties were forced to flee to Pakistan.¹⁹

Nevertheless, Daoud and some sections within the PDPA did not go along well. Initially, the Central Committee of Daoud's government comprised members of the PDPA, but with tensions developing, these were removed from the government. In the end, the same forces that brought Daoud to power also ended his rule, through the bloody PDPA revolution in 1978. The PDPA introduced a series of measures to limit large landholdings, reduce rural indebtedness, limit the bridewealth, set a minimum age for marriage, and embarked on a large literacy campaign, aiming both at male and female as well as young and old Afghans. Apparently, the PDPA had not learnt the lessons from King Amanullah's earlier attempts to introduce radical reforms without attempting to build a gradual process of reform from below.²⁰ Its 18 months of power brought excessive violence, which might have cost as many as 50,000 to 100,000 lives. The violence was directed against those who were perceived to belong to the 'elite'. Most of the victims were either Durrani Pushtun or educated Tajiks. In an attempt to escape from the radicalism of the new government and its efforts to eliminate opponents, large numbers of professionals fled to Pakistan, Europe, and the United States.

The ingredients for a mass revolutionary movement were abound. Society at large was religious, conservative and traditional in its values. Foreign influence was an affront to the cultural sensibilities of a largely peasant society, let alone the Soviet brand of socialism, which was generally perceived as atheistic and anti-Islam. Moreover, history learned that all attempts to centralize the state had failed in the face of persistent resistance. This time, too, the local leaders wanted to cling to their autonomy. The PDPA's reforms and their use of force to introduce them alienated the PDPA from the rural population. The result was massive resistance, and a call for a *Jihad* (Holy War) by leading Islamic scholars (or *ulema*) against the government, which was deemed un-Islamic and atheistic. One area after another embarked upon violent resistance against the regime, and the resistance was supported by Islamist movements of Afghan refugees operating from Iran and Pakistan. Those resistance

18 See Annexe 2.

19 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 24.

20 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 24.

movements, both those inside and outside the country, came to be known as the *Mujahideen*, or fighters in a holy war.

Socialist Afghanistan

In 1978, the Soviets signed an agreement with the PDPA to provide military assistance if the need arose. Although the Soviet Union was not happy with the unfolding situation in Afghanistan, it felt obliged to continue its support to the Kabul government. Lacking domestic support and legitimacy, Afghan Marxists leaned heavily on the Soviet Union to ensure their political survival. The Afghan regime's interests in countering the rising power of Islamist movements converged with those of Moscow, which was afraid of the potential impact of this development on the political climate in its Central Asian Republics.

There has been a lot of speculation about why Moscow sent its troops to invade Afghanistan in December 1979. Three factors are likely to have played an important role. First, the Soviet advisers stationed in Afghanistan became increasingly apprehensive about the growing strength and massive popularity of the resistance groups among the Afghan public. They feared that further weakening of the regime could bring the Islamic fundamentalists into power. Second, the Soviets were highly distrustful of Hafizullah Amin and his inappropriate socialist programme and his resort to terror. They wanted to replace him by installing the relatively pragmatic and politically reliable Babrak Karmal. Finally, the balance of power in South-West Asia underwent a fundamental change with the collapse of US security arrangements resulting from the Islamic revolution in Iran, and the Soviets no longer feared any counter move by the Western bloc. The states in the region, on their part, lacked the required level of capabilities to deter the Soviet move.

The Soviet invasion in Afghanistan became a disaster, both for the regime it wanted to protect and for itself. Mass desertions from the PDPA army forced Soviet troops to become involved in direct battles with the resistance movements, resulting in large losses on the Soviet side. More important, however, was the Soviet invasion's contribution to the process of undermining the very basis of the Afghan state. First, the image of the Afghan state as being occupied by an imperialist power had already developed deep roots among the population since the British occupation during the nineteenth century. The presence of Soviet forces and their active participation in counter-insurgency operations further alienated the Marxist regime from its people. In 1986 the Soviets replaced Babrak Karmal with Muhammad Najibullah, who had headed the regime's secret police from 1980 to 1985. But this strategy failed and only created a split within the PDPA.²¹ Second, as the *Mujahideen* resistance gained popularity, it also increased its strength through foreign support. The Afghan state was forced to retreat to Kabul and a few other strongholds, leaving the vast rural areas to a large variety of *Mujahideen* groups. Finally, the Soviet invasion not only strengthened the old tribal and ethnic confrontations but also further fragmented the country through its divide-and-rule policies. Whatever fragile balance had existed in terms of national solidarity and harmony among various ethnic groups before the Soviet invasion was completely wiped out by the war.

In total, 9.5 million people were affected by the invasion. The military campaigns against the *Mujahideen* resistance resulted in the largest single refugee population ever, driving 6 million people to Pakistan and Iran. Internally, the campaigns not only destroyed the economic infrastructure of the country, but also produced 2 million internally displaced people, as well as 1.5 million casualties.

21 Barnett R. Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration: The Failure of International Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan', *Journal of International Affairs*, 46(2), winter 1993, pp. 469-492, at p. 478.

The Soviets remained in Afghanistan for over nine years. During this period, the Afghan resistance raised the economic and military costs of the occupation to an unacceptable level for the Soviet Union. The war drained too many resources from the strained Soviet economy, and resulted in large numbers of disillusioned veterans.²² After Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union and in the dusk of the Cold War, Moscow hoped to leave Afghanistan. Negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States, with the United Nations as a mediator, brokered the Geneva Accords, which were signed on 14 April 1988. The Accords ended the superpower part of the conflict in Afghanistan and provided a timeframe for the withdrawal of the 115,000 Soviet troops. The withdrawal was finalized on 15 February 1989.

On the Threshold to a New Phase of Conflict

Afghanistan found itself in a worrying situation in 1989. Six million people had left the country. Out of the remaining 11.7 million, 535,000 were disabled veterans, and 700,000 were widows and orphans. In addition, there were more than two million internally displaced persons, who had fled to urban centres for protection. With the countryside depopulated, food production had declined severely. One-third of all villages were destroyed and the infrastructure was heavily damaged. Because of the landmines scattered all over the country – maiming thousands of peasants yearly – agriculture became a hazardous affair.²³

The retreat of the Soviet forces did not end Afghanistan's suffering. It instead introduced a new phase of conflict: different, but not less destructive than the Soviet military intervention. In the 1988 Geneva Accords, peace between the internal parties of the conflict was considered a second priority and Afghanistan was effectively left to its own devices.²⁴ The retreat and therefore the waning influence of the United States and the former Soviet Union caused an internal power vacuum, setting the stage for fighting among political factions that had once been united against the Soviet occupation. The power vacuum also set the stage for a new role for regional powers. From a superpower-dominated conflict, the Afghan conflict grew into a civil war, influenced by local and regional power politics.

The later chapters of this case study will focus on external interventions in the conflict as it evolved after 1989, and the remainder of this chapter will concern the parties involved and the dynamics of the conflict.

2.2 The Parties Involved and their Objectives

At first glance the conflict, as it developed after the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989, appears to be an anarchic and irrational situation. Closer analysis reveals a series of actors with clear strategic objectives, which form part of a volatile, multi-layered and interdependent conflict system. Subtle changes in alliances, sometimes at the level of personal feuds, have resulted in fluid and shifting

22 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 26.

23 Selig S. Harrison, 'Afghanistan', in: Anthony Lake (ed.), *After the Wars: Reconstruction in Afghanistan, Indochina, Central America, Southern Africa, and the Horn of Africa* (New Brunswick and Oxford, 1990), p. 45ff.

24 Selig S. Harrison, *Path to Peace in Afghanistan: The Geneva Accords and After*, International Peace Academy Occasional Paper 1 (New York, 1989).

alliances between the warring groups and, externally, have had far-reaching effects on the competing interests of surrounding countries.²⁵

This section reviews the various actors that were and became involved in the conflict as of 1989. It deals with the different groups in Afghanistan,²⁶ as well as with the conflict's international actors. A later section will pay attention to the dynamics of the conflict.

The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) / Watan

The communist party of Afghanistan, the PDPA, was divided. It was basically made up of two factions: the *Khalq* ('Banner') and the *Parcham* ('Masses'). The *Khalq* was strong among the armed forces and was hard-line revolutionary. It had a sort of Pushtun tribal background and support, and the leaders of the faction were mainly affiliated with the Ghilzai Pushtun tribes. The *Parcham* faction was more conciliatory. It had a lot of support among the de-tribalized Kabul intelligentsia and bureaucracy, who had felt excluded by the narrow Durrani in-group that had dominated Afghanistan during the monarchy and the Daoud Republic. The strongest fundamentalist cadres of the PDPA, however, had their origins in ethnic minority areas, notably the Panshir valley (mainly a Tajik area).²⁷ The more hard-line *Khalq* faction came to power with the 1978 revolution, led by Presidents Nur Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin.²⁸ Most of the citizens killed under their governance were either Durrani Pushtun or educated Tajiks. The *Khalq* regime of terror stimulated Moscow to intervene and install the leader of the opposing *Parcham* faction, Babrak Karmal, as President. In 1986 the Soviets replaced Karmal with Najibullah, who remained in power until 1992.²⁹

After the withdrawal of the Soviet forces, the PDPA renamed itself the *Watan* Party and renounced its communist agenda. Since the Islamic Interim Government of the *Mujahideen* took over power in 1992, the *Watan* has been marginalized politically.

The Mujahideen

Generally speaking, *Mujahideen* refers to all Afghans who regarded themselves as engaged in a *Jihad* against the PDPA and the Soviet forces,³⁰ including all those fighting in Afghanistan itself, as well as those who had fled to Pakistan and Iran and undertook incursions into Afghanistan. Some *Mujahideen* were organized in parties or groups, others acted more spontaneously at village or community level. Nevertheless, a prominent place among the resistance movements was claimed by the Islamist parties that had fled to Pakistan in the mid-1970s, leading some Western observers to regard them as representing 'the *Mujahideen* movement'. The Pakistani *Mujahideen* parties were mainly Pushtun and Sunni, and operated from the Pakistani town of Peshawar. When the United States increasingly channelled aid to those parties through Pakistan from 1979 to 1986, they were able to justify their claim for prominence as they came to form the major channel for arms and resources to the *Mujahideen* fighting within Afghanistan. In reaction, leaders that had emerged in Afghanistan itself started to claim a prominent position as well, and also asked the Pakistan government for support. In

25 Jonathan Goodhand, *From Holy War to Opium War? A Case Study of the Opium Economy in North Eastern Afghanistan* (Manchester: Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester, 1999), p. 3.

26 An overview of the Afghan parties and their factions is given in Annexe 3.

27 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', p. 50.

28 Hamish McDonald, 'Stay of Execution', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 1989, pp. 16-19, at p. 16.

29 Newell, 'Post-Soviet Afghanistan', p. 1093ff.

30 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 27.

response, the Pakistan government stated at the end of 1980 that it would only recognize and support seven of the Pakistan-based groups and their affiliates.³¹ Pakistan stimulated them to establish control over the refugee population by setting up offices in the camps or to set up their own camps. Refugees were urged to become members of whichever party held sway in their camp.³² Bearing in mind Pakistan's attempts to support fundamentalist tendencies and downplay tribal leadership (see below), it is hardly surprising that those parties were mainly non-tribalist, that they had few territorial strongholds inside the country, and thus a limited power base.³³ The major Pakistan-based *Mujahideen* parties were the *Jamiat* and the *Hizb-i Islami*.

Jamiat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan (Islamic Society of Afghanistan), or in short the '*Jamiat*', was founded by Burhanuddin Rabbani in 1973. That same year its leaders had to flee to Peshawar, because President Daoud tried to suppress the organization. Among the Pakistani *Mujahideen* it was the only non-Pushtun and non-Sunni party. The *Jamiat* mainly recruited from the newly educated of rural backgrounds.³⁴ Although allegedly supra-ethnic and embracing a range of ideological tendencies,³⁵ it was primarily composed of Tajiks. It proved particularly difficult for the *Jamiat* to find support in Pushtun areas and it has always remained a party that mainly represents the northern minorities.³⁶ During the *Jihad*, however, its troops under local commander Ahmad Shah Masoud were the best organized. The *Jamiat* even saw a chance to create a regional governmental structure inside Afghanistan (in the Panjshir Valley, to the north-east of Kabul), resisting the Soviet occupation.³⁷ The party gained most power in Kabul after the downfall of Najibullah, and its leader, Rabbani, became President of the 1992-formed *Mujahideen* government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. Despite the *Taliban*'s takeover of Kabul and most of the country, this government still occupies Afghanistan's UN seat. Rabbani still nominally leads the *Jamiat*, although its de facto leader is Masoud. The goal of the *Jamiat* is a centralized government, although with local autonomy. Rabbani has, for instance, argued for respecting existing beliefs, traditions and practices, including the traditional emphasis on consensual decision-making.

Hizb-i Islami-yi Afghanistan (Islamic Party of Afghanistan), or in short the '*Hizb-i Islami*' split from the *Jamiat* in 1979. *Hizb-i Islami* was the largest *Mujahideen* movement and long-time protégé of Pakistan, in particular among those elements in Pakistan that supported the *Mujahideen*. The *Jamaat-e-Islami* Party and the Inter-Services Intelligence, in particular, gave their support to this party.³⁸ From 1985 onwards the movement also received a large proportion of US military support to the resistance. Furthermore, it was, at different times, able to secure support from Saudi Arabia and Arab extremists.³⁹ *Hizb-i Islami* was led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, a Ghilzai Pushtun and an extremist Sunni Islamist. Hikmatyar was originally the deputy leader of the *Jamiat*, but after Masoud failed to start a rebellion in the Panjshir Valley during the Daoud regime, he started quarrelling and broke

31 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 29.

32 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 34.

33 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', p. 53.

34 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', pp. 475-476.

35 William Maley, 'The Future of Islamic Afghanistan', *Security Dialogue*, 24(4), 1993, pp. 383-396, at p. 386.

36 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 34.

37 Marvin G. Weinbaum, 'War and Peace in Afghanistan: The Pakistani Role', *Middle East Journal*, 45(1), winter 1991, p. 79.

38 Arney, 1990, referred to in Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 34.

39 Maley, 'The Future of Islamic Afghanistan', p. 387.

away.⁴⁰ Hikmatyar aimed to follow a more radical line than the *Jamiat*, and has sought to replace existing customs with the aim of creating an Islamic state. He mainly recruited from refugee camps in Pakistan, and also received support from relatively well-educated young radicals.⁴¹ Nevertheless, he failed to consolidate support among the Afghan Pushtun.⁴² Hikmatyar opposed any compromise with the Kabul government, the conciliatory resistance groups or the monarchists. Already during the *Jihad*, his men were not only opposing the Kabul government, but also the other *Mujahideen*, and they left the brunt of the fighting against the communist regime to the rest of the resistance. After the Soviet withdrawal, Hikmatyar's forces deliberately started to fight the other resistance groups in a quest for power.⁴³ In the face of the *Taliban*'s success, Hikmatyar joined Rabbani's government as Prime Minister in 1996. After the *Taliban* captured most of the *Hizb-i Islami*'s heavy weapons and became Islamabad's new client, Hikmatyar controlled few military and political resources. Some of his commanders joined the *Taliban*, while others in the north are apparently joining the forces of Masoud.⁴⁴

Apart from those *Mujahideen* parties in Pakistan, there were a number of Shia parties that had found refuge in Iranian refugee camps. The principal among them was the *Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan* (Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan), or in short '*Wahdat*'. *Wahdat* was created under the sponsorship of Tehran in order to unite the eight Shia *Mujahideen* groups,⁴⁵ which had their bases in Iran. Its leaders were Muhammad Karim Khalili and Abdul Ali Mazari. During the Soviet occupation these parties were reportedly more directed at fighting the conservative Sunni groups than the Kabul and Soviet armies. *Wahdat* had its main support among the Hazara ethnic group, and its goal was a form of power-sharing in which the Hazara groups would have control over their own areas.⁴⁶

Junbish

Since 1989, a number of factions came to play a role in the Afghan conflict, some of them breakaways from *Mujahideen* parties, others arising independently. A significant role was played by *Junbish-i Milli-yi Afghanistan* (National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan), in short '*Junbish*'. The *Junbish*'s founder and principal leader was Abdul Rashid Dostam. The *Junbish* was mainly an Uzbek party of former militias, whose loyalty was 'bought' by the communist regime. In 1992, however, they mutinied against Soviet-backed President Najibullah to side with Masoud of *Jamiat*. The *Junbish* attracted support from some of the Uzbek *Mujahideen* commanders, but was also subject to internal disputes. Between 1992 and 1997 the organization was the strongest in northern Afghanistan. Dostam's goal was to establish a government in Afghanistan that would guarantee regional autonomy through a form of power-sharing.⁴⁷

40 Hazhir Teimourian, 'Who's Who in Afghanistan', *Pakistan & Gulf Economist*, 16-22 May 1992, pp. 32-33.

41 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 31.

42 Barnett R. Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*, presentation prepared for the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Center for Preventive Action, Council on Foreign Relations, 1998.

43 Olivier Roy, 'Afghanistan: vom Ost-West Konflikt zum Bürgerkrieg', *Europa-Archiv*, 20/1989, pp. 619-26, at pp. 620-621.

44 Barnett R. Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', *Current History*, 98(625), February 1999, pp. 79-91, at p. 83.

45 Of whom the largest were *Sazman-e Nasr* (Victory Movement) and *Pasdaran-e Jihad* (Holy War Guards).

46 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 83.

47 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 83.

The Taliban

Although they were first heard of in 1994, the *Taliban* are not essentially a new force. They are the products of twenty years of war in Afghanistan. Those who organized the militia and have come to command it were originally Islamic scholars, or *ulema*. During the Soviet invasion the *ulema* called for the *Jihad* against the un-Islamic, atheist government. Although they actively participated in the *Mujahideen* resistance, they went back to the *madrassas* (the Islamic religious schools) after the Soviet withdrawal and the collapse of the communist regime in 1992. Disappointed with the achievements of the *Mujahideen* to rebuild the country and to establish Islamic laws, the more conservative of the *ulema* started to devote their time and energy to raising a new group of students of Islamic theology, or *Taliban*.⁴⁸

In the early 1990s a group of such *madrassa* teachers from the southern city of Qandahar formed a militant movement, the *Taliban*, to end the continued factional competition of the *Mujahideen*. These *mullahs* were mainly affiliated with the Deobandi movement, which is common in the Pushtun tribal areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Following the creed of the Deobandi, the *Taliban* reject the use of reason to create innovations in *shariah* in response to new conditions. They oppose all forms of hierarchy within the Muslim community (including tribalism or royalty). They also oppose the participation of Shia in policy.⁴⁹

The *Taliban* were able to generate large support. The political movements of that time had little support among the population of the rural areas and relied, at least partially, on men that had to be paid for their loyalty. The failure of the other movements to create a sustainable government contributed to the conditions for a mass movement to emerge.⁵⁰ The *Taliban* appealed very much to the desperate wish of the populace for peace. They were disappointed with the *Mujahideen* movement's failure to come to an arrangement for power-sharing, and the stigma of power abuse and corruption that surrounded them. Although the objectives of the *Taliban* largely coalesced with the objectives of the *Mujahideen* groups, according to the *Taliban* these groups could no longer be trusted, as they were morally and materially corrupt. The official goal of the *Taliban* was to come to a reunified, demilitarized, and centralized state with a Sunni Islamic signature. In their attempt to create a centralized Afghan state, the *Taliban* have increasingly adopted a discourse of Afghan nationalism in addition to their Islamic traditionalism.⁵¹

There has been a lot of speculation about the nature and extent of their backing. As the educational system in Afghanistan had totally collapsed, a whole generation of Pushtun boys had only received education at the rural *madrassas*, providing fertile ground for recruits. It is nearly beyond doubt that the *madrassas* in the refugee camps in Pakistan also produced strong adherents to radical Islam.⁵² This also applied to orphanages for Afghan children in Balochistan and the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, which were supported by Middle Eastern governments and private

48 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 4ff.

49 For a detailed investigation of the origins and creed of the *Taliban* see Ahmed Rashid, *Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

50 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 148.

51 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*'; and Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 57ff.

52 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 43ff.

philanthropists.⁵³ Less clear is how far Islamist parties in Pakistan were responsible for training the youth, and how and where the *Taliban* received their military training.⁵⁴

In addition, there has been much debate and speculation about how far it is essentially a Pushtun movement. The *Taliban* had their origins in traditional Pushtun areas and today a majority of them are still Pushtun. It has been suggested that the *Taliban* are attractive to a large number of Pushtun, as their quick rise to power held the promise of their ability to reunite the country and to re-establish the Pushtun's pre-Soviet status, in which they took the lead.⁵⁵ According to an explanation that focuses less on the ethno-historical component, the *Taliban* call for unification appealed especially to the Pushtun, as the Pushtun traditional areas mostly suffered from the factional infighting that had characterized the early 1990s.⁵⁶ They prefer the harsh control of the *Taliban* above no order at all.⁵⁷ Some observers also see a parallel between the Pushtun culture (in which greater importance is attached to the value systems that it incorporates than to membership of the Pushtun community) and the *Taliban* emphasis on values.⁵⁸ Most of these explanations probably hold some truth. Nevertheless, many Pushtun, including traditional Afghans, also oppose the *Taliban*'s harsh ideology and the radical social change that they have introduced. They regard it as an essentially foreign movement, whose creed was bred in the Pakistan refugee camps rather than nourished by Afghan traditional values.⁵⁹ Others, however, have seen the *Taliban* change into a real Pushtun movement after their more recent conquests in traditionally non-Pushtun areas.

Despite their expansion beyond their original home base, the centre of gravity of the *Taliban* remains Qandahar. Here the Qandahar *shura* resides, which brings together the leading figures in the government council, and which resides over other *shura* in *Taliban* areas, including the one in Kabul. It operates very much by consensual decision-making. The 'absolute' leader of the *Taliban* is Mullah Muhammad Omar, who presides over the Qandahar *shura*.⁶⁰

Pakistan

Of the region's countries, Pakistan has the closest and most complex relationship with Afghanistan. Its interests are geopolitical (versus India), as well as internally driven (minorities). These interests have not changed over time. With regard to Afghanistan, this has implied seeking a secure, stable, unitary, friendly, and peaceful Afghanistan. However, Pakistan's policies as to how to achieve these aims, and with whom, have changed with the situation in Afghanistan.⁶¹

During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Pakistan's role was rather ambiguous. On the one hand, Islamabad contributed to subverting the Soviet-backed Kabul government. Pakistan hoped that a victory by the Islamist *Mujahideen* would provide Pakistan with a secure border to the west and north. Such an outcome would give Islamabad 'strategic depth' in its confrontation with India, and would ward off a coordinated attack from both India and Soviet-occupied Afghanistan. During the Soviet

53 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 5.

54 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 43.

55 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 8.

56 See Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

57 Zalmay Khalilzad and Daniel Byman, 'Afghanistan: The Consolidation of a Rogue State', *The Washington Quarterly*, winter 2000, pp. 65-78, at p. 67.

58 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 86.

59 Khalilzad and Byman, 'Afghanistan', p. 67.

60 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 57ff.

61 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 15.

occupation India supported the Soviet intervention and the Kabul regime, because with American aid flowing into Pakistan, India had to restore the 'natural' balance of power in the region.⁶² Moreover, Pakistan favoured an end to the war, as this would facilitate the return of its Afghan refugees. In a number of cases the *Mujahideen* and the refugee communities were held responsible for economic dislocations and the breakdown of law and order in Pakistan.

At the same time, Pakistan attempted to keep the *Mujahideen* divided. Although there have repeatedly been Pakistani attempts to unify the resistance, this was only undertaken to the level where they would be coordinated enough to ease the need for Pakistani influence and control. An important reason for this approach was that the conflict in Afghanistan also helped Zia ul-Haq maintain his martial law regime and had brought generous financial and diplomatic backing from the United States (through the 1980s more than 7.2 billion dollars).⁶³ A more important objective of Pakistan was to block Afghan nationalism so that the Durand line, once established by the Raj and often disputed by Afghan regimes, would remain Pakistan's international border. Pakistan was afraid both of nationalists who would like to establish a Greater Afghanistan, and traditional Pushtun clamouring for the creation of an independent Pushtunistan.⁶⁴ Both options would imply the loss of Pakistan's Pushtun areas, which would largely separate Jammu and Kashmir (the stake in the conflict with India) geographically from the rest of the country.⁶⁵

This two-faced interest of Pakistan in a strong Islamic neighbour without aspirations for redrawing the Afghan-Pakistani border resulted in parallel policies. US weapons aid was channelled to groups that were cooperative about the objective of installing a fundamentalist Islamic state, while at the same time attempting to bypass Pushtun nationalism and tribal leadership.⁶⁶ The support funnelled to *Jamiat*, primarily a Tajik group, can be interpreted in this perspective. Simultaneously, rather than fighting the Afghan Pushtun and alienating itself from them, Pakistan tried to maintain friendly relations to be able to exert some control. The importance of Pushtun in Pakistan's armed forces and the importance of the armed forces in Pakistan's politics contributed to the fact that they had to receive considerable support as well.⁶⁷ Over the whole period of the *Jihad*, Islamabad's favourite 'client' was Hikmatyar, who had his support among both Tajik and detribalized Pushtuns from migrant families in northern Afghanistan. Hikmatyar was in fact the ideal compromise for both Pakistani objectives. He was a Pushtun, but at the same time he was an Islamist. As an Islamist, he would not attack a brother Islamic state. As an internationalist he would not claim its territory. Islamabad tried to push Hikmatyar by funnelling foreign arms through the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) to mostly *Hizb*-fighters.⁶⁸ Support to Hikmatyar was continued until mid-1994.⁶⁹ It has been suggested that through supporting only these radical movements, Pakistan obstructed chances for negotiations to pave a way for the peaceful replacement of the communist regime.⁷⁰

After the withdrawal of the Soviet army, Pakistan was in need of a strong and unified resistance, for only then could peace be negotiated and the refugees repatriated. Furthermore, after an eventual peace, a weak Afghan government would only be 'prey' for India or Iran. Islamabad therefore urged

62 Rais, 'Afghanistan and the Regional Powers', *Asian Survey*, 33(9), 1993, pp. 905-922, at p. 913.

63 Weinbaum, 'War and Peace in Afghanistan', p. 72.

64 Amin Saikal, 'Afghanistan's Ethnic Conflict', *Survival*, 40(2), 1998, pp. 114-26, at p. 116.

65 Adam Garfinkle, 'Afghanistanding', *Orbis*, summer 1999, pp. 405-418, at p. 412.

66 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', p. 52.

67 Garfinkle, 'Afghanistanding', p. 412.

68 Weinbaum, 'War and Peace in Afghanistan', p. 76ff.

69 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', *Current History*, 98(625), February 1999, pp. 79-91.

70 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', p. 53.

the *Mujahideen* parties to form a broad-based Afghan 'government-in-waiting',⁷¹ which it hoped to direct through clientelistic control over the religiously orientated Pushtun groups in Afghanistan.⁷² The dissolution of the Soviet Union added another dimension to Pakistan's 'strategic depth'.⁷³ Islamabad saw possibilities for trade with the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union, and next to these trade routes also the possibility of oil pipelines via Afghanistan to Pakistan.⁷⁴

When Hikmatyar defected to Rabbani's government after its installation, and after his loss of power to the *Taliban*, he became less important in Islamabad's strategy.⁷⁵ In 1994 Benazir Bhutto's government shifted its support to the *Taliban* and in 1995 Pakistan threw its full weight behind this group. The *Taliban*, as well as Hikmatyar's *Hizb*, are an Islamist, Pushtun group, and above all seemed in the position to unify and stabilize Afghanistan. Moreover, it has been suggested that the *Taliban*, due to their partial roots in Pakistan, the absence of personality-driven struggles for leadership in the movement (in contrast to the factional fighting of the *Mujahideen*), and an apparently stronger ideological basis, were more appropriate for Pakistan's strategic aim of controlling the Afghan situation.⁷⁶

Iran

In Iran, the perception of the persecution of Afghan Shias (mainly the Hazara population) by the Sunni majority was very strong. Tehran's main goal in Afghanistan has thus been to seek greater representation of the Shia parties, and this has been a serious cause of differences with Pakistan and the *Mujahideen* groups. In 1988 Iran took the initiative of uniting most of the Afghan Shia parties into the *Wahdat*. Iran's goals were also of a geopolitical character. It hoped to gain access to the Persian-speaking populations of Central Asia, and tried to counterbalance Saudi Arabia's role as a regional power. However, Iran kept a rather low profile in the Afghan conflict until the end of its war with Iraq and the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989, and its involvement remained limited to support to the Shia parties and the provision of safety to Afghan refugees in Iran.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet forces in 1989, Iran saw the Najibullah regime as the main force capable of blocking the takeover of Afghanistan by Sunni parties. It therefore continued to support the Shia factions, but stopped helping them in their war against Kabul. This policy changed after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the rise of the *Taliban*. Iran's goal was now to support Shia factions in order to block the *Taliban*. Iran started to give military and economic aid to a broader range of groups, even beyond the Shia parties. In fact, the whole Northern Alliance of factions and parties resisting the *Taliban* takeover (including the *Jamiat*, the *Junbish* and the *Wahdat*), started to receive aid from Iran. By 1995, Iran had become the principal supplier of arms to groups fighting the *Taliban*, and this assistance is still continuing. After the Northern Alliance lost the northern cities of Mazar-i Sharif and Bamiyan to the *Taliban*, Iran turned to the Central Asian states to supply the northern provinces that were still under control of Masoud.⁷⁷ Iran's hostility towards the *Taliban* is fierce and mutual: many *Taliban* leaders regard the Afghan Shia and the Iranian regime as renegades of Islam.⁷⁸

71 Weinbaum, 'War and Peace in Afghanistan', pp. 79-80.

72 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 84.

73 Khalilzad and Byman, 'Afghanistan', p. 68.

74 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p.84

75 Amin Saikal, 'Afghanistan's Ethnic Conflict', p. 118.

76 Saikal, 'Afghanistan's Ethnic Conflict', pp. 118-119.

77 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 13.

78 Khalilzad and Byman, 'Afghanistan', p. 68.

By supporting the resistance against the *Taliban*, Iran opposed Pakistani interests in Afghanistan, and the rivalry between Pakistan and Iran therefore became the main external factor fuelling the war. Since 1997 Pakistan and Iran have embarked upon a dialogue in order to prevent the conflict from further destabilizing their bilateral relations. However, the success of the *Taliban* offensives, their massacring of the Hazara and their killing of nine Iranian diplomats in 1998 resulted again in a deterioration of the Iranian-Pakistani relationship.⁷⁹

Saudi Arabia

During the Soviet-*Mujahideen* crisis, Saudi Arabia, as a partner of the US, not only wanted to combat communism, but also to promote its brand of Sunni Wahabi Islam. Additionally, Saudi Arabia tried to prevent Iran, its Shia rival, from gaining ground. Saudi Arabia therefore reinforced the Pakistani agenda, and allowed the ISI to channel its assistance to the *Mujahideen*, without paying too much attention to what Pakistan wanted to achieve out of the crisis.⁸⁰

Saudi Arabia was among the only three countries that recognized the *Taliban* regime. Apart from some affinity with the *Taliban*'s interpretation of Islam, Saudi Arabia's main reason to support the *Taliban* is geopolitical in character. This support is both an exponent of the Saudi policy of long-term cooperation with Pakistan, and of preventing Iran from extending its influence. Moreover, some Saudi companies and individuals have interests in the various pipeline proposals in the region, in which oil would be channelled through Afghanistan.

As a strategic partner of Washington and in light of a Saudi-Iranian rapprochement after the election of Muhammad Khatami as President of Iran, Riyadh severely reduced its aid to the *Taliban* in the summer of 1998.⁸¹ The Saudi government even decided to downgrade its diplomatic relations with Kabul at the end of September 1998. This was perhaps done as part of the wider international condemnation of the *Taliban* regime's acts, but most likely as a protest against the continuing presence in Afghanistan of Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden.⁸²

The Soviet Union, Russia and the Central Asian Republics

Since its withdrawal, the Soviet Union's (and later Russia's) policy on Afghanistan was geared towards stabilizing the country with a non-Islamist government. This policy aimed to protect political stability in its Central Asian republics. By continuing the aid to Najibullah, Moscow hoped that the *Mujahideen* would become wearied, after which negotiations could take place.⁸³ After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and with the empowerment of the *Taliban*, Russia played a major role in supplying the northern groups, especially Masoud's forces. Russia still viewed the now independent republics of the former Soviet Union as its sphere of influence and tried to prevent Pakistan from gaining predominance in the region. Moreover, fear of Muslim extremism in the Central Asian region remained another motive for Moscow's Afghanistan policy.⁸⁴

The Central Asian states of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have both become actively involved in the Afghan conflict, supporting co-ethnic groups across the border. They both fear that the *Taliban* might

79 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 87.

80 Saikal, 'Afghanistan's Ethnic Conflict', pp. 116-117.

81 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 86.

82 Kate Clark, 'Afghan Tensions Persist', *Middle East International*, (584), October 1998, pp. 3-4.

83 Roy, 'Afghanistan', pp. 625-626.

84 Garfinkle, 'Afghanistanding', p. 410.

sponsor Islamic radicalism in their countries.⁸⁵ During the conflict in Tajikistan, and while the *Jamiat* was in power in Afghanistan, Islamic guerrillas from Tajikistan found shelter, training and aid in the predominantly Tajik areas in north-eastern Afghanistan, leading sometimes to conflicts between Moscow and the Tajik government on the one side and Kabul on the other. After the signing of the Tajikistan Peace Accord in June 1997 and the deposition from power of the Rabbani-Masoud government, Masoud was offered access to an airbase in Kulab, Tajikistan, where he received both Russian and Iranian aid. In this way Tajikistan facilitated the use of its territory for military actions against the *Taliban*.

Uzbekistan's hopes were set on a secular regime in Afghanistan, in order to create a buffer against Islamist fundamentalism. By giving aid to the Dostam forces, it supported the opposition to the Rabbani government, as well as to the *Taliban*. The Uzbek government stopped assisting Dostam in May 1997, but is still concerned about the *Taliban* and its influence in and outside Afghanistan, and is consequently looking for a new Afghan ally.⁸⁶

Turkmenistan has remained neutral in the Afghan conflict, but has been dealing directly and indirectly with the *Taliban*. Its main interest in enabling peace is the diversification of trade, the lessening of dependence on Russia, and the exploration of new markets for energy resources, all of which remain impossible as long as the conflict in Afghanistan blocks the main trade routes.

The United States of America

During the Cold War era it was only obvious to the United States that it should support the *Mujahideen* in its resistance against a communist government, especially after it 'lost' Iran as a partner in the region. Washington funded about half of the *Mujahideen*'s arms deliveries, and for the whole of the 1980s this added up to roughly 2 billion dollars.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, allocation of the funds was left to Pakistan, and unknowingly the Americans supported Pakistan's pro-fundamentalist and anti-nationalist objectives (see above).⁸⁸

There is no evidence of overt United States aid to the *Taliban*. It is assumed, however, that Washington supported the *Taliban* at least until the bombing of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in mid-1998. Indeed, the Clinton administration initially expressed some supportive views about the *Taliban*. The main reasons for this policy were to enhance chances for an American-Saudi-built oil pipeline through Afghanistan, and to further isolate Iran. However, Washington increasingly felt uneasy with regard to the *Taliban*, especially as a result of its drugs and gender policies, and Afghanistan's role in supporting international terrorism. It started to condemn the regime. Furthermore, it was realized that the *Taliban* would not be able to unite Afghanistan.⁸⁹ In spring 1997 Washington announced its new South and Central Asia policy. This new policy featured India's growing economic importance, America's continued interests in oil pipelines from Central Asia, and the Kashmir conflict in view of the nuclearization of Pakistani-Indian relations. Stability in Afghanistan was an important condition for these American interests,⁹⁰ which was translated into a call for the creation of a multi-ethnic, broad-based government, observing 'international norms of

85 Khalilzad and Byman, 'Afghanistan', p. 69.

86 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*; Khalilzad and Byman, 'Afghanistan', p. 69.

87 Weinbaum, 'War and Peace in Afghanistan', p. 75.

88 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', p. 51.

89 Saikal, 'Afghanistan's Ethnic Conflict', p. 121.

90 Ahmed Rashid, 'Playing Dirty: *Taliban* try to Starve Hazaras into Submission', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 160(48), 1997, pp. 26-28, at p. 26.

behaviour'.⁹¹ After the embassy bombings and the supposed links between the *Taliban* and suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden, relations between Kabul and Washington further deteriorated. As a result, recent US policies are mainly concerned with Afghan terrorism and supporting efforts at peace-making.⁹²

2.3 The Dynamics of the Conflict

The conflict since 1989 can be divided into three periods. The first period covers the aftermath of the Soviet occupation and the continued governance of Soviet-backed Najibullah and the PDPA until 1992. Over this period, the *Mujahideen* continued their struggle to oust this non-Islamic government. A second period comprises the years from 1992 to 1996. This period started with the expulsion of Najibullah and the installation of an Islamic Interim Government, made up of the Pakistan-based *Mujahideen* parties headed by President Burhanuddin Rabbani. Nevertheless, peace was short-lived, as fighting continued among the political factions forming the government. Various factions came to control parts of the country. A third period started when the *Taliban* took over Kabul in 1996. This group had made a sudden and drastic appearance on the stage over the 1994-1995 period. Since their conquest of Kabul they have become the most dominant force in Afghanistan, but they have not been able to end the fighting or to impose their governance on the whole country.

The Ousting of Najibullah

As was mentioned earlier, the Geneva Accords of 1988 made no provisions for a new government replacing Najibullah's after the departure of the Soviet occupational forces. It was assumed that the PDPA would stay in power. The *Mujahideen* had been excluded as potential participants for the administration. Nevertheless, the international community expected that with the retreat of the Soviet forces, the Najibullah government would rapidly collapse. The US and Pakistan therefore strongly pressured the Pakistan-based *Mujahideen* to form a government-in-waiting, and an Afghan Interim Government (AIG) was established, that included the seven Pakistan-based *Mujahideen* parties.⁹³ At the same time, the UN started preparations for the return of the refugees from Pakistan and Iran.

However, the Najibullah government survived the departure of the Soviets, and several obstacles prevented the *Mujahideen* from taking over power. First, the *Mujahideen* were internally divided; there was rivalry between the various groups. The Najibullah regime profited from the growing fragmentation, and from its ability to play the *Mujahideen* commanders off against each other and to approach traditional leaders for support.⁹⁴ Secondly, the guerrillas lacked sufficient training and strategic guidance to confront seriously the strong Kabul forces. Thirdly, with the vanishing of the Cold War, the *Mujahideen* lost the United States as one of its main suppliers.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the withdrawal of the Soviet forces had more or less ended the *Jihad*. As a result, external support to the holy cause faded. Najibullah's troops on the other hand became relatively stronger as a result of large quantities of weapons and other military equipment left behind, and still supplied, by the Soviet army. He was, moreover, able to buy the services of various militia groups, such as that of Rashid Dostam in

91 Saikal, 'Afghanistan's Ethnic Conflict', p. 121.

92 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

93 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 36.

94 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 37.

95 Rasul Bakhsh Rais, 'The Afghan Conflict: Is a Political Settlement Possible?', *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, 22(3), 1993, pp. 303-313, at pp. 304-307.

northern Afghanistan. Finally, the unforgiving stance of the *Mujahideen* and their demand that Najibullah had to step down made him stiffen his back. For him and the Kabul government there was no alternative to continuing the struggle for survival.⁹⁶

The Peshawar-based AIG, moreover, failed to win both power and legitimacy inside Afghanistan. It was plagued by infighting, especially between the *Jamiat* and the *Hizb-i Islami*, which eventually contributed to Hikmatyar leaving the AIG. Furthermore, the non-Peshawar *Mujahideen* saw the AIG as a Pakistani instrument that was not really representing the people of Afghanistan. Besides, nobody was convinced that the AIG's administrative structures could effectively take over power from the Najibullah regime.⁹⁷ As a consequence, over the 1989-1990 period, while the *Mujahideen* were present everywhere in the countryside, the Najibullah government managed to maintain firm control over the major cities of Kabul, Mazar-i Sharif, Qandahar, Herat, and Jalalabad. Kabul tried to win the support of influential local and tribal leaders in exchange for weapons, money and political offices, as well as by granting autonomy to tribal chiefs (thereby contributing to a further fragmentation of the country in the longer term).⁹⁸

However, Najibullah also fell victim to the infighting that plagued the *Mujahideen*. This resulted in various *coup* attempts against his government. The series of events that eventually led to the ousting of the Najibullah government started shortly after the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of Soviet aid (March 1992) with an open revolt by non-Pushtun forces in northern Afghanistan. These rebels were led by the Uzbek general Dostam, who between 1989 and 1992 had supported the Kabul government. He now allied with Masoud's *Jamiat*, and enjoyed the support of *Parchami* elements within the armed forces and the *Watan* Party.⁹⁹ No longer getting support from Moscow, Najibullah realized that no other option remained than to give in. It meant the end of Najibullah's rule, as well as the *Watan* Party, which had already effectively split along ethnic lines, its factions allying with their former *Mujahideen* opponents (the *Parchami* with Dostam and the *Khalqi* with Hikmatyar).

Nevertheless, the *Mujahideen* in Peshawar could not reach agreement on how to proceed, hampered especially by the fact that the major participants – Hikmatyar and Masoud – were on very bad terms with each other.¹⁰⁰ *Jamiat* commanders Masoud and Dostam stood on the point of capturing Kabul, which Hikmatyar and his *Hizb-i Islami* forces intended to prevent. Before the Peshawar leaders were able to reach an agreement, Dostam and Masoud entered the city on 26 April 1992. That same day the *Mujahideen* leaders in Peshawar reached an agreement on an Islamic Interim Government that became known as the Peshawar Accords. This interim government was accepted by Masoud and Dostam and came over to Kabul on 29 April 1992. Sibghatollah Mujaddedi was installed as its first interim President. He was succeeded three months later by Rabbani, of the *Jamiat* party. The change in government put a legitimate end to the *Jihad*, and was quickly followed by the return of about 2.6 million refugees from Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Interim Government and Continued Factional Competition

The Peshawar peace accords did not hold for a long time. The Islamic Interim Government was obviously not capable of any nation-building. The division of power among the different factions in

96 McDonald, 'Stay of Execution', p. 17.

97 Weinbaum, 'War and Peace in Afghanistan', p. 82ff.

98 Rais, 'The Afghan Conflict', pp.304-307.

99 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 487.

100 Maley, 'The Future of Islamic Afghanistan', p. 387.

the broad-based interim government remained fragile and the arrangement waited for an occasion to collapse.

From the beginning, Hikmatyar did not agree with the Peshawar Accords, and did not stop the battle for Kabul. From May until August 1992 Hikmatyar's forces bombarded the city with rockets, according to the United Nations killing more than 4,000 people and forcing over 500,000 to flee the city.¹⁰¹ It proved difficult to come to terms with Hikmatyar. Defence Minister Masoud could not get along with Hikmatyar, whom he regarded as a representative of Pakistani interests in Afghanistan. Moreover, Hikmatyar was in search of more power and Masoud was an obstacle to this objective.

Within the capital, Rabbani had to deal with continued hostilities between forces of the *Wahdat* (which occupied large parts of Kabul at the time that Najibullah was ousted) and those of the *Ittihad-I Islami*, a Saudi-backed former *Mujahideen* party. In order not to alienate the Pushtun inhabitants, Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masoud (of the *Jamiat*) decided to support *Ittihad*, which set him against the Hazara population.¹⁰² Furthermore, Masoud and Rabbani also became alienated from Dostam, as time and again his arguments for a federal system of government with far-reaching autonomy for the regions were disregarded.¹⁰³

When in December 1992 the leadership council was designed to vote on a new interim President, several Pushtun *Mujahideen* groups and the Shia boycotted this council meeting. Rabbani completely disregarded the claims of other leaders and had himself re-elected by a hand-picked national assembly. The other *Mujahideen* parties saw this election as illegitimate and decided to quit the council. During 1993 relations continued to deteriorate. Pakistani efforts to stimulate talks in order to reunite the *Mujahideen* resulted in the Islamabad Accord of 7 March 1993, and yet another agreement on 20 May 1993, which called for power-sharing in the interim government and eventual elections. Based on these agreements, Hikmatyar was appointed Prime Minister within the Rabbani government. However, afraid that the victims of his rocket attacks on Kabul might seek revenge, Hikmatyar did not dare to enter the city, and was to be a Prime Minister in name only. Dissatisfied with this outcome, he continued his struggle for Kabul in January 1994 by renewed rocket attacks. Dostam, who also aimed for a more important position in the government, decided to choose his side and sent over his forces from Mazar-i Sharif. Their alliance was a weak one, as Dostam did not favour Hikmatyar's Islamic fundamentalism.¹⁰⁴ Their attempt to topple the Rabbani regime failed, but it resulted in a new spate of internal displacements and refugee movements.

Hikmatyar continued attacks on the city until March 1995. Then his forces had to flee the advance of the *Taliban*, which took over his base in Charasyab. Simultaneously, the forces fighting for *Wahdat* were removed from the city as a result of an Iran-brokered settlement.¹⁰⁵ At last, peace returned to the city, although blockades by Hikmatyar and the *Taliban* created a humanitarian crisis over winter 1995, as a result of food and fuel shortages. Finally, in May 1996, Rabbani was willing to concede to a peace deal and the installation of a new government of national unity. In this government, Hikmatyar would become Prime Minister. Dostam rejected the offer to join. For the few months preceding the takeover of power by the *Taliban*, Rabbani, Masoud, and Hikmatyar were able to run a government.

101 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 490.

102 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 39.

103 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 40.

104 Imtiaz H. Bokhari, 'Internal Negotiations among Many Actors: Afghanistan', in: I.W. Zartman (ed.), *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars* (Washington DC: Brookings Institute, 1995), p. 250.

105 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 12.

While the new government was contesting military and political control over Kabul, the rest of the country remained divided but rather peaceful. Without any central administration, it fell apart. In the process of disintegration, separate fiefdoms were created, with different *Mujahideen* factions in power. In some provinces, local governing councils were established and reconstruction made a start. Substantial numbers of refugees returned from Pakistan to their destroyed villages. In Herat, *Jamiat* commander Ismail Khan managed to start a process of reconstruction, while Mazar-i Sharif experienced relative peace under Dostam. Other areas, in contrast, experienced virtual anarchy. In Qandahar, for example, several *Mujahideen* factions competed for power.

Various factors reinforced the process of disintegration. The traditional Pushtun tribes, which had kept the country together to some extent, had been severely eroded as a result of the Soviet occupation, as well as of the war against Najibullah. Non-Pushtun local leaders were only interested in maintaining their autonomy.¹⁰⁶ This now also seemed to apply to the Pushtun, who were also more interested in their control over the opium cultivation than the fate of the central government.¹⁰⁷ The Islamic Interim Government, in the meantime, was never able to establish a strong power base among the Pushtun in the countryside. This was partly a result of the weak position of traditional parties in the government. Another factor was the fact that Rabbani was a Tajik, and therefore unable to generate Pushtun support. The Islamic signature of the interim government had insufficient cement for uniting the divided Afghan population. The result was a de facto division of Afghanistan in regionally based, autonomous, ethnic coalitions. The Government of National Unity, installed in May 1996, suffered from the same lack of support as the 1992 interim government. Hikmatyar was installed as Prime Minister, with the aim of broadening the coalition against the *Taliban* with him as a Pushtun leader. His installation, however, was no success, as he was still linked to his cruel rocket attacks on Kabul several years earlier. The new government was furthermore still related to the continuous struggle for political power, which had alienated most Afghans from the *Mujahideen* politics.¹⁰⁸ This lack of legitimacy of the Government of National Unity set the stage for the arrival of the *Taliban*.

The Coming to Power of the Taliban

In 1994 the *Taliban* had their first military success when they conquered Afghanistan's second city, Qandahar. The population welcomed the militia because it was freed from the local warlords.¹⁰⁹ The remarkable success of the *Taliban* in bringing order and peace to Qandahar gained them considerable popularity. When they moved on, in the areas they captured banditry was brought to an end, abandoned weaponry was seized and many people responded to the call to join their ranks.¹¹⁰ The *Taliban* had no shortage of recruits, and were backed by the tribal and village elders and Afghans outside the country.¹¹¹ The popular support among the Afghan rural population that the *Taliban* were able to generate, can be related back to their claim of bringing order and their commitment to introducing a society according to Islam. They saw the government as falling short of the standards expected of an Islamic state, despite the long involvement of its leaders in Islam.¹¹² In the areas that

106 Ian McWilliam and Charles Hoots, 'Afghanistan: Outside Kabul, it's Another Country', *The Middle East*, September 1992, pp. 21-24.

107 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 490.

108 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 42.

109 A. Davis, 'Pushing at the Cracks', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 8 February 1992, pp. 199-201, at p. 201.

110 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 45ff.

111 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 58.

112 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 58.

they captured, an Islamic code was installed, including prescriptions for men to grow beards, to cut their hair short, and to attend mosque. Restrictions were imposed on women, such as banning them from education and employment and requiring them to wear veils. Social mingling or communication among men and women outside the family were completely forbidden. Although the code was publicized as being the traditional *shariah* law, it may be interpreted as an opportunistic mixture of Pushtun traditional law and the *shariah*. Nevertheless, this appeal to religious purity was received well.

During this period of increasing influence by the *Taliban*, the position of international actors in the conflict showed some significant changes. *Taliban* victories resulted in Iran's approach to Rabbani. The US, in contrast, grew suspicious of the Rabbani government, and refused aid to Kabul. For Pakistan, Hikmatyar's defection from the Islamabad Accords and the Kabul government in early 1994, as well as his continued attacks on Kabul, enabled a shift in support to the *Taliban*.¹¹³ The Bhutto government consistently denied accusations that this political support was also translated into military assistance. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the absence of Pakistani military forces, the *Taliban* forces have been joined by large numbers of Pakistani volunteers affiliated to various religious and some even to mainstream parties. Moreover, military analysts have concluded that some of the *Taliban*'s military operations could not have taken place without the foreknowledge and logistical support of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI).¹¹⁴

Supported by outsiders or not, the perseverance of the *Taliban* did not alter. Their success story continued with their next significant victory, the occupation of Herat in late summer 1995, and finally with their taking over of Jalalabad and Kabul in September 1996. Rabbani and Hikmatyar fled over the Hindu Kush to the cities of Taloqan and Konduz, while Masoud's forces retreated to their home base in the Panjshir Valley to the north-east of Kabul. Many people in Kabul were weary of the war and responded with relief.

One of the first acts of the *Taliban* in Kabul was to hang former President Najibullah and his brother in front of the United Nations compound where he had taken refuge after his dismissal. As in other areas that they had conquered, the *Taliban* introduced a series of Islamic edicts. However, it was evident that the *Taliban* saw the people of Kabul as different to those of the rural areas, and their enforcement was stricter. The *Taliban* feared an uprising and sympathy with the opposing forces. The strict rules led to a series of confrontations with representatives of international organizations (NGOs and UN agencies),¹¹⁵ and the repudiation of a large part of the international community.

The *Taliban* did not bother much. Being in a winning mood, they continued their advance to the north. However, at the entrance of the Panjshir Valley they were stopped by Masoud.¹¹⁶ By this time a new alliance, the 'Northern Alliance' (also called the 'United Islamic Front'), was formed between Masoud, Dostam, *Hizb* and the *Wahdat*. Dostam's faction became the strongest of this alliance. The *Taliban*, who had lost some northern territories to the resistance in 1996, were eager to negotiate with him. Dostam refused, but in May 1997 his field commander Abdul Malik Pahlawan defected to the *Taliban*, enabling the *Taliban* to move up to Mazar-i Sharif and cross the Hindu Kush into north Afghanistan. Dostam fled via Uzbekistan to Turkey, Rabbani had to go to Tajikistan, and the *Wahdat*

113 William Maley, 'Taliban Triumphant?', *The World Today*, November 1996, pp. 275-276.

114 Anthony Davis, 'Pakistan's "War by Proxy" in Afghanistan Loses its Deniability', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October 1999, pp. 32-34.

115 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

116 Ralph H. Magnus, 'Afghanistan in 1996: Year of the Taliban', *Asian Survey*, 37(2), February 1997, pp. 111-114.

were left in a nearly defeated situation. The outcome was that the *Taliban* possessed 90 per cent of the country, with only Masoud remaining.

However, when shortly after the capture of Mazar-i Sharif the *Taliban* endeavoured to disarm its (mostly Shia) population, they refused to cooperate and, led by the *Wahdat*, started to drive out the *Taliban* in bloody battles that killed thousands. Abdul Malik Pahlawan, who saw the writing on the wall, quickly changed positions again and sided with the *Wahdat*. An attempt to recapture Mazar in September 1997 was also thwarted because of Iranian efforts to resupply the city.¹¹⁷ At the same time Masoud's forces, together with the *Wahdat*, managed to reconquer the Hindu Kush passes, moved into southern Afghanistan and proceeded up to the outskirts of Kabul. The only *Taliban* militia left in northern Afghanistan fled to Konduz, the last of Hikmatyar's bulwarks. Nevertheless, the *Hizb* forces in this city decided to join the *Taliban*, and the situation turned another 180 degrees, as the *Taliban* were able to establish a stronghold in Konduz. It provided the *Taliban* with a possibility to recover and to renew their attacks on Mazar-i Sharif, now from Konduz, in October 1997.

It took several *Taliban* offensives before they were able to conquer Mazar-i Sharif in August 1998. In the process of doing so, various alliances failed to stop them.¹¹⁸ In the end, the *Taliban* massacred the Hazari population of the city into submission,¹¹⁹ killing 5,000 to 8,000 people in a three- to four-day period.¹²⁰ The result of the *Taliban*'s July-August 1998 offensive was not only that Masoud, Dostam and Rabbani had to flee the country, but also that the *Taliban* again controlled 90 per cent of Afghanistan's territory. Only a few opposition holdouts remained: much of Badakhshan, parts of the Hazarajat, and the Panshir Valley. Since then, the situation has not changed significantly.

The Present

The *Taliban* still experience considerable resistance, and they have not succeeded in crushing the Northern Alliance,¹²¹ yet Masoud continues to be the only remaining major opposition force.¹²² Nevertheless, the *Taliban* seem determined to bring the whole country under their control. Afghan initiatives to establish a negotiated settlement have failed. For example, the January 1999 attempt by two former moderate *Mujahideen* leaders to create an impartial Peace and National Unity Foundation Party to enable negotiation procedures was welcomed by the opposition alliance but rejected by the *Taliban*.¹²³ Various initiatives for peace and a negotiated settlement by outsiders, among others from the side of the UN and Pakistan, have also failed (see Chapter 3). A short-term political solution seems hard to attain. As all sides continue to receive military and financial support from outsiders, they can continue the struggle for power militarily. Unfortunately, these outsiders also continue to have their interests in the country and a continuation of war. For example, while Pakistan has openly expressed a preference for a broad-based government, Pakistan's ISI continued to back the *Taliban* in the hope that it could conquer the whole country militarily.¹²⁴ Moreover, a 'criminal economy' of drugs trade and

117 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

118 -, 'Afghanistan' in: *Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia 1999 Yearbook*

119 Garfinkle, 'Afghanistanding', pp. 405-409.

120 Rupert C. Colville, 'One Massacre that Didn't Grab the World's Attention', *International Herald Tribune*, 8 August 1999.

121 Ahmed Rashid, 'Heart of Darkness', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 August 1999, pp. 8-12.

122 'Kein Ende des Blutvergiessens in Afghanistan', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 27 August 1999.

123 Fox and Young, *Pushtuns (Pathans) in Afghanistan*.

124 Anthony Davis, 'Taliban Found Lacking when Nation-building Beckoned', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1997, pp. 359-364, at p. 363.

smuggling¹²⁵ has come into existence in the country, mainly benefiting the *Taliban*. For many Afghans the war implied that few ways were left to earn money, and apart from joining a guerrilla army the main alternative has become to grow poppy.¹²⁶ The *Taliban* prohibit its consumption, but its cultivation is stimulated.¹²⁷ It is quite cynical that by now poppy is the main source of revenue for the *Taliban*,¹²⁸ yielding them US\$ 20 million yearly in taxes.¹²⁹

The *Taliban*'s international relations can be characterized as problematic at the very least. Their continued hostilities towards the Hazara population, including their blocking of the central Hazarajat over the 1997-1998 period in an effort to starve the Hazara into submission,¹³⁰ had affronted the Iranians. The massacring of the Hazara and the killing of nine Iranian diplomats in the *Taliban* conquest of Mazar-i Sharif in August 1998, and another massacre during the conquest of Bamiyan in September 1998, resulted in growing military tensions between Iran and the *Taliban*.¹³¹ In October 1998 Tehran amassed 200,000 troops along its border with Afghanistan. The *Taliban* dispatched a few thousand troops to its border as well.¹³² It took the interference of UN negotiator Brahimi and Pakistani diplomats to prevent an outright interstate war. Tehran backed down after the release of 26 Iranian prisoners by the *Taliban*. Relations between the two countries remain tense. Apart from its discontent with Afghanistan's internal affairs, Iran is frightened that the main militant Iranian opposition groups might find an operational base in Afghanistan.¹³³

Other countries in the region also experience the effects of the situation in the country. Now that the *Taliban* have proven to be successful, liberal sections of the Pakistani population, and even some in the government, see the *Taliban* as a threat to regional security. This fear is understandable, as there are groups in Pakistan propagating the same harsh interpretation of Islam, and aspiring for a similar role in Pakistani politics.¹³⁴ So far, Pakistan's immediate interests in the territorial integrity of Afghanistan and a peaceful neighbourhood have outweighed this threat.¹³⁵ Pakistan's determination to see *Taliban* rule imposed on Afghanistan has isolated it diplomatically.¹³⁶ As a result of the fear of being drawn into Afghanistan's internal conflict and the conflict between Tehran and Kabul, as well as the effects of the Afghan instability on Pakistan (in the form of a 'gun culture' and heroin-addiction problem spilling over the borders), Islamabad has been pushed into a more conciliatory role as negotiator,¹³⁷ insisting on a broad-based government through negotiation. However, the military *coup*

125 Rashid, 'Heart of Darkness', p. 10.

126 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', pp. 45-46.

127 Rashid, 'Heart of Darkness', p. 10.

128 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

129 *Observatoire Geopolitique de Drogues* (OGD), 1997 estimate, in: Stephan Leader and David Wiencek, 'Drug Money: The Fuel for Global Terrorism', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 2000, pp. 49-54, at p. 52.

130 Rashid, 'Playing Dirty'; and UN Secretary-General, *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security*, 17 March 1998, <http://www.un.org/docs/sc/reports/1998/s1998222.htm>.

131 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 86.

132 Kate Clark, 'Afghan Tensions Persist', pp. 3-4.

133 Rashid, 'Heart of Darkness', p. 10.

134 Khalilzad and Byman, 'Afghanistan', p. 70.

135 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 15.

136 Anthony Davis, '*Taliban* Continue the Killing but Fail to Finish the Crusade', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, November 1998, pp. 17-22, at p. 18.

137 Garfinkle, 'Afghanstanding', pp. 411-414.

in Pakistan in October 1999 brought into power a government that may prove to be even more supportive of the *Taliban*.¹³⁸

There is no direct threat to India from the conflict. Nevertheless, like Pakistan, India also feels some side-effects such as drug-trafficking and weapons proliferation.¹³⁹ This is especially the case in Kashmir. Another regional player, China, suffers from heroin imports from Afghanistan, as well as from Islamist support to Uighur nationalist movements. Uighur militants have trained and fought alongside their fellow Islamic guerrillas in Afghanistan, and the heroin trade has been used to finance their movements. Some say that bin Laden, if not the *Taliban*, has ties to these movements.¹⁴⁰ The same goes for the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which is said to have received assistance from the *Taliban*.¹⁴¹

But discontent with the *Taliban* regime is not only regional. It also has wider international implications. The country has become the world's number one producer of poppy. According to the UN Drug Control Programme, in 1999 it produced 4,600 tonnes of opium, of which 90 per cent came from *Taliban*-held areas.¹⁴² Moreover, Afghanistan has come to be regarded as a major hide-out and training ground for international terrorism. With the morale of the *Taliban* declining, they needed new recruits whom they found among the Islamic fundamentalists of the world. Those who joined the *Taliban* were mostly no longer welcome in their own country. They not only found refuge in Afghanistan but also an income. Next to fighting the resistance, they earned wealth by trafficking drugs and consumer goods through Afghanistan. For those reasons, internationally, Afghanistan has received the label of a 'rogue state'. Lastly, the *Taliban* have gained the discontent and even outright rejection of a large part of the international community with their harsh interpretation of Islam and deplorable human rights record.

Although the US initially took a moderate stance against the *Taliban*, relations deteriorated over the 1997-1998 period. The *Taliban*'s gender policies, as well as their protection of poppy production and harbouring of international terrorists generated discontent in the US. Just as the *Taliban* prepared to campaign for international recognition, the United States launched a cruise missile attack on targets in Afghanistan in August 1998. The attack was aimed at camps that were suspected of forming the base of the exiled Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden. The US associated him with the bombing of US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam a few weeks earlier.¹⁴³ The continued protection of bin Laden by the *Taliban* and their denunciation of the missile attack ruled out a dialogue with the US and led the US to levy economic sanctions against the regime in 1999.¹⁴⁴ Saudi Arabia, which had earlier recognized the *Taliban* together with Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates, in September 1998 withdrew its representation in Kabul in response to the *Taliban* hosting bin Laden.¹⁴⁵ The murder of a UN military adviser in Kabul and the abduction and killing of two local UN employees made the UN withdraw its workers from the country in August 1998 until the security situation improved.¹⁴⁶

138 Khalilzad and Byman, 'Afghanistan', p. 68.

139 Rais, 'Afghanistan and the Regional Powers', pp. 913-914.

140 Rashid, 'Heart of Darkness', p. 10; and Ahmed Rashid, 'Taliban Temptation', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 March 1999, pp. 21-22.

141 Rashid, 'Heart of Darkness', p. 9.

142 Leader and Wiencek, 'Drug Money', p. 52.

143 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

144 Rashid, 'Heart of Darkness', p. 9.

145 Rashid, 'Heart of Darkness', p. 9.

146 Report of the UN Secretary-General, 'The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security', October 1998, <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/reports/1998/s1998913.htm>.

The deteriorating track record of the *Taliban* has also had far-reaching economic consequences. When they came to power, the construction of an oil and gas pipeline through Afghanistan from Turkmenistan to Pakistan was already agreed. The American company UNOCAL and the Saudi firm Delta were to build the pipeline at a cost of US\$ 2 billion. UNOCAL therefore proclaimed the victory of the *Taliban* as a positive development.¹⁴⁷ After the cruise missile attacks of 1998, however, UNOCAL decided to withdraw from Afghanistan.¹⁴⁸

Until now, the *Taliban* seem not to be impressed by the international developments and opinions. They have little experience in running a government administration. Their military campaigns and the eradication of corruption and law and order remain the main concerns of the regime. Nevertheless, they have been able to establish a kind of overlordship, partially built upon the re-emergence of traditional village-based rule, giving the regime its internal coherence to stay in power.¹⁴⁹ The *jirgas*, made up of village elders and other notables, have been given decision-taking power at the local level by the *Taliban*. However, it remains to be seen whether their tactics work in other parts of the country.¹⁵⁰ Despite their successes in bringing some unity to the areas that they have conquered, guerrilla or commando activities were not eradicated, and new factional schisms may still occur.¹⁵¹ This may apply to the Qandaharis and others, as well as to moderates and radicals.¹⁵² At the same time, in the absence of a civil administration, social issues have mainly come to be a concern of Western aid agencies.

2.4 Recapitulation

This chapter aims to provide a background for the analysis of interventions in the Afghan conflict discussed in chapters 3 and 4. In order to identify how far these interventions were or could have been a success, and to identify the gaps in the knowledge to contribute actively to peace, a list of the factors underlying the conflict is attempted.

Historical Weakness of the State and the Struggle against State Control

After the retreat of the Soviet Union in 1989, Afghanistan witnessed fighting among competing political factions, which had formerly been united in the guerrilla war against the Soviet invader. How to explain the lack of internal coherence and the continued return to competition and fighting? Most observers see a major cause as being that the country has never had a strong government or sense of state. Consequently, a centre that could manage to build the state had never really developed. On the contrary, traditional communities strongly resisted the encroachment on their domain by the state.¹⁵³ It

147 Magnus, 'Afghanistan in 1996', p. 116.

148 Ahmed Rashid, 'Islamic Face-off', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 September 1999, pp. 19-20; see also Rashid, *Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia*, for a profound analysis of the rise of the *Taliban* in the light of oil politics.

149 Garfinkle, 'Afghanstanding', p. 406.

150 Davis, 'Taliban Found Lacking when Nation-building Beckoned', pp. 362-363.

151 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

152 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 65.

153 Koenraad van Brabant and Tony Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations. Case Study: Afghanistan*, Informal Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation (Paris: Development Assistance Committee, 1999), p. 11.

has been suggested that in the absence of (regional) outsiders, their promotion of modernization and the establishment of the current borders of Afghanistan, Pushtun, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara military leaders would have established their own independent 'emirates' or 'khanates'. Now, however, they were virtually forced to fight the central authorities in Kabul.¹⁵⁴

Whatever power-sharing system had existed in the past, it was destroyed during the Soviet invasion. As of 1979 regional identities gained extra importance, as did the non-Pushtun groups in particular, and crushed every existing state-society relationship. While different factions denied each other the control over Kabul, the countryside experienced its own dynamics, which in some regions led to factional competition at the local level (as in Qandahar) while other regions were relatively peaceful.

Chances for centralization of power and unification of the Afghan state were weak in the past, but are even worse at present as the old relations between tribal leaders and the population has also waned. At the same time, factional competition through opportunistically changing alliances has become the norm rather than the exception, destroying prospects for party politics, if this had ever been an option at all. Nevertheless, while Afghanistan is basically a failed state, it continues to exist in some form, leaving open possibilities for other forms of governance.

Control over the State and the Ethnic Factor

The Soviet intervention and the consequent infighting eroded the traditional political balance among the various ethnic groups. Non-Pushtun groups have become more powerful than twenty years ago. This resulted from several factors. As most of the resistance against the Soviets came from the Pushtun areas, the Pushtun were also the major targets of retaliations. At the same time, the Soviets assured themselves of the cooperation of the Uzbeks by launching development projects and giving aid. For different activities, the Soviets profited from their militia (Dostam and his *Junbish* party, for example, originated from their ranks). During the Soviet occupation the Uzbeks, Tajiks and Hazara were able to exercise full administrative and political autonomy. Secondly, as a result of the territorial base of the ethnic groups, the militia that have emerged in the different regions have come to represent the general political objectives of the populations from which they come.¹⁵⁵ The result was that the organization and mobilization of the population was along ethnic lines.¹⁵⁶

These changes in relative power positions among the various ethnic groups brings some observers to characterize the present civil war as 'symboliz[ing] the two opposite struggles in Afghanistan, one by the P[u]shtuns to re-establish their dominance, and the second by the Hazara, Tajik and Uzbek minorities to seek adequate representation in political power at the centre and autonomy of their respective areas'.¹⁵⁷ Although ethnicity certainly plays a role in the Afghan civil war as of 1989, it would be wrong to interpret the past too much from this perspective, as it downplays the importance of several other factors. In the first place, focusing on ethnicity results in ignoring the above-mentioned regional factor, with leaders seeking power through the mechanism of seeking strategic alliances. At the lowest level, this may translate into local leaders of the same ethnic group opposing each other, while on higher levels leaders from different ethnic groups may temporarily align. The fact that on higher levels one deals with different ethnic groups suggests an ethnic conflict. Nevertheless, a classification of the conflict as a personal rivalry among different *leaders* (rather than among different

154 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 492.

155 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', pp. 2-3; see also Saikal, 'Afghanistan's Ethnic Conflict', p. 115.

156 Newell, 'Post-Soviet Afghanistan', p. 1098ff.

157 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 2.

groups) might be more correct, especially in the rural areas. Secondly, by focusing on ethnicity the different ethnic groups are represented as homogeneous, ignoring the fact that opposing political blocks cut through ethnic groups, and internally divide them. In the civil war over Kabul from 1992 to 1996, ‘virtually every group was at one time both the ally and the opponent of every other group, regardless of ethnicity’.¹⁵⁸ There was, for example, a lot of infighting among *Mujahideen* groups from Pushtun areas, and citizens from rural or urban backgrounds had different views on Islamic law and how to implement it.

The conflict received an ethnic component with Pakistan trying to promote its interest in a fundamentalist Islamic nation with no aspirations to change its borders. Support was thus given to fundamentalist, nationalist, but non-expansionist parties. At the same time, not to alienate itself from the Pushtun, channelling aid through Pushtun movements (mainly Hikmatyar’s *Hizb*) was chosen. Although not representative for all Pushtun in Afghanistan, this at least fuelled the impression of a war of Pushtun against the non-Pushtun ethnic groups. This impression was strengthened by the strong Pushtun character of the *Taliban* movement. The presence of an ethnic factor became more apparent when the Hazaras, Tajiks and Uzbek people joined forces to defend their traditional territories in northern and central Afghanistan against capture by *Taliban* forces. The *Taliban*’s acts of ethnic cleansing in areas and cities that they had conquered reinforced this effect.¹⁵⁹ The ethnic factor has grown into a political reality at last, with the northern minorities currently demanding a share of power on the basis of ethnic grounds. This claim is fiercely rejected by the *Taliban*, who are only willing to consider power-sharing on the basis of the strength of political groups.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, however, it should not be forgotten that the increasing politicization of Islamic identity has increased the salience of the Sunni/Shia sectarian differences, which again cut through the ethnic divide,¹⁶¹ and which – especially in the *Taliban* resistance against the Hazara population – played a more important role than ethnicity.

Outside Interference

‘Afghan tribal societies had a tradition of using violence in social conflict, but they also had traditions to resolve conflicts and limit violence’.¹⁶² The high levels of violence and the continuation of armed struggle are not simply the results of local society or culture, but can be related to the high levels of material and military support from outside powers, especially the neighbouring countries. The departure of the Soviets caused a power vacuum, and resulted in intensified external interference. Although during the Soviet occupation each group was already supported by kin groups residing in neighbouring countries, the end of the Cold War reactivated several oppressed, slumbering regional conflicts. The political polarization inside Afghanistan and the civil war motivated the Afghan groups to seek support from outsiders to counterbalance their internal opponents.¹⁶³ This provided the regional powers with an opportunity to meddle in the affairs of the collapsing Afghan state, further intensifying the conflict. Apart from ethnic and religious interests, regional powers had political and security interests motivating their interest in the Afghan conflict. While the *Taliban* are supported by Pakistan,

158 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*; see also Saikal, ‘Afghanistan’s Ethnic Conflict’, who takes a related position.

159 Saikal, ‘Afghanistan’s Ethnic Conflict’, p. 119.

160 Rais, ‘Conflict in Afghanistan’, p. 18.

161 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

162 Rubin, ‘Post-Cold War State Disintegration’, p. 492.

163 Rais, ‘Conflict in Afghanistan’, p. 10.

Iran, Russia and the former Soviet Central Asian states support the opposition. In this respect, an understanding between Iran and Pakistan would be an important factor in enabling a meaningful dialogue among the Afghan groups.¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, the importance of outsiders should not be overrated: despite its support, Pakistan seems to have very little political leverage over the *Taliban*.¹⁶⁵

Contest over the Nature of Society

With the rise to power of the *Taliban*, the conflict has gained yet another, although not completely new, dimension, namely a struggle about the nature of Afghan society. The *Taliban* interpretation of Islam, which includes the imposition of a harsh Islamic rule, the expulsion of women from public life, and the use of war to bring about national unification and political consolidation, alienated Afghan moderates and minority groups.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, with its aim of introducing Islamic law and reunifying the country, the *Taliban* movement does not differ so much from the other Afghan parties in the conflict. All parties to some extent promote Islam (although maybe not in as strict an interpretation as the *Taliban*), and all have the unification of Afghanistan on their agendas. These movements furthermore have in common that they arose in response to successive attempts by Afghan leaders since the late nineteenth century to transform Afghanistan into a 'modern state', based on a Western liberal ideology, in which the role and behaviour of women played a central role. The aim of the Islamists was to obstruct this process and to install their own Islamist government.

The world view of the *Taliban* is in line with the long-standing resistance in mainly rural Afghanistan against 'modernity', and is reminiscent of the earlier responses to modernization attempts by the state. The *Taliban*, however, differ from the other Islamist movements in what they want to achieve. Their creed is primarily religious and not political, and centres on personal behaviour and religious community.¹⁶⁷ They do not seek to create a political ideology. Instead, they want to use *shariah* as sole guide, with help of the *ulema* (men of religious learning who interpret *shariah* law). As such, they can be perceived as seeking a return to the *status quo* existing before intellectual movements in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁶⁸

These aspirations do not oppose their interests in a unified state. On the contrary. But according to them this union has to be achieved through the establishment of a religious community. Such a community excludes any form of regional autonomy or federal arrangements, which is thus fiercely opposed by the *Taliban*. They aim for a unified Afghanistan and the abolition of historic leadership structures. To some extent they have been successful in doing this. While the opposition was divided into several groups, which were again further divided into feuding factions, the *Taliban* were able to establish a unitary structure in the territory that they conquered.¹⁶⁹

The present confrontation between Western countries and the *Taliban* must be seen in the light of these contesting visions of 'state and society', 'modernity', and 'religious fundamentalism'. The international donor community is seen as a Western community with Western norms and values,

164 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 11.

165 Davis, 'Taliban Found Lacking when Nation-Building Beckoned', p. 363; and Davis, 'Taliban Continue the Killing but Fail to Finish the Crusade', p. 22.

166 Rais, 'Conflict in Afghanistan', p. 2.

167 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 11.

168 Marsden, *The Taliban*, p. 87.

169 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

which are opposed by the *Taliban*.¹⁷⁰ In this context, portraying the *Taliban* as a medieval phenomenon is besides the point. It shows the failure to recognize the *Taliban* as a ‘contemporary’ movement, which deliberately refuses to compromise to the Western world view and value system.¹⁷¹ With the disappearance of Cold War antagonisms, the role of the West has gradually changed from political participant to merely political observer. With the end of the Cold War, ‘the West put on new lenses’¹⁷² and came to see the Islamic motivations of the supported Afghan fighting parties as destabilizing. The fundamentalist Islamic *Taliban* gender policies, as much as Western interest in gas and oil pipelines, and the *Taliban*’s harbouring of terrorism have placed Afghanistan back in the focus of international attention.¹⁷³ Now the accent in Western involvement has shifted to humanitarian assistance and diplomacy. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

170 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 4.

171 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 11.

172 Rais, ‘Conflict in Afghanistan’, p. 17.

173 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

3 International Efforts to Bring the Conflict to an End

Chapter 3 reviews the interventions by outsiders to end the Afghan conflict. The major interventions by the international community were along three tracks: diplomacy, in the form of negotiations and political relations; military force as well as restrictions in military assistance; and economic and aid policies.

The Afghan conflict has been subject to intense mediation. The huge number of actors involved in those negotiations added to their complexity. The major diplomatic efforts will be analysed here, starting from the Geneva Accords of 1988, which were meant to settle matters in Afghanistan after the Soviets had retreated. As was shown in the preceding chapter, the Geneva Accords remained largely ineffective in ending the violence. The diminishing political involvement of the former Soviet Union and the United States over the following years coincided with a diminished interference from the UN in particular. This paved the way for regional powers, especially Iran and Pakistan, not only to initiate peace initiatives, but also to pursue their own policies. With the *Taliban* takeover of Kabul in 1996, interest in Afghanistan was renewed, thus inciting diplomatic efforts by the international community at large.

The post-1996 initiatives included some minor military responses, but these were no serious threat to the *Taliban*'s leadership. Although regional powers interfered in the conflict by supporting the warring factions, the conflict retained its mainly intrastate character. The military responses referred to came respectively from Iran (threatening military intervention) and the US. At the military level, there were also allegations of external military support. As a result, imposing an arms embargo was considered, but until now this has proved impossible to implement.

Another level of external involvement concerns relief, rehabilitation and development assistance. These may also contribute to ending violence, as well as to reconciliation and prevention of future escalation of conflict, but the role of these instruments has proved less significant in the case of Afghanistan. In earlier stages of the Afghan conflict, aid played an important role in supporting warring factions. In the post-1996 period, withholding development assistance and relief aid became ways of indicating international discontent to the *Taliban* regime.

The chapter ends with an assessment of the external interventions in the Afghan conflict. The limited success of these interventions is related to a lack of political commitment by international and regional actors, a lack of connection between intended outcomes of the interventions and realities on the ground, a failure to address ideological differences adequately, and misconceptions about the leverage of aid.

3.1 Diplomatic Efforts

The United Nations was involved in many of the diplomatic efforts to end the war. The UN was the only intergovernmental organization actively involved in the Afghan conflict. Its political involvement started in 1981 with a first mission of a personal representative of the Secretary-General. During the 1980s developments in the former Soviet Union, Europe and Afghanistan paved the way for the UN to become more involved in finding a solution to the conflict. In 1988 the diplomatic efforts of the UN resulted in the signing of the Geneva Accords, which led to the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989. However, it is debatable whether these Accords were a success. The Geneva Accords were mainly an agreement to settle the external factors in the conflict. They provided a diplomatic cover for the Soviet decision to withdraw, and intended to end international military aid to the *Mujahideen*. The Accords aimed at establishing a role for the United Nations in implementing and monitoring the Accords, as well as in the provision of humanitarian assistance for refugee repatriation and national reconstruction.¹⁷⁴ The Accords, however, were not able to end Soviet support to Najibullah's regime. The resistance movement denounced them for this reason. Originally, part of the deal was also that the United States and Pakistan would stop supporting the *Mujahideen*. However, when they realized that the Soviets would withdraw their forces regardless of continuing external assistance to the *Mujahideen*, this was omitted.¹⁷⁵ The most important omission of the Accords, however, was that the end of international involvement was not linked to a domestic political settlement. The fact that it was foremost an externally induced agreement echoed through in the later endeavours to set up an interim government.

Efforts to Establish an Interim Government

In order to achieve an internal settlement, the UN put all their efforts into forming an interim government that would hold elections. This reflected an approach that has proved successful in countries like Cambodia, Nicaragua and Namibia.¹⁷⁶ Initially, the effort to reach agreement on an interim government appeared to be a typical post-Cold War dialogue between the US and the former Soviet Union, in which the United Nations played a complementary role.¹⁷⁷ It proved difficult to get the *Mujahideen* to negotiate with the Kabul government. The resistance did not recognize Najibullah's regime, as it was perceived as being illegitimate and a puppet of Moscow. Nevertheless, in December 1989, the UN Secretary-General managed to get consent for negotiations in which all parties in the conflict would take part, including Moscow, which might be regarded as quite an achievement.¹⁷⁸ However, rather than coming to an agreement with Kabul, the US and Pakistan continued their efforts to achieve a then seemingly conceivable *Mujahideen* military victory.¹⁷⁹

Changes came with the Gulf War, when radical elements of the Afghan *Mujahideen* (in particular *Hizb*) joined the international Islamist opposition to the US-led coalition against Iraq. This resulted, at least temporarily, in Saudi Arabia suspending funding to *Hizb*. Moreover, when the *Mujahideen* failed to establish a government, Pakistan backed away from them, and opted for a political settlement as

174 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

175 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 479.

176 See Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration'.

177 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 89.

178 Rais, 'The Afghan Conflict', pp. 304-307; see also Karlernst Ziem, 'Ein Zwischenbericht: Zur Lage in Afghanistan', *Aussenpolitik*, (1), 1989, p. 44.

179 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 480.

well. Both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia began to look at the proposals for an interim government more favourably. By November 1991, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran indicated that they would support the US-Soviet agreement. All parties thus seemed ready to accept a UN-mediated settlement. This implied that an interim government would be formed that would organize free and fair elections for a broad-based government, as well as a moratorium on weapon supplies by all external partners. The plan failed due to several reasons. First, the UN made limited provisions for its implementation. In other cases where the UN has assisted in installing an interim government, the Security Council has provided armed forces to disarm hostile forces, or administrative assistance to enable a process of elections. In Afghanistan the consensus included only limited involvement by the international community. Although the US and the USSR would try to remove sophisticated weapons and weapons of mass destruction, no provision was made for disarming or merging the various armed forces in the country. Moreover, the UN did not intend to monitor the elections. The UN General Assembly only passed a resolution asking the Secretary-General to use his good offices to promote a negotiated solution.¹⁸⁰

Second, the warring factions inside Afghanistan did not seriously consider the UN-mediated transition, let alone the plan to disarm. The UN plan furthermore relied on the belief that with the end of external assistance the various Afghan parties and armed forces would all have to revert to the internationally sponsored interim government for patronage. This was a miscalculation. With the end of aid from the US and Moscow, the Afghan government and the resistance fell apart and fragmented along ethnic lines, and power came into the hands of autonomous local commanders spread over the country. Moreover, at a higher level, the negotiations had too narrow a political basis. Former President Zahir Shah, the Shia parties and the *Mujahideen* commanders inside Afghanistan resisted the prominence of eastern Pushtun leaders in the procedures for transition to the interim government. During the Soviet occupation, the Pushtun (with many of them in exile) had lost power, while the Uzbek factions and Hazaras had become more powerful. This came to the fore in the anti-Pushtun revolt in January 1992, which aimed to topple the government and threatened the transition process.¹⁸¹ It was thus a weak plan, based on insufficient analysis of the causes of conflict, the changes in relative power positions that had taken place during the Soviet occupation, and, consequently, the post-Soviet situation.

In addition, the concept of an interim government was never likely to succeed in the Afghan context. As Barnett Rubin concluded: 'When [...] state institutions collapse, and armed factions emerge as the main form of collective action, interim governments offer no quick solution to the problem of political order'.¹⁸² Afghanistan lacked basic state institutions such as unified armed forces, administration, legal system, let alone some degree of social order or a law-bound state structure. Moreover, no consensus existed on the nature of the political community for which to aim. For the Afghan *Mujahideen*, the proposed procedures for the formation of an interim government through democratic elections were in fact unacceptable. Rather than whether it would be democratically elected or not, they regarded it of utmost importance that the new government would be an *Islamic* government.¹⁸³

180 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 484.

181 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 485ff.

182 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 492.

183 Rubin, 'Post-Cold War State Disintegration', p. 471; see also Bokhari's analysis of the failure to come to an interim government in Bokhari, 'Internal Negotiations among Many Actors'.

Finally, developments inside Afghanistan went faster than the process of negotiation. Two of the *Mujahideen* parties did not agree with a pre-transition council, which was supposed to take over all powers and executive authority from the government, whereupon it would convene to choose the interim government. Before matters could be settled, in April 1992 the *Jamiat-Dostam* alliance took over Kabul and ousted Najibullah. This urged the Peshawar-based parties to come to an agreement (the Peshawar Accords) and the hasty formation of an Islamic Interim Government which, although accepted in Kabul, could not get sanctioning from Hikmatyar. Hence when fighting over Kabul restarted, the efforts of the UN for an interim government ended. Although in December 1993 it was decided to re-establish a political office – the United Nations Special Mission for Afghanistan (UNSMA) – until the rising of the *Taliban*, the role of the UN in Afghanistan remained limited.

Efforts to come to an Agreement in the Factional War

The installation of the *Jamiat*-headed provisional government led by Rabbani was no success. It had no prospects of significant support from outsiders, and was challenged by Hikmatyar's continuing attacks. With the diminished interest of outsiders, efforts for reaching a peace agreement now mainly had to come from within the region. Pakistan took the lead in reaching an agreement, and in 1993 started a policy to support stability in Afghanistan. This policy, however, was based on Pakistan's own interests, especially the importance of Afghanistan for Islamabad's trade with Central Asia.¹⁸⁴ Iran cooperated with Islamabad in stabilizing Afghanistan, because it hoped to gain more power for the Shia by striving for a power-sharing arrangement. The Saudi-Iranian détente added another positive factor.¹⁸⁵ The stage seemed set for a regionally induced peace accord for Afghanistan. Negotiations on power-sharing resulted in the Islamabad Accord of 7 March 1993. This Accord attempted to define the mandates of the President and the Prime Minister, and gave a clear timeframe for organizing elections. One of the outcomes was that Hikmatyar was given the position of Prime Minister within the Rabbani government. Further negotiations were held in Jalalabad to form a cabinet and to transform the Ministry of Defence into a Defence Council. They resulted in another agreement on 20 May 1993. Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan signed the accords as guarantors.¹⁸⁶ The deal held for less than one year. Hikmatyar again resumed fighting, this time allied with Dostam. Pakistan and the United Nations were able to negotiate a series of ceasefires, but the military and political hostilities did not stop.¹⁸⁷

Several factors contributed to the failure of the Islamabad Accord. First, it was an 'elite settlement', a compromise between leaders, which did not settle the root causes of political instability.¹⁸⁸ Hikmatyar was prepared to compromise. His craving for power could not be disregarded. As a result of the large armoury built up with US and Pakistan assistance, his *Hizb* forces were still an important military power. Secondly, while the tribal structure of the Pushtun had served as an insurmountable obstacle for carving a coherent plan to oust the communists, Masoud's success in this respect created resentment with the Pushtun against the new regime. Moreover, the retreat of the state to urban centres strengthened local and regional leadership. An important factor was also that the accords were the result of external pressure, instead of being based on a real compromise between Afghan elites. They suggested a consensus that was not there, and indicated no contours for an interim policy arrangement. The fact that Hikmatyar was given a special position in the government also

184 Rais, 'Afghanistan and the Regional Powers', pp. 911-912.

185 Rais, 'Afghanistan and the Regional Powers', p. 916ff.

186 Rais, 'Afghanistan and the Regional Powers', pp. 911-919.

187 Bokhari, 'Internal Negotiations among Many Actors', p. 250.

188 Maley, 'The Future of Islamic Afghanistan', p. 380.

conveyed the implicit but important message that ‘the straightest path to the Afghan premiership was through pools of civilian blood’.¹⁸⁹ This became apparent when Hikmatyar attempted to get the Defence Ministry of his rival Masoud under collegial control. When Rabbani resisted, Hikmatyar threatened to continue the war, and Rabbani had to backtrack.

The UN’s role during this period was very limited. An attempt for UN mediation by Special Representative Mahmoud Mestiri became futile as the *Taliban* rapidly advanced in January and February 1995. Further efforts by his successor, Norbert Holl, resulted in initiatives for a ceasefire, the demilitarization of Kabul and a national peace process. However, these plans also became irrelevant since the *Taliban* were victorious on the battlefield.¹⁹⁰

Diplomacy and Negotiation with the Taliban

The *Taliban*’s victories put Afghanistan back at the centre of international attention. Nevertheless, it took until July 1997 before Afghanistan returned high on the agenda of the UN, when Secretary-General Kofi Annan raised the priority of Afghanistan by appointing a high-level special envoy, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi.¹⁹¹ Later in 1997 he was also appointed as head of the UN Special Mission to Afghanistan (UNSMA). Both Brahimi and Secretary-General Annan called attention to the fact that foreign interventions were an important factor in intensifying the Afghan conflict. Their statements and reports referred especially to the supply of arms and military training by foreign countries. They therefore questioned the sincerity of some countries’ support for the United Nations missions.¹⁹² Brahimi, then, initiated the so-called ‘6+2’ group, consisting of Afghanistan’s neighbours Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and China, as well as the US and Russia, which aimed to strengthen the diplomatic efforts to bring about an end to the conflict.

The UN, however, was slowly manoeuvred into a difficult position *vis-à-vis* the *Taliban* regime. Despite their takeover of Kabul, and although the *Taliban* occupied the larger part of the territory and population, they were not recognized as the legitimate leadership of the country. The Rabbani government continued to hold Afghanistan’s seat at the United Nations. Only three countries – namely Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – recognized the new *Taliban* regime. The international community took an awaiting stance. While until 1996 the US had given the *Taliban* the benefit of the doubt, they too became more critical as of early 1997. The US realized that it could not embrace the *Taliban*, either politically or ideologically, and it started to call for the creation of a multi-ethnic, broad-based government, observing ‘international norms of behaviour’. Together with the European Union’s continued criticism of the *Taliban* and Pakistan’s backing, this prevented the *Taliban* from being recognized internationally.¹⁹³ Relations only deteriorated, as during the course of 1997 the UN increasingly addressed certain controversial *Taliban* edicts, especially with regard to women. Being one of the largest providers of assistance and formerly the major mediator in diplomatic efforts, the UN became regarded by the *Taliban* as a Western/US-oriented opponent. This also applied to many foreign organizations that had raised doubts or criticized the new edicts.

Organizations increasingly started calling for making development assistance conditional on the extent to which the *Taliban* would give in on their harsh ideological position, and no support would be

189 Maley, ‘The Future of Islamic Afghanistan’, p. 388-390.

190 Magnus, ‘Afghanistan in 1996’, pp. 111-114.

191 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*; and Ahmed Rashid, ‘Final Offensive?’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 August 1999, p. 12.

192 Rubin, ‘Afghanistan under the *Taliban*’, p. 91.

193 Saikal, ‘Afghanistan’s Ethnic Conflict’, p. 121.

given to institutional capacity-building.¹⁹⁴ The failure of the *Taliban* to comply with demands of the UN and international organizations to guarantee their employees' security and to become more flexible on gender issues resulted in a suspension of ECHO funding, as well as a withdrawal of expatriates from Afghanistan in August 1999.

Recent initiatives from the UN have also failed. Two rounds of UN-sponsored peace talks in Ashgabad, in January-February and March 1999 between the *Taliban* and the Afghan opposition initially appeared to be successful. They resulted in an agreement in principle to form a shared executive, a shared legislature and a shared judiciary,¹⁹⁵ and promises that each side would settle a truce in northern Afghanistan during the next round of discussions.¹⁹⁶ However, the *Taliban* withdrew from further talks because of the opposition's refusal to accept a unified *Taliban* command for the whole country.¹⁹⁷ Continuing the '6+2' formula, the United Nations attempted to bring the *Taliban* and the Northern Alliance to the negotiating table in Tashkent in July 1999. This attempt also failed when the *Taliban* rejected a ceasefire.¹⁹⁸

Apart from the UN efforts, some regional initiatives for conflict resolution were undertaken. These included the so-called *ulema* talks of April 1998, during which the *Taliban*, under pressure from Pakistan's Prime Minister Sharif, agreed to negotiate with the Northern Alliance in Islamabad. These negotiations, however, remained at the stage of appointing the members of a commission that was supposed to deal with resolving the conflict. A tentative agreement was reached on the nomination procedures and a ceasefire. However, all the agreements broke down.¹⁹⁹ At that time peace was low on the agenda of the *Taliban*, as they were tied down by the offensive in the north-east.²⁰⁰ More recently, efforts by Pakistan and Iran to resolve the conflict reportedly led to quarrels between the two countries.²⁰¹ Pakistan increasingly lost credence in being willing to come to a settlement of the conflict, due to its continued political and alleged military support of the *Taliban* regime. In August 1999, for example, the northern-based opposition rejected a Pakistani offer for mediation, saying that Pakistan should first end its military and economic support to the *Taliban*.²⁰²

Another effort worth mentioning is the 'Frankfurt Process', aimed at bringing together Afghan intellectuals in a search for peace. While Northern Alliance members have supposedly responded to invitations from this group, *Taliban* representatives have not. Although they are not actively involved, Western countries responded positively to the effort.²⁰³ On 29 April 1999, former King Zahir Shah

194 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 5ff.

195 UN Secretary-General, *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security*, 31 March 1999.

196 CNN, 'Taliban Agrees to Share Power with Afghan Opposition', 14 March 1999, <http://cnn.com/WORLD/asiapcf/9903/14/afghan.02/>.

197 UN Secretary-General, *The Situation in Afghanistan and its Implications for International Peace and Security*, June 1999.

198 Rashid, 'Final Offensive?', p. 12.

199 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 91.

200 Anthony Davis, 'Taliban Continue the Killing but Fail to Finish the Crusade', p. 19.

201 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 19.

202 CNN, 'Afghan Opposition Rejects Pakistan's Peace Efforts', 19 August 1999, <http://cnn.com/ASIANOW/south/9908/19/BC-Afghanistan-Talks.ap/>.

203 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 19.

called for a *Loya Jirgah* (a grand assembly of senior leaders). The *Taliban* rejected this effort, while the Northern Alliance, Afghan groups, and the US welcomed it.

What made diplomatic efforts to deal with the *Taliban* so problematic? The difficult relationship between the UN and the *Taliban* is exemplary of the clash of ideologies and cultures in which the Afghan conflict has turned, and that has made it difficult for the international parties to remain neutral. This, again, handicaps negotiations.

It has, in addition, become very difficult to get a grip on the *Taliban*. They show no flexibility in their position and, apparently, cannot be forced either. While they are interested in development (especially economic infrastructure) and international political recognition, there are so far no indications that withholding assistance has resulted in any toning down from their side. This is not surprising, considering the amount of aid that the country receives (US\$ 300 million per annum) compared to the US\$ 2.5 billion the country is able to gain from smuggling and US\$ 1.25 billion from drugs. Moreover, the aid flows promised as an incentive by the West are limited in comparison to the *Taliban*'s other financial sources (notably Pakistan and Saudi Arabia). The *Taliban* do not see themselves as aid-dependent, nor do they value highly the development efforts of the past.²⁰⁴ Hence, as Afghanistan is economically rather independent, the effect of political isolation by the West is limited.

There are, however, indications that the *Taliban* are susceptible to economic and financial pressure from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.²⁰⁵ As regards Western actors, international political recognition remains a major issue for the *Taliban*. In October 1998, the UN Credentials Committee voted *not* to recognize the *Taliban*.

3.2 Military Force and Restrictions in Military Assistance

The *Taliban* were never seriously threatened militarily by external powers. There were only two instances during which a military confrontation with foreign powers appeared likely. The first concerned the confrontation of troops at the border with Iran in 1998, which resulted from the Iranian indignation about the suffering of the Hazara population and the killing of Iranian diplomats during the *Taliban* conquest of Mazar-i Sharif. The second confrontation concerned the United States' cruise missile attack in August 1998, aimed at the training camps of terrorist bin Laden. It can be debated as to how far this confrontational stance has brought a solution to the conflict any closer. Neither of the two incidents seems to have had leverage on the internal military position of the *Taliban* or their political agenda.

Military assistance was a powerful factor in sustaining the war. In chapter 2 it was pointed out that regional powers supported all warring factions in the Afghan conflict. The Najibullah regime was supported by the USSR; the *Mujahideen* -and later the *Taliban* – were supported by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the US. The Northern Alliance received military support from Iran and Russia. All external actors considered support necessary for bringing the conflict to an end in a way that was favourable to them. However, the support also led to competition between the external actors. By supporting the resistance against the *Taliban*, Iran found itself opposing Pakistani interests in Afghanistan. The rivalry between Pakistan and Iran hence became the main external factor fuelling the war. Since 1997

204 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 45.

205 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 5ff.

these two parties have embarked upon a dialogue in order to prevent the conflict from further destabilizing their bilateral relations. Nevertheless, this has not been effective up until now.

The importance of regional parties in the continuation of conflict has led to considerations to impose an arms embargo. Up until now, this has not been realized. There are several reasons for its failure. First, the external powers still consider the struggle for power in Afghanistan open-ended. Supporting the parties is therefore imperative. Secondly, it is practically impossible to implement an arms embargo. The borders with neighbouring countries are too porous for monitoring. Thirdly, there is the issue of timing. By now, an embargo would likely work in favour of the *Taliban*. Strengthening the *Taliban* through an arms embargo is not considered desirable by some of the Western actors.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the Council of the European Union at the end of 1996 decided to place an embargo on all deliveries of arms, ammunition and military materiel to Afghanistan.

3.3 Humanitarian and Development Assistance

During the Soviet occupation, the UN used to be the only large international organization providing aid to the country. The United Nations' humanitarian role started in 1979 with the UNHCR giving aid mainly to the three million Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan. During the Soviet years the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) started a much smaller operation in Kabul, supporting development programmes of the Soviet-aided Afghan government. In addition, the UN was represented through a Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, appointed in 1984 by the UN Human Rights Commission. Overall, however, UN activities were concentrated in Pakistan and the bulk of assistance inside Afghanistan was provided by a limited number of foreign NGOs.²⁰⁷ ICRC gained access to the country in 1986.²⁰⁸

The UN insisted on political neutrality in its assistance.²⁰⁹ This was, however, complicated by the non-neutrality of other interveners. In fact, UNHCR support to refugees in Pakistan became political as well, as it provided an entry for the US and Pakistan to organize the *Mujahideen*. It was further complicated by direct US support to cross-border 'humanitarian' efforts for *Mujahideen* capacity-building. Over the 1985-1990 period, the Pakistan-based *Mujahideen* groups received US\$ 380.7 million from the US.²¹⁰ Moreover, the UN efforts were supported by the activities of various NGOs, who saw their support as a contribution to the struggle against the Soviets. Overall, it turned out to be very difficult not to get caught in the tug-of-war between different parties, and by choosing one faction or the other, many efforts in effect hardened the battle-lines.²¹¹ Matters were complicated by the fact that every UN agency had its own mandate and funds. There was almost no contact with the government, and virtually no cooperation between the different agencies and with the NGOs.

After the signing of the Geneva Accords and the withdrawal of Soviet forces, an Office of the Coordinator for Afghanistan (UNOCA) was installed to coordinate all UN humanitarian efforts for Afghans in and outside Afghanistan. In 1992 this office came under the auspices of the newly formed

206 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 20.

207 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, *Evaluation of Danish Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan 1992-98*, 1999/9, p. 79.

208 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

209 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', p. 55.

210 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', p. 54.

211 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', p. 55.

UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and in 1993 it was renamed the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA). While the diplomatic efforts of the UN temporarily ended with the installation of the Islamic Interim Government in 1992, its humanitarian operations continued through this office.²¹² However, its role shifted to one of information-sharing and facilitation. UNDP took on responsibility for the coordination of rehabilitation assistance.²¹³ With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the US temporarily disengaged itself from Afghanistan, politically as well as on the level of humanitarian and development assistance.

From then onwards, the European Union became the largest multilateral donor of assistance to Afghanistan, and has remained so until the end of the 1990s. Important donor countries were Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada, the UK, Norway and Denmark (see Annexe 4). In addition, WFP, the ICRC, UNDP and UNICEF were important financial contributors. In 1997 an estimated US\$ 217 million of aid was provided.²¹⁴ There is currently a UN representation of thirteen UN agencies, with UNOCHA as the coordinating body, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and about 150 NGOs, of which one-third are international NGOs.²¹⁵

Major emergencies in which humanitarian assistance was provided included the large-scale exodus from the fighting in Kabul in early 1994, resulting in a refugee flow of 300,000 people to Jalalabad, Mazar and Pul-I-Khumri, and two earthquakes in the north-eastern province of Badakhshan in 1998, which cost the lives of over 6,000 people. Aid to rehabilitation and development concentrated in particular on the areas to which refugees from Pakistan and Iran have been returning, while in urban areas relief programmes have been continued to aid internally displaced persons. Social services – mainly health and education – have largely become a responsibility of NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and the UN agencies.²¹⁶

Coming to Common Programming

With the *Taliban* coming into power in large parts of the country, emergency and development assistance became more politicized than ever before. First, the donor community to Afghanistan seemed to have a shared understanding on a number of policy objectives. There was a common feeling among the donors that peace should be reached through a negotiated settlement, including the Northern Alliance. Second, assistance became overtly principle-centred. Human rights became a central issue and gender discrimination had to be specifically addressed. Moreover, the integrity of aid in its provision had to be maintained, and the security of aid staff assured. Apart from that, aid had to address the issues of narcotics and terrorism.²¹⁷ Although emergency aid was to be continued unconditionally, these policy objectives were translated into a refusal to provide *development*

212 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

213 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, *Evaluation of Danish Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan 1992-98*, p. 57.

214 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, *Evaluation of Danish Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan 1992-98*, p. 6.

215 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, *Evaluation of Danish Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan 1992-98*, p. 6.

216 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, *Evaluation of Danish Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan 1992-98*, pp. 5-6.

217 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 4ff.

assistance if these principles could not be fulfilled. In response to the *Taliban's* stance on gender, organizations attempted to include an equal number of women and men in their programmes, while refusing assistance for institutional capacity-building.²¹⁸ Counter-narcotics programmes were started, aimed at offering alternatives to poppy growers. Moreover, renewed investments were made in certain social services in refugee camps, especially for women.²¹⁹

Common planning was difficult in the absence of a government counterpart developing a national plan. In addition, the UN agencies and NGOs all had separate mandates and funding sources.²²⁰ In 1997 the UN started developing a Strategic Framework to make political and assistance strategies better informed of each other and more coherent. In this central coordination framework for aid, representatives of donors, UN, NGOs and the ICRC could meet to make joint decisions about priorities and programmes.²²¹ The Strategic Framework essentially implied reform of the UN, reflecting the broader shift in the UN humanitarian system to link the political objectives of conflict reduction and humanitarian goals to relief and development activities. Afghanistan was to be a test case of the new approach. The initiative was thus not specifically aimed at the Afghan context.²²²

A parallel and closely related initiative was the development of a 'Common Programming' structure for Afghanistan. In fact, Common Programming was the mechanism for establishing the goals set in the Strategic Framework. In this, aid agencies tried to come to agreed priorities and policies, and Common Programming among donors and NGOs. In contrast to the Strategic Framework, Common Programming focused on the dilemmas posed by the work in Afghanistan. Agencies had to deal with highly fluid, dangerous situations, in which development activities could never be seen in isolation from conflict. As a consequence, the common separation in categories such as relief and development made little sense. Thus while they are parallel and related initiatives, they focused on different levels. While the Strategic Framework aimed at an integration of policy and programmes, Common Programming instead aimed at coordination of activities in the field.

It is difficult to locate the starting date of these initiatives. Although the rethinking of approaches and ideas for institutional reform started earlier, the initiatives gained momentum through various activities during 1997. In January 1997 an International Forum on Assistance to Afghanistan was organized in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan).²²³ This conference was organized by the UN's DHA in cooperation with UNDP and was financially supported by the government of the Netherlands. Over 240 participants visited the conference.²²⁴ Its aim was to assess in what way the international community (*i.e.* donor countries, UN organizations and NGOs in combination with Afghan actors) could design a common assistance strategy for Afghanistan. One of the outcomes of the Ashgabat meeting was the establishment of an informal contact group of donors and international organizations that were active in Afghanistan: the Afghanistan Support Group (ASG). The ASG was to convene on a

218 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 23.

219 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 25ff.

220 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

221 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

222 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida, *Evaluation of Danish Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan 1992-98*, p. 58.

223 For an overview of the meetings on aid to Afghanistan discussed in this section, see Annexe 5.

224 See *UN Report on the International Forum on Assistance to Afghanistan, Ashgabat 21-22 January 1997*, of the Permanent Representation to the UN in New York, dated 21 February 1997.

regular basis – two to three times a year – and would focus on specific topics. The ASG could also invite ‘umbrella’ organizations of NGOs.

The Afghanistan Support Group (ASG)

In April 1997, the ASG convened in meeting for the first time in Geneva. It was chaired by the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation. The meeting focused on how to bring sustainable peace to Afghanistan. Special attention was paid to gender issues and UN activities. It was concluded that development assistance could contribute to creating room for diplomatic manoeuvre. This resulted in the suggestion that projects that overtly excluded women should no longer be funded.²²⁵ The participants of the meeting agreed on the need to improve coordination of both aid and diplomatic initiatives. However, there was disagreement on how to achieve this in practice. A Dutch proposal to merge the ASG with a political meeting of 21 countries later in 1997 was rejected. There was some disagreement on which UN agency should take the lead. The role of UNSMA, in particular, was considered controversial in this regard. The only outcome was the appointment of five regional coordinators in Afghanistan.

During the second ASG meeting on 3 December 1997, all participating donor countries discussed and endorsed the draft ‘Assistance Strategy for Afghanistan’ (*i.e.* the Strategic Framework), emphasizing that:

- Assistance must, at a minimum, do no harm, and must, where possible, aim to contribute to establishing a basis for future peace and security;
- Assistance must work towards a shared purpose – empowering Afghans to build sustainable livelihoods, and;
- Saving lives and reducing human suffering will, for the foreseeable future, remain a priority;
- It was necessary to act in unity, as single actions would undermine influence on local leaders.

Building on the theme of improving the coordination of assistance, all ASG participants agreed to finance only activities resulting from Common Programming. The UN was to play a lead role in facilitating this, and UNOCHA’s Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for Afghanistan was suggested as the major collection box. From 1998 onwards UNOCHA annually collected its funding through such appeals. The 1998 CAP was a first outcome of Common Programming.²²⁶ In effect, by these various efforts the role of UN coordination changed from the sharing of information to the development of common principles, approaches and purposes.²²⁷

The third and the fourth ASG meetings focused on *principled* Common Programming, and hence the issue of conditional aid. The third ASG meeting on 5 May 1998 presented three options:

1. To work according to ECHA guidelines. This would imply that most activities would have to end;
2. To focus on local community-level projects and the development of non-institutional capacity on the local level;

225 ‘*Zendbrief*’ of the Deputy Chef de Poste of the Netherlands Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, dated 1 May 1997, reporting to DCH on the ASG meeting of 21 April 1997.

226 See UNOCHA, *1998 Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan*.

227 UNOCHA, *1998 Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan*, p. 60.

3. To cooperate with authorities on capacity-building, and temporarily disregard fundamental principles.

As the first option implied factually ending aid, while the third would compromise the donors' position on fundamental principles, the meeting opted for the second alternative. In fact, this was the only alternative that made continuation of aid possible without compromising the donors.

During the fourth ASG meeting, which took place in Tokyo in December 1998, the ASG took a stronger stance on principles. For example, it was critical of the UN's Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the *Taliban* as being too compromising towards the *Taliban*, especially on gender issues. It no longer intended to tolerate *Taliban* restrictions. The ASG drafted a proposal to station twelve human-rights monitors in Afghanistan, as well as to establish a special UNSMA 'Civil Affairs Unit'. The UN should also negotiate security guarantees for aid personnel with the *Taliban*. In the meantime, NGOs should be discouraged from returning individually, hence undermining a common strategy. The ASG also promoted the idea of establishing a 'strategic monitoring capacity' aimed at assessing the effects of aid on the peace process.

The principle of Common Programming was endorsed again. All participants, including the Netherlands, again pledged only to finance activities that resulted from Common Programming, and that are part of the Consolidated Appeal.

Common Programming in Practice

In practice, the process was hampered in various ways. First, the scope for Common Programming was severely limited when international assistance was disrupted in the summer of 1998. All UN programmes in the regions controlled by the Rabbani government (except for Hazarajat) had already been suspended after the WFP warehouse, as well as many agency premises in Mazar-i Sharif, were looted in October 1997.²²⁸ After various incidents, including a dispute between the UN and the *Taliban* about a decree banning the UN from employing foreign Muslim women staff in Afghanistan unless accompanied by a male family member,²²⁹ the United Nations also decided to withdraw from the southern *Taliban*-held areas between mid-April and mid-June 1998. In response to the incidents, New York tried to reach a memorandum of understanding with the *Taliban*. Negotiations led to such an agreement, but it was to remain unequivocal and viable to criticism. Some elements in the *Taliban* appeared to undermine the agreement, for example by issuing the order to close non-health programmes for women.²³⁰ By mid-July 1998 special envoy Brahimi speculated on a total withdrawal from Afghanistan. At about the same time, ECHO stopped its funding to Kabul. The suspension of aid was a response to the growing restrictions on access and employment of women, and to the demand by the *Taliban* that NGOs relocate to an abandoned polytechnic building, which NGOs viewed as unacceptable on security grounds. The killing of a UN officer the day after the US cruise-missile attack on Afghanistan was the signal for virtually all UN and NGO personnel to leave the country. The UN demanded guarantees for the security of its staff from the *Taliban* before it would allow its expatriates to return to Afghanistan. Only the ICRC and a few NGOs stayed behind. It took until March 1999 before the UN and the NGOs started to return.

At the same time the principled approach on gender issues and human rights, which in a number of instances resulted in a withholding of aid, has failed to affect the *Taliban*'s policies. This has been

228 UNOCHA, *1999 Appeal for Afghanistan*, 16 December 1998.

229 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 90.

230 Rubin, 'Afghanistan under the *Taliban*', p. 90.

attributed to several factors. Firstly, the *Taliban* is a movement and a not very well-organized political entity. Conditional aid does not have much effect in the absence of a functioning, organized state. Although the *Taliban* installed a kind of governing structure, state power is de facto decentralized, with local leaders pursuing relatively autonomous policies.²³¹ Moreover, the *Taliban* were suspicious and hostile to the changes proposed by the donor community, and there was a large discrepancy between their priorities and principles and those promoted by the donors. Apart from this, the humanitarian nature of most programmes, the multitude of agencies involved and the limitations of donor coordination reduce the credibility of conditionality.²³² Nevertheless, it appears that the continued concern with human rights has been somewhat effective, in that the *Taliban* have agreed upon inquiries into the Mazar-i Sharif massacres. Small advances have been made in the sense that both the UN and NGOs are now exploring the potential of signed agreements with the *Taliban*, and in that the *Taliban* have been forthcoming on the security demands since the return of aid personnel in 1999.²³³

In addition to these hampering circumstances, a major problem was that it was very difficult to come to an agreed strategy. Many donors in the Strategic Framework remained sceptical about the possibilities of contributing to the peace process through aid. Pursuing policy goals through assistance created a great number of dilemmas for donors. Doubts were raised about the possibility of promoting a politically conscious approach in the face of humanitarian disaster. For example, as a result of the conflict, major Afghan cities became overpopulated and dependent on humanitarian aid. Providing the cities with aid conflicted with the ‘do no harm’ approach, as it discharged the warring factions of their duties to take care of the population so that they could concentrate on the fighting. At the same time, providing humanitarian aid conditionally conflicted with the principle of the right to humanitarian assistance. Several actors therefore argued that humanitarian aid should not become politicized. Instead, they argued that the focus of the Framework should be to improve the effectiveness of aid.

Similar dilemmas posed themselves in the fields of more structural development. As the *Taliban* controlled the peaceful areas, rehabilitation required cooperation with the *Taliban*. The donors’ insistence on the *Taliban* or other Afghan parties respecting international humanitarian norms and human rights was often at friction with their principle to respect Afghan culture and tradition. To limit assistance to emergency aid contradicted the need for community development and local peace-building, as was suggested by the ASG. And while institutional capacity-building would be the option in response to the country’s development crisis, as the donors perceived a crisis in governance they still resorted to humanitarian budget lines and criteria, thereby excluding longer-term funding cycles and institutional capacity building while favouring quick-impact programmes.²³⁴

Although aid agencies and donors endorsed both the Strategic Framework and Common Programming, conceptual disagreement and contextual factors resulted in the concepts’ limited success in practice. This became most apparent in UNOCHA’s failure to get full funding for its Consolidated Appeals for Afghanistan: the *pièce de résistance* of these policy approaches.²³⁵

231 Rubin, ‘Afghanistan under the *Taliban*’, p. 44.

232 Rubin, ‘Afghanistan under the *Taliban*’, p. 38.

233 Rubin, *Testimony on the Situation in Afghanistan*.

234 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 47.

235 See the UNOCHA *Consolidated Appeals for Afghanistan* of consecutive years.

3.4 Assessment of International Policies and Interventions

In review, the limited success of external interventions in the Afghan conflict can largely be attributed to four factors. Two of these factors played a role from the Geneva Accords onwards, while two became significant after the *Taliban* came to power.

Firstly, the failure of external interventions can partly be attributed to a limited commitment by international and regional actors to end the conflict. After the departure of the Soviets, the international community's attention for Afghanistan decreased considerably. As the support from the US and USSR ended, so did their interest in negotiations. The fading international interest was, for example, reflected in the moderate financial contributions to the UN emergency appeals for Afghanistan.²³⁶ At the same time, however, external support for warring factions did not come to an end, and efforts to reach a peace agreement were frustrated by the interests of the region's countries in Afghanistan. The agenda for negotiations was mostly set by these outsiders: Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Iran. It seemed for the regional players as if an Afghanistan in turmoil was more important than a peaceful Afghanistan ruled by only one faction. In this respect Pakistan played, and continues to play, a prominent role. While openly expressing its concern for peace, it continued to choose sides in the conflict, and thus helped to sustain it.

Secondly, failure can be attributed to the lack of connection that existed between the intended outcomes of the interventions and the realities on the ground. The number of efforts for mediation in Afghanistan were considerable, and initiatives aimed at coming to a negotiated settlement, including general elections and a broad-based government. Time and again these initiatives were disrupted by developments on the ground in the form of continued factional infighting. With the superpowers having lost interest, local factions were doing well with support from regional allies. New alliances were established depending on the interests of these outsiders. For the parties inside Afghanistan, alliances have become a means of survival. The different movements in the conflict are not political parties that can negotiate power-sharing. They can best be characterized as armed groups, with opposing (anti-) state projects.²³⁷ With the *Taliban* advance, the situation changed in so far that this group gained power in a large part of the country. Their claim for leadership over the whole country excluded the possibility for a broad-based government, and was hence an incentive for other factions to continue the war.

In response, several observers have argued that a federal system with a central government in Kabul and real power devolved to the regions might be a better option. Such a system appeals to the strong interest in an undivided Afghanistan that seems to be favoured by all factions.²³⁸ Moreover, it is an option that is likely to gain support from the regional players in the conflict. Russian and Central Asian fears for Islamic fundamentalism would be mitigated by a moderate Islamist buffer to the *Taliban*. Peace would offer Pakistan trade routes. Federalism would secure the rights of the Shia population, which is in the interest of Iran. Moreover, federalism would offer some prospects for

236 For example, of the US\$ 180 million requested in 1992, less than half was pledged (Maley, 'The Future of Islamic Afghanistan', p. 392); the 1997 Appeal of US\$ 133 million resulted in a US\$ 56 million contribution from the international community (UNOCHA, *1998 Consolidated Appeal for Afghanistan*).

237 Barnett R. Rubin, 'Conflict and Peace in Afghanistan', *Afghanistan Outlook*, December 1999, ReliefWeb, 31 December 1999,

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/vID/9F284156BE7390C58525686900748740?OpenDocument>.

238 Barnett R. Rubin, 'Conflict and Peace in Afghanistan'.

tackling Afghanistan's booming narcotics and illegal arms trade. In the past, Masoud and *Junbish* have considered such a system, and *Wahdat* actively propagated it.²³⁹

However, at the moment the *Taliban* are not willing to compromise. Federalism would imply a change of balance of power to their disadvantage, and is seen by them as legitimating warlordism.²⁴⁰ In this light, some observers have suggested supporting the *Taliban*'s opponents. Nevertheless, too close a cooperation with the Northern Alliance might also hinder a lasting solution as long as there are no guarantees that they will do better than the *Taliban*. Supporting moderate Pushtuns has also been proposed, as most of them reject the harsh version of Islam propagated by the *Taliban* and oppose Pakistani support to the *Taliban*.²⁴¹ Other observers have suggested that it is probably more important to focus on the regional parties and to come to a common understanding between them and the US and Russia. In this respect, Saikal noted that a rapprochement between Washington and Tehran would be helpful.²⁴² A common understanding would enable the enforcement of an arms embargo, which is now hampered by the region's diverse interests. This should be accompanied by attention for the Pakistan, for Pakistan is likely to play an important role in any attempt at transforming the *Taliban*.²⁴³

With the rise of the *Taliban*, a third factor accounting for the failure of outside interventions gained importance. It concerns the failure to address adequately the ideological differences between the *Taliban* and Western countries. While the *Taliban* search to establish an Islamic state based on their interpretation of the *shariah*, the West is concerned with maintaining internationally agreed upon human rights. The *Taliban* interpret the insistence of the West on the latter issue as an unwelcome intervention. Since the *Taliban* takeover, the international community has become involved in a conflict over ideologies. (Western) countries have expressed their discontent politically, as well as through a display of force, the suspension of aid and the refusal to invest in economic infrastructure. Although the message is conveyed consistently to the *Taliban*, it could be questioned whether this principled position contributes to ending violence. It seems as if the *Taliban* are insensitive to outside criticism. Some observers even see the confrontational stance, for example the suspension of aid, as counterproductive, and favour 'quiet diplomacy'. Brabant and Killick remarked in this respect that the reactions of donors '[...] have often been driven by principles more than by analysis of the real opportunities and constraints that characterize the situation in Afghanistan'.²⁴⁴ The use of force is even more debated. The timing of the launch of US missiles against terrorist camps in Afghanistan was terribly ill-chosen, in the sense that it disrupted difficult but important negotiations with the *Taliban* over aid work in Kabul.²⁴⁵ A large rift thus seems to separate Western and *Taliban* value systems. Bearing in mind the notion that a sense of ownership needs to be created for sustainable peace and development, a major question remains of how far to accommodate the *Taliban*.²⁴⁶

A fourth, and perhaps fifth, factor that contributed to the failure of external initiatives for peace concerns the disagreement of the international community about how to implement aid in support of

239 Davis, 'Taliban Found Lacking when Nation-building Beckoned', p. 364.

240 Rubin, 'Conflict and Peace in Afghanistan'.

241 Khalilzad and Byman, 'Afghanistan', p. 74ff.

242 Saikal, 'Afghanistan's Ethnic Conflict', p. 124.

243 Khalilzad and Byman, 'Afghanistan', p. 74ff.

244 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 5.

245 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 21.

246 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 43.

political goals, as well as misconceptions about the leverage of aid. Although agreement on a Strategic Framework was reached fairly quickly, translation into Common Programming proved more problematic. The coordination forums proved to be useful frameworks for expressing the international aid community's values and principles, to discuss a common mission statement and assistance strategy, and to point to problems in the aid system. Nevertheless, the success of the outcomes of these forums is debatable. According to some observers, the Strategic Framework mainly aimed to overcome structural weaknesses in the international humanitarian aid system and did not result so much from specific difficulties in the aid to Afghanistan. As it lacked a real situational analysis, it failed to come to real common policy strategies.²⁴⁷ However, it could also be argued that the efforts to come to a Strategic Framework as well as Common Programming were an important step forward in the process of linking political goals to assistance.

As regards the leverage of aid in practice, it has proved difficult to influence the *Taliban*, as they are not a homogeneous movement and only to a limited extent aid-dependent. Moreover, the size and complexity of the aid apparatus, including many countries and NGOs, makes it difficult to coordinate actions and to make conditionality convincing. By acting independently, donors and NGOs undermine the possibilities of the external community to have influence on developments in Afghanistan, and thus strengthen the position of the *Taliban* and other warring parties.

247 Brabant and Killick, *The Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, p. 42ff.

4 Dutch Policies and Interventions

This chapter explores the instruments used by the Dutch government to deal with the conflict in Afghanistan, and will give, where possible, indications of their effectiveness. Dutch diplomatic and bilateral relationships with Afghanistan are examined first, and the changes in the conceptualization of humanitarian aid and development policies in the 1990s are considered. Later sections focus on Dutch policies in practice, at the diplomatic and international level, and at the project level.

4.1 Dutch Diplomacy and Bilateral Relations with Afghanistan²⁴⁸

Diplomatic relationships between the Netherlands and Afghanistan are of a relatively recent nature. First attempts at entering official relations through a pact of friendship failed in the 1930s. It took until 1948 before the pact was sealed, and until 1965 before both countries entered official diplomatic relations. In the meantime, the Netherlands had established a consulate in Kabul, as well as a 'Netherlands-Afghanistan Foundation' focusing on promoting trade relations between the two countries.

Although the Netherlands was Afghanistan's second European trade partner in trade volume, political or other relations between the two countries were never special in any sense. The fact that in the 1970s Afghanistan was on the list of the world's 25 poorest countries, for instance, did not result in attempts to establish a relationship in the field of development aid. This was mainly a result of large-scale Soviet development activities in Afghanistan and fears of Soviet attempts to absorb Afghanistan into its sphere of influence. These fears became manifest in 1979 with the Soviet invasion of the country. This invasion implied that Afghanistan had suddenly moved from the periphery to the centre of Cold War world politics. It also implied that allies were requested to 'take measures' against the new government under the leadership of the United States. For the Netherlands, this implied that it did not recognize the new Soviet-installed government.

After the retreat of the Soviet troops, official recognition of Najibullah's puppet regime was not considered opportune for the Netherlands. As the situation in post-invasion Afghanistan developed into a civil war with no clear victors, relationships on the diplomatic level remained absent. This also applied to the *Taliban* rulers, whose rule is highly contested.

These problems notwithstanding, the Netherlands did become more interested in the Afghan imbroglio. During the period 1990-1998, the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation visited Afghanistan on several occasions. The Netherlands even became one of the largest donors of aid to Afghanistan. As there are no clear historical, or important diplomatic, financial and trade relations, it

248 This paragraph draws heavily on A.C. van der Zwan, *Historisch overzicht van de bilaterale betrekkingen tussen Nederland en Afghanistan*, (The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Documentary Information Systems Service, Research Unit, December 1994).

is suggested here that Dutch interest in Afghanistan can be linked to the new perspectives on development cooperation and humanitarian aid that emerged in the 1990s.

New Conceptions of Aid

Before the 1990s the provision of development aid was to a large degree determined and limited by political circumstances. The end of the Cold War seemed to provide new opportunities for aid in dealing with conflict and post-conflict situations, and conceptions of aid hence changed in the 1990s. This was also the case in the Netherlands.

Dutch interest in the relationship between aid and conflict increased in the 1990s. In 1990 the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs published the policy paper *Een wereld van verschil*,²⁴⁹ and in 1993 a policy paper focusing on the role of conflict, *Een wereld in geschil*.²⁵⁰ In 1993 the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs also published a policy memorandum focusing specifically on the role of humanitarian aid. In this memorandum, *Humanitarian Aid: Between Conflict and Development*,²⁵¹ it was concluded that the growing demand for humanitarian aid – often resulting from internal conflicts – in combination with the long duration of many conflicts called for a new approach. The UN had already introduced new concepts such as ‘peace-building’ and ‘peace-making’ in its *Agenda for Peace*.²⁵² Yet international law, and especially the principles of sovereignty and non-interference, complicated or even obstructed the use of these new instruments. This applied, and to some extent still applies, especially to the deployment of troops with the aim of *prevention, peace enforcement and ceasefire enforcement*.

The Dutch policy memorandum, however, did not focus on instruments of traditional diplomacy, or military means for intervention. Instead, the memorandum analysed possibilities for dealing with the causes and effects of conflicts from the perspective of development aid. As such, it linked up with discussions on the relationship between humanitarian aid and conflict prevention, and, in a wider sense, the discussion on rehabilitation, reconstruction, peace, security and development.

The ideas touched upon in the memorandum were further developed in a statement by the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation for the UN General Assembly in October 1996.²⁵³ This address became referred to as the ‘Princeton Speech’. Here the concepts of *development for peace* and *peace aid* were introduced. These concepts were based on the following assumptions: ‘the needs of people whose security is threatened by violent conflict require(s) a coherent and effective international response integrating preventive diplomacy, political mediation, humanitarian relief...social action, economic alternatives, [and] cultural communication. In one word: development.’²⁵⁴ Hence, the concepts aimed at linking aid to political initiatives. Analysis and lessons

249 *A World of Difference: A new Framework for Development Cooperation in the 1990s* (The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1990).

250 *A World of Dispute: A Survey of the Frontiers of Development Cooperation* (The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 1993).

251 *Humanitarian Aid between Conflict and Development* (The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 1993).

252 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peace-Making and Peace Keeping*, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992 (New York: United Nations, 1992).

253 *Statement by Mr Jan Pronk, Minister for Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*, in the General Debate in the Second Committee, Fifty-first Session of the United Nations General Assembly (New York, 14 October 1996).

254 Pronk, *Statement by Mr Jan Pronk*.

from the cases of Somalia and Rwanda were clear: ‘humanitarian aid cannot substitute for political action’. The analysis identified three challenges:

1. The integration of different policy instruments (political, military, relief, rehabilitation and development) in a coherent, overall framework;
2. Better coordination of the various external actors. This applied to those within the UN, as well as between the UN, governments and NGOs;
3. Better aligning external assistance with local efforts.

Apart from this focus on policies and actors the memorandum also addressed the aspect of timing. Common practice was only to start assistance after peace was officially declared, *i.e.* after a government was considered worthy of receiving assistance. Even then, the focus would still be on urgent humanitarian needs. The Dutch analysis instead advocated a different approach with a longer-term focus. The memorandum concluded that most countries in conflict seem to be locked up in a state of half-peace/half-war. Postponing aid until a situation of peace and stability arises could take too long. The proposed approach focused especially on countries in this state of transition from war to peace, with a minimal degree of security and peace as a precondition.

These new concepts of ‘development for peace’ and ‘peace aid’ indicated that it was considered necessary to move to ‘development activities in conflict situations, which can sustain preventive diplomacy and other peace-building measures of a more political nature’.²⁵⁵ As was stated in the Princeton Speech, such policies obviously needed to become part of national policies as well as of these international organizations. The Minister considered this imperative for their success, as in most cases operational programmes were (and are) coordinated by international organizations. However, it was also stated that coordination should not become an aim in itself, as this might ‘impede quick action, centralize functions that are better decentralized, and lead to general blueprints rather than situation-specific approaches’.²⁵⁶

The development-for-peace concept thus aimed at addressing situations of half-peace/half-war. One could say that Afghanistan fitted this profile during the period 1989-1998. Dutch interventions will therefore be analysed against the background of the development-for-peace concept. However, before considering the Dutch interventions in the conflict in Afghanistan at the international level, the implementation of ‘development for peace’ and the provision of emergency assistance, we need to outline the Dutch analyses of the conflict, and the implications that these had for policy-making. The Dutch analyses were based on various visits by delegations of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Afghanistan.

Dutch Analysis of the Conflict and the Possibilities for Intervention

During the period 1994-98, delegations of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands Embassy in Islamabad, and the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation visited Afghanistan on various occasions.²⁵⁷ The first visit took place in 1994. The report of this visit noted that although aid to Afghanistan had increased substantially as of 1993 (after a decline in 1992), the security situation in Afghanistan was far from stable. Kabul in particular was experiencing new outbursts of violence, which even resulted in the departure of several NGOs. The continuation of

²⁵⁵ Pronk, *Statement by Mr Jan Pronk*.

²⁵⁶ Pronk, *Statement by Mr Jan Pronk*.

²⁵⁷ For an overview of those Dutch diplomatic missions, see Annexe 6.

violence seemed to result in donor fatigue. These facts notwithstanding, the report expected that most Afghan refugees in Pakistan would return, as at that point in time large parts of the country were relatively peaceful. It was suggested that these areas should become the focus of aid projects. The report also suggested improving donor coordination.²⁵⁸

During follow-up visits, delegations concluded that aid to refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran was no longer a priority. Instead, attention had to be focused on repatriation and rehabilitation.²⁵⁹ However, as the humanitarian situation in large parts of the country was still deplorable, continuation of humanitarian assistance was still recommended in 1995. During 1995 it was also reported that although coordination had improved since 1994 due to the activities of ACBAR²⁶⁰ and UNOCHA, efficiency was still not very high.

In a letter to the Dutch parliament on the findings of a visit to cities in Afghanistan and Pakistan in June 1996, the Minister for Development Cooperation concluded that although no substantial structural aid could take place during the conflict, assistance should not be limited to emergency aid.²⁶¹ Assistance should focus on peaceful areas and the Afghan organizations in these areas that were involved in reconstruction activities, as well as on strengthening traditional social structures. In the letter he also announced the development of aid policies aimed at such circumstances.

In 1996 after a visit to the Dostam-controlled area in the northern part of Afghanistan, a Dutch delegation concluded that assistance in this region could focus on rehabilitation, and, given the relatively peaceful situation, development aid.²⁶² Food aid to refugee camps in Pakistan was no longer considered necessary. A visit to the *Taliban*-controlled areas during 1996 was equally positive. Although some critical remarks were made on the *Taliban*'s position on gender issues and the application of the Islamic *shariah*, it was suggested that this position was not completely inflexible. The reports suggested that aid could be used for moving the *Taliban* towards more tolerance. During these visits, it also became clear that the *Taliban*, as a result of their success on the battlefield, hoped for a military victory.

During the preparations for the Ashgabad conference (for details see section 4.2), a delegation of the Conflict Management and Humanitarian Aid Department (DCH) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Afghanistan on a fact-finding mission from 7-13 January 1997. This mission focused on the options for designing a coherent strategy that incorporated various policy instruments. In line with the development-for-peace concept, the instruments to be included would vary from political and military policies, to various types of aid. The mission also attempted to inventory the actors willing and able to participate in such a strategy. The findings of this mission²⁶³ were partly included in the keynote address delivered by the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation at the Ashgabad conference:

- Aid to Afghan refugees in Pakistan should be reduced, and the funds should be diverted to projects in Afghanistan. An exception could be made for education projects focusing on girls;

258 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file dmp/2025/00606.

259 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file dmp/2025/01571.

260 Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief, a coordinating agency for NGOs. ACBAR was established as a result of the Geneva Accords, with the aim of exchanging information between NGOs and representing these agencies in negotiations with the authorities.

261 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file DMP/NH/2017/00106, DAL/2018/00284.

262 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file dao/2001/00024.

263 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CP-26/97.

- In addition to emergency aid, assistance should also focus on rehabilitation aid in the peaceful areas of Afghanistan. This applied especially to agricultural projects and other types of income-generating projects (e.g. small enterprises, vocational training, et cetera);
- Reconstruction of institutional capacity was a serious problem that should become the focus of long-term aid;
- Peace aid had to be considered as essential. Such aid should aim at strengthening the few still existing civil organizations, as well as promoting initiatives for Afghan civil society. Projects should thus focus on promoting the establishment of new organizations and on strengthening their capacity;
- Implementing peace aid in a country like Afghanistan implied taking relatively great risks. Not to embark upon such a course would be unlikely to contribute to ending the conflict, but instead would contribute to its continuation.

As for the Dutch, it was concluded that the success of peace aid depended to a large degree on the capacity of Afghan organizations. However, developments in the field of capacity-building were deemed unsatisfactory. The efficacy and sustainability of aid were hence problematic.²⁶⁴

A mission in November 1997 reported that many development actors had difficulties with a merger of humanitarian and political goals. They were sceptical about possibilities to contribute to peace through aid, in the way that was promoted in the Strategic Framework. Moreover, the report concluded that humanitarian aid conflicted with the ‘do-no-harm’ approach. Aid discharged the warring factions from their duties to take care of the population, thus enabling them to concentrate on fighting. The development-for-peace approach also had its drawbacks. The emphasis on principle-centred assistance was problematic in the *Taliban*-controlled areas. Hence, it was no longer sufficient for areas to be peaceful. In addition, authorities had to be tolerant on specific topics. Lastly, the report concluded that civil society required strengthening.²⁶⁵ Despite these findings, the Minister for Development Cooperation decided to continue the development-for-peace approach. He suggested a balanced approach, in which both areas controlled by the *Taliban* and areas controlled by the Northern Coalition were to receive rehabilitation and reconstruction aid.²⁶⁶

During a visit in February 1998, the problem of institutional capacity was stressed again. The visit made clear that Afghanistan lacked an intelligentsia capable of providing political leadership to the country. It was decided to address this problem through a bottom-up approach, starting in the peaceful areas of the country, thereby reconfirming the development-for-peace approach.

4.2 Dutch Political Interventions at the International Level

The following paragraphs focus on all types of political intervention by the Netherlands related to the Afghan conflict during the period 1989-1998. This section considers Dutch diplomatic contacts and involvement in donor meetings; and the next section reviews Dutch development and emergency assistance.

264 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file 1/Afghanistan/os/noodhulp – lopende map dao.

265 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1/Afghanistan/os/noodhulp – lopende map dao.

266 Based on a memorandum dated 14 January 1998. The suggested areas were the province of Badakhshan, in the north-west of Afghanistan (controlled by the Northern Coalition), and the province of Nangarhar (bordering with Pakistan and controlled by the *Taliban*).

Diplomatic Contacts

Most official tours to Afghanistan in the period 1989-1998 can be characterized as attempts to intervene in the conflict. Delegations consisted of the Minister for Development Cooperation, delegations of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and delegations of the Netherlands Embassy in Pakistan.

During a 1996 tour,²⁶⁷ the Minister talked to the expelled President, Rabbani. During the talks, Rabbani pointed out that in his opinion external intervention – especially interference and support for the *Taliban* by Pakistan – was one of the main causes for the continuing conflict. Rabbani also appealed for more development aid projects. His rationalization for this appeal was that such projects would shift the focus from conflict to development. He even stated that the absence of projects had contributed to the conflict. This latter part of Rabbani's analysis was not supported, but it was confirmed that aid in peaceful areas could contribute to the peace process. The prospect of substantial reconstruction aid was directly coupled to peace, when the Minister stressed that if there was peace, a conference on reconstruction and development would be organized by the donor community.

This idea was also suggested to the Chief Minister of the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, Mr Sherpao. This part of the visit was linked to the plan to organize an international conference of countries related to the conflict, donors and aid agencies in December 1996. Peshawar was suggested as the location for this conference, although in the end, the conference was held in Ashgabad, Turkmenistan.²⁶⁸

During a 1998 visit to Afghanistan, the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation assessed the possibilities for initiating a peace process.²⁶⁹ His second aim was to assess whether peace aid could become instrumental for a peace process. With this aim, the Minister talked to several representatives of the *Taliban*. They indicated that they were open to outside mediation in the conflict, also by the UN. It became clear that the *Taliban* set high value on official recognition of their authority. The Minister tried to inform the *Taliban* on the normal procedures for obtaining a UN seat, as well as on the way in which to deal with UN organizations, hence providing them with prospects for official recognition (or at least not downplaying chances for recognition). The *Taliban* also showed interest in receiving reconstruction aid. In response to their interest, the Minister indicated that although he favoured such aid, it had to be coordinated by the international community in combination with Afghan NGOs. In the report of this mission²⁷⁰ an indirect link is suggested between the *Taliban*'s interest to negotiate and the problems that they were experiencing in recruiting soldiers. The NGOs the Minister consulted perceived this problem as a window of opportunity for successfully applying the concept of peace aid. Peace aid projects could help to convince the war-weary 'silent majority' to opt for peace.

Dutch Involvement in Donor Meetings

As of 1989 when the Soviet troops left Afghanistan, the Netherlands became one of the main donors of aid to Afghanistan. The Netherlands spent approximately US\$ 115 million on aid to Afghanistan during the period 1989-1997. Over the years 1995-1997, the Netherlands even became the fourth

267 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file DMP/NH/2017/00106, DAL/2018/00284.

268 As India, one of the participants to the meeting, objected to convening in Pakistan, the conference was moved to a politically less sensitive location in Turkmenistan.

269 15-22 February 1998; report in Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file DCH/2019/00584.

270 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file DCH/2019/00584.

donor, spending US\$ 84 million on aid according to DAC data (see Annexe 4). The Dutch also showed themselves to be an important actor in donor meetings. Dutch delegations mostly had the Minister for Development Cooperation as their leader. The Netherlands was also instrumental in organizing the donor meeting in Ashgabad in 1997.²⁷¹ However, Dutch interest was not just cheque-book driven. The Netherlands also promoted its development-for-peace approach. The next paragraph will assess Dutch participation in these meetings, as well as the points of view presented and their influence on the outcome of the meetings.

Dutch Participation in UN Meetings

The Netherlands participated in most UN meetings on Afghanistan, the only exception being a meeting in New York in November 1996 that was organized by UN-DHA. The aim of this meeting was to prevent individual countries from embarking upon uncoordinated peace missions. Attempts to do so by Pakistan, Iran and Japan were considered harmful to the UN's initiatives.²⁷² The Dutch absence at this meeting is remarkable given the fact that the Netherlands – at that point in time – was one of the main donors of aid to Afghanistan, and was known for advocating coordinated approaches. The absence was even more remarkable as the Netherlands and the UN cooperated actively in organizing the Ashgabad conference, which was to be held a few months later. In response to not being invited, the Netherlands Minister strongly expressed its disappointment to the organizer (UN/DHA).²⁷³ An explanation for the UN's decision to exclude the Dutch from being invited was not found.

In April 1997 the Netherlands participated in a UN meeting that centred around political issues. This meeting focused mainly on UNSMA's role in Afghanistan. The meeting concluded that a military victory by one of the two camps would not solve the conflict. The UN aimed at a government representing all parties to the conflict. In the meantime, all external interference sustaining the conflict should end. The meeting also advocated an arms embargo. Moreover, the UN stressed its wish to coordinate political and aid initiatives. These ideas corresponded with Dutch perceptions and plans.

The Ashgabad Conference, 1997

The Ashgabad meeting took place from 21-22 January 1997. The Netherlands supported this International Forum on Assistance to Afghanistan financially.²⁷⁴ During the meeting, the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation delivered a keynote address: 'A Time for a Change: Support for Peace in Afghanistan'. In this speech, the Minister outlined the concept of 'peace aid', as well as a 'development-for-peace' strategy in which development was integrated with political conflict management. Essential for this concept was the finding that Afghanistan was a country that was half in peace and half in conflict. He concluded that although this had resulted in the return of large numbers of refugees to the more peaceful areas, the international community had made no attempts to start a process of reconstruction targeted on these 'zones of peace'. In his opinion, reconstruction in these peaceful areas could stimulate sectors of the economy and society, and give parties in the conflict a

271 Support for the conference was financed through project AF005501. Financial support amounted to NLG 1.0 million.

272 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CP-149/96.

273 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DCH/CP-242/96.

274 Information on the preparations for the Forum is based on Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CP-149/96. The conference was initially to be co-chaired by the Netherlands. It was finally decided that DHA (Mr Y. Akashi) would be chair.

prospect of a non-violent future. Hence his appeal: 'Where a minimum degree of security exists, the international community must, together with actors in Afghanistan, be willing to go beyond emergency relief and humanitarian assistance'.²⁷⁵ More specifically, the strategy should focus on stimulating the rural economy in the peaceful areas. This would make people 'less dependent on a gun for their livelihood', and would help to address the problem of urbanization. The Minister made the following suggestions for an innovative approach for aid in Afghanistan:

- Donors should act according to the 'do-no-harm' principle. This also implied that donors should avoid providing aid to only one party or region;
- Aid should be used in combination with political and diplomatic instruments;
- Afghan (civil society) organizations should be involved more actively and, if necessary, strengthened;
- Donor as well as political activities should be coordinated and become part of one, coherent strategy. Such a coherent, unitary strategy should include all actors: donors, UN, NGOs, and Afghan organizations. Parochial interests should be set aside.

The outcomes of the meeting showed that the conference endorsed the Netherlands' point of view regarding: (a) the interdependence of peace and development; (b) the analogous implementation of rehabilitation and development programmes as well as emergency humanitarian relief activities; and (c) the need to formulate a common strategy. The appeal for a common strategy was translated into a request for a so-called 'Strategic Framework'. A first draft of this Framework was to be presented within six months.²⁷⁶ It was suggested that the Framework should focus on certain principles (human rights, the humanitarian imperative and the impartiality of aid), as well as give particular attention to gender issues and illicit drug production. These requirements can be interpreted as a first indication of a tendency towards principle-centred aid.

Dutch Participation in the Afghanistan Support Group (ASG) Meetings

As was described in chapter 3, one of the outcomes of the Ashgabad meeting was the establishment of an informal contact group of donors and international organizations that were active in Afghanistan: the Afghanistan Support Group. The Netherlands actively contributed to these meetings and the Netherlands' point of view several times was shared by many of the participants. Nevertheless, in a couple of instances, the Dutch proposals were ahead of the general opinion.

The first of these meetings, held in Geneva on 21 April 1997, was organized by the Netherlands and Norway. The Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation was chair of this meeting. During this first meeting, it was decided not to merge with a political meeting of the 'Group of 21'²⁷⁷ later in 1997 as was suggested by the Netherlands.

275 Pronk, J., *Time for a Change: Peace Aid in Afghanistan*, speech delivered in Ashgabad, 21-22 January 1997, p. 4.

276 It took until December 1997 before a first draft was presented to the Afghanistan Support Group.

277 The 'Group of 21' is a group of governments with influence in Afghanistan, including the following countries: China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uzbekistan, as well as the Organization of Islamic Countries.

During the second ASG meeting on 3 December 1997, all participating donor countries discussed and endorsed the draft 'Assistance Strategy for Afghanistan'. This draft included several ideas presented by the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation. However, the ASG rejected the proposal of a 'common fund' mechanism (an idea supported by the Netherlands). Instead, the ASG suggested extending the Consolidated Appeal and allotting it a management task.

During the third ASG meeting, the Netherlands, together with all ASG members, opted to focus on local community-level projects and the development of non-institutional capacity on the local level. This was the only alternative that made continuation of aid possible without compromising the donors. The other options, working according to ECHA guidelines, or cooperating with the authorities on capacity-building, would either imply a factual ending of aid, or would compromise the donors' position on fundamental principles.

During the fourth ASG meeting in December 1998, a DCH delegation representing the Netherlands again suggested a merger of the various consultation groups on Afghanistan. In view of the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, a merger was considered as beneficial in fusing the political and the humanitarian negotiation circuits. The ASG members did not react positively to this suggestion. Instead, the ASG took a firmer stance on *Taliban* restrictions, which it no longer intended to tolerate.

4.3 Conflict Prevention, Development Aid and Emergency Assistance

Over the period 1989-1998, the Netherlands funded 158 projects on Afghanistan.²⁷⁸ The earlier mentioned trend of an increase in Dutch interest in Afghanistan since 1989 is reflected in the number of projects financed. While during the period from 1989-1991 the Netherlands funded 21 projects, during the period 1992-1998 this number increased by 137 projects. Of these 158 projects, five concerned emergency assistance after earthquakes,²⁷⁹ and five were more or less of a general nature.²⁸⁰ The remaining 148 projects can be characterized as both *conflict-related* and *conflict-synchronous*. Over the period 1992-1998 more than NLG 120 million of Dutch government aid was given to Afghanistan.²⁸¹ Of this, the majority was administered by NGOs (almost 50 per cent) and IGOs (almost 48 per cent).²⁸² The Netherlands also contributed to various UN Inter-Agency Appeals and Consolidated Appeals for Assistance to Afghanistan.

Characteristics of Dutch Aid to Afghanistan

It could be questioned whether certain of these 148 projects, which were identified as conflict-related, should indeed be considered as such. One of these types of aid concerns agricultural projects. In general, such projects are not seen as conflict-preventive. In the case of Afghanistan, however, one has to make an exemption. One of the problems confronted by post-1989 Afghanistan concerned an almost total destruction of its agricultural structure. In pre-invasion Afghanistan, agriculture contributed up to 50 per cent of the country's national income, and up to 80 per cent of its export earnings.²⁸³ Post-invasion Afghanistan showed an almost completely reversed picture. Because of the

278 Annexe 7 contains an overview of these projects.

279 Projects AF006801, AF006802, AF007401, AF91901 and WW143001.

280 Projects AF004801, AF004901, AF005101, AF006101, and WW133512.

281 See Annexe 8.

282 See Annexe 9.

283 Harrison, 'Afghanistan', p. 56.

conflict, the countryside had been highly depopulated. The conflict had also resulted in a process of urbanization, concentrating up to 25 per cent of the population in the cities. In addition, a large number of people had fled the country. Those still active in agriculture had often shifted activities to the cultivation of cash crops for the main cities, as well as to opium poppies. For these reasons, any reconstruction of Afghanistan required special attention to the agricultural sector. Rebuilding this sector appeared to be imperative for the country's economy and food supply, as well as for promoting the return of (internal) refugees to the countryside. Several Dutch programmes during the period 1989-1998 focused on the agricultural sector. These programmes aimed at regenerating agricultural activities in the so-called 'zones of peace', in order to promote repatriation of refugees or peace building in 'zones of peace'.²⁸⁴ In total, 19 post-1991 projects related – more or less – to the issue of regenerating the agricultural sector. Programmes related to veterinary training were not included as being 'conflict-related'.²⁸⁵

Gender and human rights projects are also characterized as conflict-related. In the case of Afghanistan, the focus of Western donors on the role of women and girls caused serious controversy with the fundamentalist Islamic *Taliban*. The cultural controversy on the role of women in society had its effects on the aid provided by Western donors to the reconstruction process. On several occasions donor countries, including the Netherlands, discussed the role of women, especially the educational opportunities for girls, with the *Taliban* leaders. These discussions were never successful in that they failed to make the *Taliban* leadership more liberal in its point of view. In total, some seven post-1991 projects focused more or less on the role of women in Afghan society.²⁸⁶

Dutch projects on Afghanistan also focused on the repatriation of refugees. A large number of Afghans fled to the neighbouring countries of Pakistan (around 3.3 million according to 1990 government of Pakistan figures²⁸⁷) and Iran. After the Soviet retreat, projects for repatriation started. The Netherlands supported approximately 25 post-1991 projects aiming to promote repatriation, as well as to support those who repatriated.²⁸⁸

Shifts in Attention in Dutch Assistance

The signing of the Geneva Accords of 1988, and the retreat of Soviet troops in 1989, seemed to pave the way for donors to start repatriation, resettlement, reconstruction, and other types of assistance programmes for Afghanistan. In a letter to the Netherlands parliament, the then Minister for Development Cooperation P. Bukman stated: 'The framework for development cooperation is to a large degree determined by political circumstances'. In his letter to parliament he also pointed out that

284 This concerns the following projects: AF000701, AF000702, AF000703, AF001702, AF002701, AF003301, AF004204, AF005605, AF005607, AF006701, AF006901, AF007601, AF008201, AF008301, AF008502, AF89905, AF92901, AF92903, and AF92908.

285 Projects AF001501, AF001502, AF001503, AF004401, AF004402, AF89904, AF90901, AF90905, and AF92906.

286 This concerns the following projects: AF004202, AF004205, AF005901, AF007701, AF007702, PK001403, and PK001405.

287 R. van Rooyen, 'Repatriation of Afghan Refugees: A UNHCR Perspective', in S. Irfani and F. Rahman (eds), *Afghanistan: Looking to the Future*, seminar report of the Institute of Strategic Studies (Islamabad 1990), p. 54.

288 This concerns the following projects: AF000702, AF002101, AF002301, AF002302, AF002303, AF002304, AF002603, AF002701, AF002901, AF003001, AF003002, AF003101, AF003201, AF004101, AF005604, AF006901, AF008401, AF92902, AF92909, AF92910, AF92911, AF92912, AF92916, AF92918, and AF93901.

UN agencies were vital in coordinating resettlement and rehabilitation programmes. As regards the political situation, he stressed the historical weakness of the state and central government in Afghanistan. A bottom-up approach, focusing on grass roots and specific target groups, was hence considered imperative. As the political circumstances in Afghanistan were still too diffuse, he concluded that Dutch aid should also focus on refugees in neighbouring countries. Since these refugees would ultimately return, helping them through specific aid could strengthen their role in future development activities in Afghanistan.²⁸⁹ Hence, from 1989-1991 Dutch aid consisted mainly of food aid and bilateral aid to Afghan refugees.²⁹⁰

As of 1992, aid to refugees in Pakistan and Iran was cut down gradually. The UNHCR's aim was to accelerate the repatriation of refugees to Afghanistan.²⁹¹ From 1990-1992 there was also a change in Dutch aid programmes, in that the focus shifted to rehabilitation projects in Afghanistan. The Netherlands started rehabilitation projects in a number of Afghan provinces with the aim of encouraging the repatriation of refugees from Pakistan.²⁹² This shift can also be observed in the money spent on Afghan refugees in the region. The amount spent was reduced from NLG 12.3 million in 1990 to around NLG 2 million in 1991.

When the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk, presented an outline of the concept of 'development for peace' during the Ashgabad conference, Dutch aid projects were already designed along these lines. Projects funded by the DMP/NH,²⁹³ in particular, rested on the opinion that reconstruction could start in peaceful areas. In practice, this implied a focus on rehabilitation projects aimed at facilitating the return of Afghan refugees. Such projects were already started in 1989, and included mine-clearance, education and agricultural rehabilitation. Although rehabilitation was part of Dutch aid before 1992, it certainly became more prominent as of 1994.²⁹⁴ As regards training and education, the trend is clearer. There were about 15 training and education projects during the period 1992-1998, increasing as of 1995-1996 from roughly one each year to five in 1997.

Rehabilitation aid is the best indicator for the development-for-peace policy. In the case of Afghanistan this implied promoting peace through development and rehabilitation projects in the relatively peaceful areas. Our data show that the Netherlands funded three to four projects in 1991-1992. There was a dip in 1993, and a sudden increase as of 1994 with, depending on the definition of rehabilitation, five to ten projects. In 1996, there was a relapse in the number of projects, while 1997 showed an increase. The fluctuation seems to indicate a link between rehabilitation projects and the dynamics of the conflict.

Another indicator for assessing the importance of the development-for-peace policy is that most assistance projects to Afghanistan that were funded by the Netherlands after 1997 were linked to the

289 Letter to the *Tweede Kamer* by the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, P. Bukman, 22 May 1989, Kenmerk: 9/51570, Dossier: doa/1988-1994/00921.

290 See also the Memorandum of the Netherlands Embassy in Islamabad to the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation, dated 11 January 1989. The bulk of the projects from 1989-1991 focused on emergency and refugee aid.

291 The Netherlands Embassy in Islamabad refers to this policy in its Code to the Minister for Development Cooperation, dated 29 March 1991.

292 See project AF000701.

293 Directorate of Multilateral Development Cooperation and Special Programmes (DMP); NH stands for Emergency Aid.

294 These include the following projects: AF92912, AF92917, AF001701, AF002604, AF002902, AF003501, AF004601, AF005601, WW135101 and WW135107.

ASG's Strategic Framework and the revised Consolidated Appeal. In total, the Netherlands contributed to 27 such appeals during the period 1989-1998.²⁹⁵ The importance of the (reorganized) Consolidated Appeal Process for Dutch assistance to Afghanistan is also stressed in a memorandum of 10 March 1998.²⁹⁶ Here, the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation points out that efforts to reorganize assistance to Afghanistan through an integrated strategy by the international community have proven fruitful. The Netherlands has called for and supported this reorganization. However, he also stated that although some progress was made, the Consolidated Appeal to a large degree still reflected projects of the individual organizations involved. He concluded that the 1998 Appeal still lacked a clear ordering of projects according to region and sector. The Minister was also critical of NGOs. They proved only moderately interested in participating in the Consolidated Appeal process, as well as in focusing on the do-no-harm approach and on the goal of peace-building. This last aspect is attributed to a lack of insight into the concept of development for peace, and to a lack of vision.

Characteristic Development-for-Peace Projects

A large number of Dutch aid policies on Afghanistan aimed at starting and supporting rehabilitation projects at an early stage. The first, relatively large-scale rehabilitation project started in 1989-91. In fact, the activity consisted of four rehabilitation projects in four different Afghan provinces. These projects aimed at promoting the repatriation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. This project started in 1989, focusing on one province. In 1991, the project expanded to include three additional provinces.²⁹⁷

The project first started as a result of an inventory of damage and the priorities for rehabilitation. The Rehabilitation Programme of Afghanistan concluded that aid should focus on strengthening the agricultural infrastructure, increasing agricultural production, and improvement of health care. For the Netherlands, supporting such a project linked up with the policy aim of accelerating the return of refugees.

The project on 'strengthening the capacity and emergency aid on behalf of repatriating Iranian refugees'²⁹⁸ is another activity that can be characterized as typical of Dutch aid. This project was executed through an Afghan NGO called Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), which was established in 1989 with the aim of coordinating and providing emergency aid to returnees from Iran in western Afghanistan. As of 1989, however, CHA also focused on rehabilitation. During a visit of a DMP delegation to Afghanistan, it was concluded that CHA needed extra support aimed at strengthening its capacity. The project memorandum stressed the need for training and policy planning.

Another project during the period 1992-96 by *Stichting Oecemenisch Hulp* (SOH) concerned rehabilitation of educational facilities in the relatively peaceful province of Herat. At first sight the project seemed to be on the verge of normal development aid. However, rebuilding schools was perceived as an important push for rehabilitation and sustaining the peace process. The project was

295 Projects AF002601, AF002602, AF002603, AF002604, AF002901, AF002902, AF002903, AF002904, AF002905, AF003401, AF003501, AF003601, AF003701, AF004601, AF004602, AF004603, AF004604, AF005601, AF005602, AF005603, AF005604, AF005605, AF005606, AF005607, AF005608, AF005609, and AF008201.

296 This Memorandum also contains the concept of a letter to the Dutch parliament. This letter reports on a visit to Afghanistan in February 1998 by the Netherlands Minister for Development Cooperation.

297 In 1989, the project started as AF/92/901. In 1991 three projects were added: AF000701-AF000703. These projects continue up until the present.

298 Project AF003201.

executed by DACAAR (Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees), in cooperation with other organizations and local personnel.²⁹⁹

The Netherlands also contributed to rehabilitation projects related to an activity of the International Refugee Committee (IRC) in the eastern, western and southern regions of Afghanistan. The Netherlands funded this project³⁰⁰ because of its focus on local communities and NGOs.³⁰¹ The project was later included in the 1997 Consolidated Appeal for Assistance to Afghanistan.

The Netherlands also funded a community-level project in the Argu District in Badakhshan. This project can be directly related to the DCH delegation's visit in November 1997. Based on the findings of this mission, it was decided to start rehabilitation projects in two provinces, each controlled by different parties to the conflict. The aim was to strengthen the community's capacity, and, hence, sustainability of development. The project was executed through Afghanaid, an NGO focusing on infrastructure and agrarian rehabilitation projects. The security situation in this province was anything but stable with the *Taliban* troops closing in on the region, and local commanders acting more or less independently. Economically, the region was, even by Afghan standards, in a poor condition. This also applied to the humanitarian situation. The project aimed to contribute to peace-building in this region through micro-financing, as well as infrastructural and agricultural projects and community development.³⁰²

Another peace-building project, through the International Peace Academy (IPA), also matched the criteria of the development-for-peace concept.³⁰³ This project aimed at developing a strategy for peace-building in Afghanistan, and integrating activities of (I)NGOs and donor countries. In fact, the project matched perfectly with the attempt to establish a strategic framework for aid and peace-building activities. However, the project was postponed, and in the end cancelled, as a result of the sensitive relationship between Iran and Pakistan.³⁰⁴

Dutch aid also focused on capacity-building. The Dutch NGO NOVIB submitted a proposal on 'strengthening civil society in support of development'.³⁰⁵ Based on an analysis of local NGOs, NOVIB concluded that these Afghan NGOs lacked a strategic vision, as well as communicative skills, knowledge of development issues, knowledge of Afghanistan's rural society, and qualified and professional personnel. The project proposal focused on a number of Afghan NGOs with the aim of strengthening their capacity through workshops and training of the top and middle management. The proposal furthermore focused on human rights issues (including gender), education, environment and long-term sustainable development. The project aimed at bringing together NGOs with various ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Notwithstanding these aspects, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' response was rather cool. The project's approach was considered too broad, and focus on the peace process was only indirect. However, as the project evolved out of the Ashgabad meeting's conclusions, the advice to execute the programme was positive.³⁰⁶

299 Project AF003801.

300 Project AF006901.

301 Memorandums HH-305/97 and HH-0703/98.

302 Project AF007601. For the Memorandum, see Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, file HH-880/98/hw.

303 Project AF007501. A first evaluation was made in Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Memorandum CP-272/97.

304 Memorandum from DCH to the Netherlands Embassy in Islamabad, 28 June 1999.

305 Project AF006601.

306 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Memorandum C-132/98.

4.4 Assessment of Dutch Policies and Interventions

Various visits by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs resulted in a number of findings, analyses and policy recommendations. First, it was concluded that a quick fix of the conflict was not to be expected. The Afghan state was confronting serious problems in the field of institutional capacity and civil society. Strengthening both sectors was considered necessary for the development-for-peace approach, as well as for the sustainability of peace. It was also concluded that Afghanistan was a country with zones of war and zones of peace. In these peaceful areas rehabilitation and reconstruction processes could be started. The refugee problem was considered to become less important over the years. Therefore, the focus had to shift to activities within Afghanistan. The conflict areas, however, still required humanitarian and emergency assistance. In view of the fact that humanitarian aid could sustain conflict, it was stipulated that Dutch programmes had to be in accordance with the do-no-harm approach. The Netherlands tried to facilitate all parties in the conflict.

Overall, the Minister for Development Cooperation visited Afghanistan on three occasions during the period 1996-98. Those visits had a strong focus on the peace process. During the visits the Minister tried to convince the warring factions that peace was imperative for reconstruction of the country. By linking substantial aid to peace and promising extra aid in peaceful areas of the country, even in the absence of a peace agreement, the Minister used (the perspective on) aid as a negotiation tool.

In development assistance and emergency aid, the development-for-peace approach gained prominence as of 1994. The fluctuation in certain types of assistance seems to indicate a link between rehabilitation projects and the dynamics of the conflict. Rehabilitation projects were related to repatriation of refugees, agricultural activities in peaceful areas, gender-related projects, and strengthening of civil society and institutional capacity at the community level. As of 1997, most Dutch-funded projects to Afghanistan were linked to the Consolidated Appeals, and the ASG's Strategic Framework.

At the international level, the Dutch were prominent in various donor meetings. During these meetings, the development-for-peace approach was actively promoted. The Netherlands was also instrumental in organizing the Ashgabad conference. In the ASG meetings, the Netherlands pressed for donor coordination through actively promoting the formulation of a Strategic Framework for assistance to Afghanistan, Common Programming, and participation in UNOCHA's Consolidated Appeals. The Netherlands even suggested a merger of various political and developmental consultation groups on Afghanistan, as well as the establishment of a common fund mechanism, but these suggestions were not supported by other ASG members.

Overall, one can conclude that the Netherlands started at an early stage with a policy strategy that resembled the concept of development for peace, and was consistent in its approach. However, Dutch consistency and attempts to promote a stronger linkage between political goals and development assistance at the international level encountered hesitance and scepticism. One can even say that some proposals were 'a bridge too far'.

5 Major Findings and Lessons Learned

5.1 Analysis of the Conflict

From the outline of the Afghan imbroglio a number of factors have been deduced as underlying and accounting for the continuing violence. First, the problems related to the process of state formation. The analysis pointed to a lack of state coherence and continued return to competition and fighting in Afghanistan, which resulted from the country's history. Afghanistan has never had a strong government or sense of state. Hence, a centre that could manage or build the state had never been developed, and traditional communities have strongly resisted encroachment by the state. In the absence of a strong political centre, a power-sharing system emerged in which regions and their leaders had a certain degree of autonomy. This system provided some stability in the absence of a strong state, but was destroyed during the Soviet occupation. During the Soviet period, regional identities gained extra importance, while traditional relations between tribal leaders and the population deteriorated. The outcome is all but encouraging. While the chances for centralization of power and unification of the state were weak in the past, they are even worse at present.

A second factor concerns the gradual breakdown of traditional order in relations among the different ethnic groups. Both the Soviet invasion and the continuous infighting afterwards eroded the political balance among the various ethnic groups. During their invasion the Soviets cooperated with the Uzbeks, Tajiks and Hazara, and, in the process made it possible for these groups to exercise administrative and political autonomy in their respective territories. This process first resulted in a decline of power for the Pushtun. As most resistance came from Pushtun areas, the Pushtun also became the major targets for retaliation. The resulting exodus of Pushtun fleeing the country undermined their traditional position in Afghan society even further. The traditional order eroded further during the occupation and the following civil war, as militia gradually came to represent the political objectives of their populations.

More recently in particular, analyses have come to characterize the violence in Afghanistan as an ethnic conflict. As indicated, such characterizations are too simple, and could result in inappropriate attempts and measures to address the conflict. Although the role of ethnicity in the conflict grew after 1989, it would still be inappropriate to label the conflict as 'ethnic'. Analysis shows that the regional factor and personal rivalries among different leaders were more important. These resulted in various, continuously shifting alliances. The importance of the ethnic factor is also downplayed due to internal divisions within ethnic groups. In practice, almost every group was at one time both the ally and the opponent of every other group, regardless of ethnicity. It would hence be wrong to present the ethnic groups as homogeneous. These facts notwithstanding, the ethnic factor became more important with -

the rise of the (largely Pushtun) *Taliban* and their acts of violence and even a type of ethnic cleansing in areas and cities in the north.

The rise of the *Taliban* introduced a third factor: a struggle over the nature of society. All parties to the conflict support the goal of an Islamic state. The *Taliban*, however, differ from the other Islamist movements in that their creed is primarily religious and not political, and centres on personal behaviour and religious community. They do not seek to create a political ideology, but want to use the *shariah* as sole guide with the help of the *ulema*. These aspirations do not oppose the goal of a unified state. In fact, they presuppose a unified state. However, as this goal has to be reached through the establishment of a religious community, it excludes any form of regional autonomy or federal arrangements. This implies the end of historic leadership structures and the exclusion of power-sharing arrangements.

Apart from internal factors, the interference of regional actors fuelling the conflict constitutes a fourth factor. The departure of the Soviets and the fading interests of the US in the country resulted in a power vacuum that was filled by regional powers such as Pakistan and Iran, and minor players such as the Central Asian republics. These regional powers started to support warring factions in Afghanistan for ethnic and religious as well as political and security reasons.

This combination of factors indicates that the Afghan conflict manifested itself at various levels: the international system (during the Soviet invasion); the regional level (the relationship with neighbouring countries); the national level (the various groups within society); and the societal level (the struggle over the nature of society). All levels are interrelated. Consequently, attempts at mediation have to pay attention to them all. Simply focusing at one level is not enough.

5.2 Analysis of International Interventions

The Afghan conflict has been mediated intensively, but without clear success. First, the Geneva Accords of 1988 failed. They were meant to settle matters in Afghanistan after the Soviets retreated. With hindsight it is safe to say that they were mainly an agreement to settle the external factors in the conflict, *i.e.* to provide an exit out of the conflict for the Soviet Union and the US. Internally, the Accords failed because there was no link to a political settlement at the domestic level. This was demonstrated most clearly by the fact that the Najibullah regime was able to remain in power for several years. Failure to solve these problems at the domestic level set the stage for a new round of fighting.

Second, consecutive attempts by the UN to realize a settlement through the formation of an interim government failed due to several reasons. In contrast to its application elsewhere, the international community was not willing to make sufficient provisions to sustain the peace process. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, discord among local parties and their aspirations for regional autonomy implied that they too were not committed to the formation of an interim government. Lastly, the lack of a basic governmental infrastructure with strong state institutions implied that the concept had little chance for success in the Afghan context. There was no agreed upon political order to sustain the process. These local conditions were not sufficiently analysed. Instead, the convenience of 'proven concepts' in combination with a lack of clear analysis provided input for yet another series of conflicts.

The rise of the *Taliban* did not alter this situation. Even the fact that they proved to be the most successful on the battlefield – conquering 90 per cent of the country in four years – implied no change. Their authority is still highly contested. It may even be questioned whether a complete military victory by the *Taliban* would solve Afghanistan's problems. Given their particular interpretation of Islam,

their predominantly Pushtun composition, and the form of government for which they stand, such a situation appears unacceptable for the groups in the north of the country. In addition, most neighbouring countries – except for Pakistan – will also have problems accepting a *Taliban* victory. Even the ‘limited’ success of the *Taliban* so far has caused problems for the international community. First, as a result of their military successes and a prospect of total victory, they were not willing to opt for a peace process. Mediation efforts, therefore, failed time and again. Second, the mediators – mainly from the West – represented a contesting ideology of state and society. These opposing ideologies resulted in what came increasingly to be seen as a sort of ‘clash of civilizations’. The persistence of the different sides in keeping to their viewpoints implies that there was – and is – little room for diplomatic manoeuvring.

The analysis of international interventions indicates that the international community (*i.e.* the West) has little leverage over the *Taliban*. Attempts to influence the *Taliban*’s goals and behaviour were also complicated as a result of the support that they received from neighbouring Pakistan. Furthermore, the *Taliban* were only to a limited extent dependent on assistance from donors. The amounts of international aid faded away compared to the income gained from smuggling and narcotics production. In the end, international political recognition was the only means of leverage for the international community. The only countries that recognize the *Taliban* regime are Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. However, it is doubtful whether international recognition provides enough leverage to influence *Taliban* politics. In fact, the present labelling of Afghanistan as a ‘narco’ or ‘rogue state’ (or, according to the latest typology, ‘state of concern’) indicates a movement towards isolation.

As regards the conflict and the possibilities for a peace process, the analysis indicates that it is imperative to include the regional level. All parties to the conflict, including the *Taliban*, depend on support from neighbouring countries. The ‘6+2 group’ was installed to involve these neighbouring countries in peace negotiations. However, as some participating countries – especially Pakistan and Iran – continue their support to warring factions, this group is unlikely to succeed. It is also uncertain whether regional supporters, notwithstanding their support, really can influence the *Taliban*. There are no clear indications so far that they can. However, it could be contemplated not only to exert pressure on the *Taliban* (and other parties), but also on their supporters.

In addition to various diplomatic means, the international community also tried to influence the situation in Afghanistan through assistance-related instruments. To this aim, the donor community to Afghanistan developed a Strategic Framework and Common Programming, as well as a Consolidated Appeal structure. Central to these instruments is the concept of supporting peace through linkage of assistance and diplomatic/political instruments. However, there were several problems involved. First, the absence of a government in Afghanistan – or, in this case, recognized authorities of that kind – made development of a strategy through a national plan very difficult. Second, the donor community had embarked upon two different processes. While the Strategic Framework in the first place aimed at linking humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance to political objectives of conflict reduction, the Common Programming structure stemmed mainly from a call for improving coordination and effectiveness of assistance. Not only was it difficult for the donor community to develop common strategic goals, but pursuing these goals through assistance generated an even greater number of dilemmas. The various actors involved had different objectives and mandates. This complicated coordination and therefore consistent policies and approaches. This applied in particular to dealing with the dilemma of humanitarian aid versus the do-no-harm principle.

The limited success of assistance-related instruments resulted also from the *Taliban*’s firm stance. The *Taliban* did not share the donor community’s views and objectives as regards a peace settlement,

human rights (including gender) and the structure of society. Rehabilitation hence remains problematic even though a large part of the country can now be characterized as a zone of peace. The unreliability of the authorities and their posture not to budge an inch to the requests of the donor community complicate and, to some extent even prevent, application of the new frameworks.

In review, the limited success of external interventions in the Afghan conflict can largely be attributed to four factors: firstly, a lack of political commitment by international and regional actors to end the conflict; secondly, disconnection between the intended outcomes of the interventions and the realities on the ground; thirdly, the failure to address adequately ideological differences between the *Taliban* and the Western countries; and, fourthly, disagreement by the international community on how to implement aid in support of political goals and misconceptions about the leverage of aid.

5.3 Analysis of the Dutch Interventions

The limitations for the international donor community, of course, also apply to the Netherlands. However, it should be noted that the Netherlands firmly advocated the linkage of humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance and conflict prevention. To this aim, several policy memorandums were produced, focusing on the concepts of 'peace aid' and 'development for peace'. These concepts were, in addition, applied in a consistent way in the case of Afghanistan. Dutch-funded projects focused to a high degree on these concepts, and several appraisals explicitly refer to these concepts as guidelines. This applied especially to the projects funded through UNOCHA's Consolidated Appeals.

The Netherlands also actively promoted the development-for-peace concept internationally. The Princeton Speech and the keynote address at the Ashgabad conference are cases in point. At a later stage, the Netherlands also participated in the Afghanistan Support Group. Here they supported far-reaching measures such as a common-fund mechanism and a merger of various political and developmental consultation groups. This, however, was 'a bridge too far' for the international donor community. Discord and doubts among some participants in the ASG over the possible success of the development for peace approach in the Afghan context prevented any further movement towards integrating both concepts.

Afghanistan appeared as an ideal case for application of the concept. Due to its half-peace/half-conflict character, it should be possible to strengthen the peace process through focused assistance in the peaceful areas. Hence, it was expected not only to support peace in these areas, but also to affect the zones of war in a positive way. In practice, however, application of the concept proved very difficult, due to the realities on the ground and the ideological differences with the *Taliban*. In addition, a principled approach propagated in isolation cannot be expected to succeed.

5.4 Lessons Learned

Various lessons can be learned from this study of conflict in Afghanistan and the international response to it. In the first place, the Afghan case highlights the importance of political commitment by international and regional actors to end a conflict. After the departure of the Soviets, the international community's attention on Afghanistan decreased considerably, while at the same time external support to warring factions did not cease. Without substantial backing and limited provisions, the intentions of the UN for an interim government in the early 1990s stood little chance. It took until the capture of Kabul before the international community again took serious interest in Afghan affairs. The loss of interest not only contributed to a loss of control over the situation in Afghanistan, but also led to the

erosion of credibility of later efforts. Hence, the first lesson teaches that mediation in a conflict requires a continued and long-term involvement and commitment.

A second lesson is that mediation requires a deeper understanding of the factors involved and their relatedness, as well as the dynamics of the conflict. Assessment of the Afghan imbroglio shows a series of factors having influence at several interrelated levels. Consequently, any attempt at mediation has to address all levels, and to incorporate the different factors. Consecutive efforts of the international community have fallen short in this respect. Cases in point are the Geneva Accords, which in essence served as a way out of the Afghan conflict for the major powers. They resorted to the idea that with their departure the major problems were settled, thereby negating the erosion of the state system by the Soviet occupation, changes in power balances among the various ethnic, religious and regional groups, and continued interest by regional powers. The UN efforts for an interim government, although addressing the internal struggle, failed to incorporate the dynamics on the ground. The aimed-for interim government was unacceptable to the armed factions, and in fact unattainable in the Afghan context of that moment, as state institutions had collapsed. All the efforts failed to come to an acceptable domestic settlement. It indicates that any policy response, in order to be successful, requires a thorough analysis of the local situation. In this regard the Afghan case may not differ from other cases, but the complexity of the conflict makes such understanding even more imperative.

Good analysis and assessments are also imperative for successful humanitarian or development interventions. The third lesson, therefore, is that for development assistance to become effective as an instrument in positively influencing conflict, one needs to be aware of the possibilities that one has as an outsider. In Afghanistan, efforts for generating peace have only had very limited success, if at all. Good intentions such as development-for-peace approaches make no sense unless they are based on adequate analyses and instruments. Lack of means to exert pressure or to have leverage implies no sustainable success can be expected. Given the limited means available to the donor community, some modesty is required when it comes to expecting results in terms of conflict and peace.

In order to become more effective, all instruments available to the international community need to be integrated. This implies a complete fusion of political and developmental instruments, in combination with clear policies and goals. It also requires better coordination and cooperation. This is the fourth lesson. However, integrating political goals and humanitarian assistance implies a series of dilemmas. While providing humanitarian assistance may easily conflict with the do-no-harm approach, providing no assistance at all may collide with the right to humanitarian assistance. It is therefore necessary to make fundamental choices, or to weigh short-term humanitarian goals against longer-term conflict-management goals. In its practical implementation, the development-for-peace approach still has a long way to go.

A fifth lesson is not to rely too heavily on concepts in conflict interventions. In the Princeton Speech it was mentioned that coordination should not become an aim in itself, as this might 'impede quick action, centralize functions that are better decentralized, and lead to general blueprints rather than situation-specific approaches'. This is applicable to the case of Afghanistan. While the Strategic Framework and Common Programming have led to reorganizations that from the outside appear as coherent, many dilemmas and problems – mostly related to planning, coordination and implementation – remained. This became most obvious in the problems involved in the funding of UNOCHA's programmes. Coherence in policies, strategic frameworks, principle-centred approaches and the role of development assistance in addressing conflicts have nearly become aims in themselves. Instead of discussing the need and use of certain approaches in specific cases, discussions seem to focus on general strategies for implementation. In the end, this may obstruct effectiveness of assistance.

A final lesson relates specifically to the Dutch development-for-peace approach. While reviewing the Dutch efforts to mitigate the conflict in Afghanistan, one is struck by the enormous insistence of contributing in one way or another. In order for development for peace to become a success story, adequate analysis of local situations as well as available policy instruments is required. As regards implementation, monitoring the impact of interventions and continued analysis of the dynamics and the overall context of the conflict are imperative. And even then, such an approach can only be successful if it is supported by other donors. In order to appraise the effect of activities, the do-no-harm principle and impact assessment should also be applied and compared to the programmes of various donors and NGOs in conflict areas. The need for better coordination will then become obvious.

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Annexe 1 Political Dossiers Consulted³⁰⁷

1 / Afghanistan / buitenlandse politiek / Nederland / basisgegevens
de behartiging van de diplomatieke betrekkingen tussen Afghanistan en Nederland
lopende map

1 / Afghanistan / OS / Noodhulp
de noodhulp aan Afghanistan
Jaar: 1998
lopende map

DCH / beleid / landen / Azië en Oceanië
lopende map (1999)

DCH/CP / OS-activiteit / aanvragen / Afghanistan / projecthulp / IPA
project on peacebuilding in Afghanistan
DCH / 2005 / 00001

1 / Afghanistan / ontwikkelingssamenwerking / noodhulp
de noodhulp aan Afghanistan
Jaar: 1996 – 1997
DDI-DAO / 2002 / 00017

1 / Afghanistan / ontwikkelingssamenwerking / hulpprogramma's
hulpprogramma's t.b.v. Afghanistan
Jaar: 1995 – 1996
DDI-DOA / 2001 / 00024

1 / Afghanistan / VN / conferenties
conferenties mbt de situatie in Afghanistan
Jaar: 1996 – 1997 (sep-nov)
DAO / ARA / 00034

307 The titles of these dossiers are indicated in Dutch to enable future consultation and reference.

DMP/IB / beleid / structureel / bijeenkomsten board landen
beleidsvorming en beleidsuitdraging in samenwerking met het ministerie van financiën met betrekking tot projecten en activiteiten ten behoeve van Afghanistan ter bespreking in de board of directors
DMP / IB / 2002 / 00043

1 / Afghanistan / VN
de verhouding tussen Afghanistan en de Verenigde Naties (VN)
Jaar: 1995 – 1996 (aug)
DDI-DOA / 2001 / 00047

DCH / bijeenkomsten
international conference on Afghanistan Ashgabad 1997-01-21 t/m 1997-01-22, beleid
DCH / 2019 / 00076

zittingen / 47e AVVN 1992 / speeches op land A-C / Berichtgeving ter kennisname
speeches gehouden voor de algemene vergadering der VN door bewindvoerders
Jaar: 1992 – 1993
DDI-DIO / 1998 / 00076

DMP/NH / beleid / structureel / dienstreizen / landen Azië regio
beleidsvorming en beleidsuitdraging ten behoeve van bezoek, 1996-06-14/19 van R aan Afghanistan en Pakistan
DMP/NH / 2017 / 00106

DCH / dienstreizen / regio Azië
bezoek van medewerker DCH/CP en medewerker DCH/NH aan Pakistan en Afghanistan, 1997-01-01 t/m 1997-01-13, beleid
Jaar: 1997
DCH / 2018 / 00107

DCH / dienstreizen
beleidsvorming en beleidsuitdraging ten behoeve van bezoek 1996-09-18 van dirix a mbt Afghanistan ervaringen
Jaar: 1996 – 1996
DCH / 2017 / 00117

DAL / beleid / structureel / Afghanistan
beleidsvoorbereiding
Jaar: 1995 – 1996
DAL / 2018 / 00119

DCH / bijeenkomsten / Afghanistan
briefing tbv Nederlandse NGO's, 1998-02-05
Jaar: 1998 – 1998
DCH / 2019 / 00135

DMP/NH / algemeen / ondersteunend / landen Afghanistan
berichtgevingen ter kennisname inzake – Afghanistan

DMP/NH / 2002 / 00141

Dossier DMP/NH / beleid structureel / DDI-DMP / landen Afghanistan
beleidsvorming en beleidsuitdraging met betrekking tot – Afghanistan

Jaar (vanaf): 1992

DMP / 00154

DDI-DPV / DPV/PZ / VN / VR / vredesoperaties

United Nations good offices mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP), beleid, bijdrage

Jaar: 1990 – 1990

DPV / ARA / 00159

DGIS/CM / Azië / landen / Afghanistan

Documentatie en beleid Afghanistan

Jaar: 1994 – 1996

DGIS/CM / ARA / 00165

DCH / dienstreizen

dienstreizen DCH 1996-1997, beleid

Jaar: 1997

DCH / 2019 / 00166

DCH / landen / Azië en Oceanië / Afghanistan / beleid

Jaar: 1996

DCH / 2019 / 00218

DCH / beleid / bijeenkomsten / overlegstructuren / land

Afghanistan Support Group meeting, third meeting londen, 1998-05-05

DCH / 2019 / 00219

DCH / bijeenkomsten / overlegstructuren

Afghanistan Support Group, londen, 1998-05-05, beleid

Jaar: 1998-1998

DCH / 2019 / 00220

DCH / bijeenkomsten

Afghanistan Support Group

DCH / 2019 / 00221

DAL / beleid / structureel / bezoeken

bezoek R (Pronk HP) aan Afgh. en Pakistan 1996-06-15 – 1996-06-19

DAL / 2018 / 00284

1 / Afghanistan / buitenlandse politiek / Nederland
de diplomatieke betrekkingen tussen Afghanistan en Nederland
DDI-DOA / ARA / 00422

DCH / bijeenkomsten / overlegstructuren / land
Afghanistan Support Group meetings, beleid
DCH / 2019 / 00475

DCH / dienstreizen / Azië en Oceanië
regio Azië en Oceanië, beleid
Jaar: 1998
DCH / 2019 / 00508

DCH / parlement
kamervragen en kamerbrieven mbt Afghanistan, beleid
Jaar: 1996
DCH / 2019 / 00511

DCH / beleid / bijeenkomsten / overlegstructuren / land
Afghanistan Support Group meeting, second meeting New York, 1997-12-03
Jaar: 1997 – 1998
DCH / 2019 / 00520

DCH / beleid / bijeenkomsten / overlegstructuren / land
Afghanistan Support Group meeting, second meeting New York, 1997-12-03
DCH / 2019 / 00521

DCH / beleid / landen / Azië en Oceanië
Afghanistan, mijnopruijing
DCH / 2019 / 00529

DCH / landen / Azië en Oceanië
Afghanistan, beleid
Jaar: 1998
DCH / 2019 / 00530

DCH / bezoeken / R
bezoek van R aan Afghanistan en Pakistan, 1998-02-16 t/m 1998-02-21, beleid
Jaar: 1998
DCH / 2019 / 00584

DMP/NH / beleid / structureel / bezoeken / humanitaire hulp
beleidsvorming en beleidsuitdraging tbv bezoek aan Afghanistan en Pakistan
vanaf: 1994
DMP/NH / 2025 / 00606

DPV/PZ / landen

Afghanistan / beleid / instructie

Deel: 01

Jaar: 1990 – 1991

DPV / ARA / 00718

DSI/VR / beleid / structureel / bijeenkomsten

correspondentie inzake bijeenkomsten van de Afgh. Support Group

Jaar: 1997

DDI-DSI / 00741

Afghanistan / ontwikkelingssamenwerking

Jaar: 1990-1992 (jan-dec)

DOA / 1988-1994 / 00921

Afghanistan / ontwikkelingssamenwerking

Jaar: 1993-1994 (jan-dec)

DOA / 1988-1994 / 00922

Afghanistan / Verenigde Naties (VN)

akkoorden van Genève inzake Afghanistan

Jaar: 1990 – 1992 (jan-okt)

DOA / 1998-1994 / 00931

Afghanistan / Verenigde Naties (VN)

Jaar: 1991 – 1994 (jan-dec)

DOA / 1988-1994 / 00932

DMP/NH / beleid / structureel

humanitaire hulp bijeenkomsten

Jaar: (vanaf) 1995

DMP / 2025 / 01552

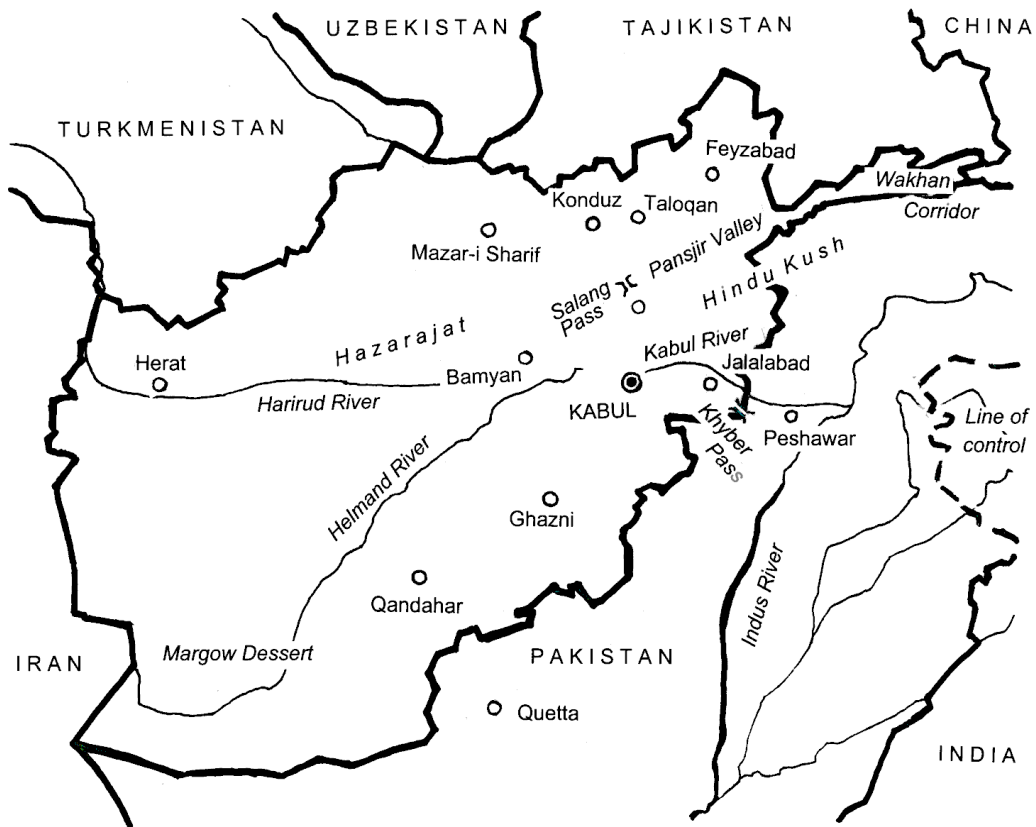
DMP/NH / beleid / structureel / bezoeken

beleidsvorming en beleidsuitdraging ten behoeve van bezoek, 1995-03/04-31/08, van DMP/NH aan Pakistan en Afghanistan

Jaar: (vanaf) 1995

DMP / 2025 / 01571

Annexe 2 Map of Afghanistan



Annexe 3 Afghan Political Leaders since Independence, and Major Parties and Factions

1933-1973

King Muhammad Zahir Shah

During his reign the following Prime Ministers served:

Sardar Muhammad Hashim Khan (1929-1946)

Sardar Shah Mahmood Khan (1946-1953)

Sardar Muhammad Daoud Khan (1953-1963)

Muhammad Yusuf Khan (1963-1965)

Muhammad Hashim Maiwandwal (1965-1967)

Muhammad Nur Ahmad Itemadi (1967-1971)

Sharifi Abdul Zahir (1971-1972)

Muhammad Musa Shafiq (1972-1973)

1973-1978

Sardar Muhammad Daoud Khan (President and Prime Minister)

1978-1979

Nur Muhammad Taraki (Chairman of the Revolutionary Council (CRC), President and Prime Minister)

1979

Hafizullah Amin (CRC, President and Prime Minister)

1980-1986

Babrak Karmal (CRC, President, General Secretary of the APDP)

Prime Ministers:

Babrak Karmal (1980-1981)

Sultan Ali Keshmand (1981-1988)

1986-1987

Haji Muhammad Chamkani (CRC, President)

Sultan Ali Keshmand (Prime Minister)

1987-1992

Muhammad Najibullah (CRC (in 1987 only), President, and from 1986 onwards also General Secretary of the APDP/*Watan*)

Prime Ministers:

- Sultan Ali Keshmand* (1981-1988)
- Muhammad Hassan Sharq* (1988-1989)
- Sultan Ali Keshmand* (1989-1990)
- Fazal Haq Khaliqyar* (1990-1992)
- Abdul Sabur Farid Kuhestani* (1992)

1992

Abdul Rahim Hatif (acting President)

1992

Sibghatullah Mojadeddi (acting President)

1992-1996

Burhanuddin Rabbani (President)

Prime Ministers:

- Gulbuddin Hikmatyar* (1993-1994)
- Arsala Rahmani* (1994-1995, acting)
- Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai* (1995-1996, acting)
- Gulbuddin Hikmatyar* (1996)

1996-

Muhammad Rabbani (Chairman of the Ruling Council, interim)

PDPA/*Watan*

People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, came up in the 1960s, renamed into *Watan* after 1989. PDPA basically existed of two factions and split up along this division in the early 1990s:

- *Khalq* (lit. 'Banner') the more hard-line revolutionary wing of the PDPA, came into power with the 1978 revolution. Nur Muhammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin were its leaders.
- *Parcham* (lit. 'Masses') the more conciliatory wing of the PDPA, came into power in 1979 under its leader Babrak Karmal.

Jamiat

Jamiat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan, Islamic Society of Afghanistan, was founded by Burhanuddin Rabbani in 1973. Primarily composed of Tajiks. Commander Ahmed Shah Masoud is affiliated to this party.

Hizb-i Islami

Hizb-i Islami-yi Afghanistan, Islamic Party of Afghanistan, split off from *Jamiat* in 1979, led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar.

Wahdat

Hizb-i Wahdat-i Islami-yi Afghanistan, Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan, founded in 1988, Muhammad Karim Khalili and Abdul Ali Mazari were its leaders. Mainly supported by the Hazara population.

Junbish

Junbish-i Milli-yi Afghanistan, National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, founded by Abdul Rashid Dostam. Mainly composed of Uzbek.

Taliban

Arose in 1994, its ultimate leader is Mullah Muhammad Omar.

Annexe 4 Net ODA Flows of the Most Important OECD Donors to Afghanistan; in Millions of US\$ per Year

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total
USA	40	56	59	65	42	53	2	2	0	319
Germany	8.6	8.1	5.5	15	16.1	21.6	15.6	17.4	18.5	126.4
Netherlands	2.6	3.1	0.7	5.2	10	12.4	26.6	12.3	42.9	115.8
Sweden	16.7	16.1	4.8	13	9.1	12.4	15.3	14.8	12.2	114.4
Norway	1.2	3.4	8	8.5	8.9	8.9	9.2	7.6	8.8	64.5
Canada	1	2.7	5.3	4.7	7.6	7.2	7.1	3.9	13.4	52.9
UK	4.1	2.4	3.2	3.1	2.2	5.3	10.9	8.6	9.5	49.3
Denmark	1.6	1.6	2.7	3.2	4.3	2	5.6	3.9	2.8	27.7
France	1.9	1.9	1.5	1.4	2.1	4.4	3.5	2.5	1.7	20.9
Switzerland	1.8	2	2.7	3.9	1.5	1.6	3.4	1.5	2.2	20.6
Australia	0.4	1.2	4.8	0.4	0.8	2.9	2.9	2	4.1	19.5
Finland	1.1	0.2	2.3	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.4	3.5	2.6	15.3
Austria	1.4	1.5	0.6	1.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	2.9	1.8	11.8
Italy	0	0	0.4	0	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.6	3.2
Luxembourg	0	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.6
Belgium	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0	0.9	1.5
Ireland	0	0.1	0	0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.6	1.4
N. Zealand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.2	0.3
Spain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0.1	0.2
Japan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total bilateral	82.4	100.6	101.7	126.7	107.4	134.7	105.9	84.5	123.4	967.3
Multilateral	86.3	38.2	34.8	74.2	116.6	88.9	109.1	144.1	155.3	847.5
Total ODA	168.7	138.8	136.5	200.9	224	223.6	215	228.6	278.7	1814.8

Source: OECD-DAC, Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Aid Recipients

Note: ODA is defined by the DAC as ‘those flows to developing countries and multilateral institutions provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies, each transaction of which meets the following tests:

- It is administered with the promotion of economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective; and
- It is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25 percent. To calculate the grant element of an ODA transaction, a 10 per cent discount rate is used.³⁰⁸

The table displays *net* ODA, which, in the explanation of DAC, differs from gross ODA in the following sense: ‘At the same time as DAC Members are extending new grants and credits to the developing world, they are also receiving repayments of principal. Accordingly, the data on total new flows (gross disbursements) are adjusted to a net basis by deducting amortization receipts, recoveries on grants or grant-like flows, and repatriation of capital occurring during the period of report (“net flow” or “net disbursements”). Flows originating from transactions undertaken on initiative of residents of developing countries (balance-of-payment liability side entries) are not recorded in DAC statistics.’³⁰⁹

308 Development Assistance Committee statistical reporting directives, DAC(88)10, part I (24 February 1988).

309 Development Assistance Committee statistical reporting directives, DAC(88)10, part I (24 February 1988).

Annexe 5 Overview of International Meetings concerning Aid to Afghanistan

Date and Location	Conference	Representative for the Netherlands	Objectives	Outcomes
1 June 1995, Stockholm	Donor conference	DMP/NH	Meeting of donors and aid agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – More attention needs to be given to fundamental issues – Different phases of assistance (emergency aid and rehabilitation) need to be integrated
18 November 1996, New York	Political UN meeting	–	Finding a political solution for the crisis in Afghanistan	Consultation will continue
21-22 January 1997, Ashgabad	Donor conference, International Forum on Assistance to Afghanistan	Minister for Development Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Defining a common strategy for assistance to Afghanistan – Integration of assistance and political mediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Coordination of assistance needs to be strengthened – A better balance is needed between the diplomatic role and the provision of assistance by the UN – Optimal participation of Afghans – Strengthening governance structures – Special attention for drugs and de-mining – Priority for the rural areas – Involvement of women needs to be stimulated

16 April 1997, New York	Political meeting of the UN	Permanent Representation to the UN, New York	Finding a political solution for the Afghan crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – UN needs to continue to play a central role – Restriction of the trade of arms – Better balance between political and assistance initiatives
21 April 1997, Geneva	First meeting of the ASG (Afghanistan Support Group)	Minister for Development Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Keep Ashgabad going – Discussing the achievements since Ashgabad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – UN coordinator appointed – Strategic Framework is in progress
3 December 1997, New York	Second meeting of the ASG	Minister for Development Cooperation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Other donors voice their agreement with the major ideas of the Ashgabad meeting – Donors need to use financing to steer assistance
5 May 1998, London	Third meeting of the ASG	Minister for Development Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reaching consensus on Principled Common Programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthening of civil society is needed – Principles of human rights need to be observed in the implementation of activities in cooperation with the <i>Taliban</i>
7-8 December 1998, Tokyo	Fourth meeting of the ASG	DCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reaching consensus on a common strategy for assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Common Programming is in progress – Proposal to set up an independent strategic monitoring capacity endorsed

Annexe 6 Overview of Dutch Diplomatic Visits to Afghanistan

Date	Department involved	Objective of the mission	Analysis	Conclusion
5-15 April 1994	DMP/NH	Inventory of the need for emergency assistance	Reasonably quiet in large parts of the country	Less assistance is needed for refugees in Pakistan
31 March-11 April 1995	DMP/NH	Inventory of the need for emergency assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Violence in Kabul is flaring up as a result of the <i>Taliban</i> – Donor coordination is required 	More attention needs to be given to the repatriation of refugees
26-28 March 1996	Embassy, Islamabad	Get an impression of the situation in the northern, Dostam-controlled areas of the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Situation in the north is stabile – emergency phase has almost come to an end – Rehabilitation assistance is needed 	Assistance to refugees in neighbouring countries has to be halted
31 March-2 April 1996	Embassy, Islamabad	Get an impression of the situation in the southern, <i>Taliban</i> -controlled city of Qandahar	Large-scale repatriation is taking place	Assistance might be used as a leverage for the gender issue

6-8 April 1996	Embassy, Islamabad	Get an impression of the situation in Herat	<i>Taliban</i> welcomes all assistance, provided it is not conditional	
15-19 June 1996	Minister of Development Cooperation	Get an impression of the humanitarian situation and the refugee problem in both Afghanistan and Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fighting is limited to Kabul – <i>Taliban</i> are not interested in peace negotiations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Supporting Afghan organizations might contribute to the peace process – More assistance is promised if the parties reach a peaceful solution of the conflict – Proposal of a donor conference is made
7-13 January 1997	DCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fact-finding mission for the Ashgabad conference – Inventory of how different policy instruments can contribute to a coherent strategy 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Confirmation of the policy to limit assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan in favour of assistance within Afghanistan itself – Recommendation to provide rehabilitation assistance in peaceful areas – Support to institution capacity – Peace-supporting assistance deemed necessary: support to local organizations, capacity-building
23 January 1997	Minister for Development Cooperation	Meeting with representatives of Dostam		Substantial reconstruction can only take place in the context of peace and an improvement of human rights situation

9-19 November 1997	DCH	Considering the possibilities of contributing to the peace process	A transition is observed from emergency to rehabilitation assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – capacity-building needs more attention – Attention has to be given to the elements of the Ashgabad speech: integration of humanitarian and political objectives, Strategic Framework, Do-No-Harm, Rehabilitation, and civil society
15-22 February 1998	Minister for Development Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Further orientation on the possibilities for the peace process – Attention for the current position of women 	<i>Taliban</i> appear willing to talk about peace through negotiations	The international community needs a common strategy for the provision of assistance

Annexe 7 List of Conflict-related Projects Financed by the Dutch Government

Starting Year	Project Number	Category	Organization involved
1989	AF89901A	Emergency Aid	INDOORS/ICCO
	AF89901B	Emergency Aid	INDOORS/ICCO
	AF89902	Medical Aid Healthcare	NOVIB
	AF89904	Veterinary Training	Afghanen in Nood
	AF89905	Rehabilitation Agriculture	UNHCR
	AF89906	Emergency Aid	ARC/NOVIB
	AF89907	Medical Emergency Aid Healthcare	AZG
	AF89908	Education	Afghan Education Committee
1990	AF90901	Veterinary Training	Afghanen in Nood
	AF90902	Emergency Aid	UNICEF
	AF90903	Medical Aid Healthcare	NOVIB
	AF90904	Emergency Aid	ARC
	AF90905	Veterinary Training	Afghanen in Nood
	AF90906	Emergency Aid	INDOORS
1991	AF91901	Emergency Assistance after earthquakes	Dutch Embassy
	AF91902	Healthcare	AVICEN/Stichting Vluchteling
	AF92901	Rehabilitation Agriculture	IRC/Stichting Vluchteling
	AF92902	Rehabilitation Agriculture	IRC/Stichting Vluchteling
	AF92903	Rehabilitation Agriculture	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF92904	Rehabilitation	NOVIB
	AF92906	Veterinary Training	AFGCIE
1992	AF92907	Emergency Aid	FAO/WFP
	AF92908	Rehabilitation Agriculture Education Medical Aid Healthcare	NOVIB

	AF92909	Rehabilitation	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF92910	Repatriation Rehabilitation	UNHCR
	AF92911	Repatriation Healthcare Sanitation	UNICEF
	AF92912	Mine clearing	UNOCA
	AF92913	Medical Emergency Aid	ICRC
	AF92914	Emergency Aid	WFP/UNOCA
	AF92915	Healthcare	UNICEF
	AF92916	Repatriation Emergency Aid	UNHCR
	AF92917	Mine clearing	UNOCA
	AF92918	Repatriation Rehabilitation	UNHCR
	AF92919	Medical Aid Healthcare	NOVIB
	AF93901	Repatriation Rehabilitation	Stichting Vluchteling
1993	AF000701	Rehabilitation Agriculture Healthcare Education	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF001501	Veterinary Training	AFGCIE
	AF001701	Mine-clearing	UNOCHA
	AF001702	Rehabilitation Agriculture	FAO
	AF002101	Repatriation Rehabilitation	UNHCR
1994	AF000702	Rehabilitation Agriculture Healthcare Education	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF001502	Veterinary Training	AFGCIE
	AF002301	Medical Emergency Aid Healthcare	AZG
	AF002302	Medical Emergency Aid Healthcare	AZG
	AF002303	Medical Emergency Aid Healthcare	AZG
	AF002501	Emergency Aid	ICRC
	AF002601	Contribution CAP-94 Emergency Aid	WFP
	AF002602	Contribution CAP-94 Sanitation Medical Aid Healthcare	UNICEF
	AF002603	Contribution CAP-94 Repatriation	UNHCR
	AF002604	Contribution CAP-94 Mine clearing	UNOCHA
	PK001301	Emergency Aid	ACBAR

	PK001403	Education Women	Stichting Vluchteling
	PK001404	Medical Aid Healthcare	Stichting Vluchteling
	PK001504	Medical Aid Healthcare	HAF
	PK001506	Medical Aid Healthcare	HAF
1995	AF000703	Rehabilitation	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF001503	Veterinary Training	AFGCIE
	AF002304	Medical Emergency Aid	AZG
	AF002402	Medical Aid	HAF
	AF002701	Rehabilitation Agriculture	SOH/DACAAR
	AF002801	Rehabilitation Medical Aid	ICRC
	AF002901	Contribution CAP-95 Repatriation	UNHCR
	AF002902	Contribution CAP-95 Mine clearing Emergency Aid	UNOCHA
	AF002903	Contribution CAP-95 Sanitation	UNCHS
	AF002904	Contribution CAP-95 Emergency Aid	WFP
	AF002905	Contribution CAP-95 Medical Aid Healthcare Education Sanitation	UNICEF
	AF003001	Rehabilitation	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF003101	Emergency Aid	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF003201	Rehabilitation Emergency Aid	NOVIB
	AF003301	Rehabilitation Agriculture	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF003401	Contribution UN Appeal Healthcare Education	UNICEF
	AF003501	Contribution UN Appeal Relief Mine clearing	UNOCHA
	AF003601	Contribution UN Appeal Emergency Aid Rehabilitation	WFP
	AF003701	Contribution UN Appeal Sanitation	UNCHS
	AF003801	Rehabilitation	SOH
	AF003901	Emergency Aid	ICRC
	AF004001	Emergency Aid	RCNL
	AF004101	Emergency Aid	NOVIB
	PK001302	Emergency Aid	ACBAR
	PK001405	Emergency Aid Healthcare Education Women	Stichting Vluchteling
	PK001507	Medical Aid Healthcare	HAF
	PK001508	Medical Aid Healthcare	HAF

1996	AF004002	Emergency Aid	RCNL
	AF004201	Medical Aid Healthcare	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF004202	Education Women	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF004203	Rehabilitation Agriculture Education	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF004301	Emergency Aid	NOVIB
	AF004401	Veterinary Training	AFGCIE
	AF004402	Veterinary Training	AFGCIE
	AF004501	Emergency Aid	ACTED
	AF004601	Contribution UNOCHA Appeal Mine clearing Emergency Aid	UNDHA
	AF004602	Contribution CAP Repatriation	UNHCR
	AF004603	Contribution CAP Emergency Rehabilitation	WFP
	AF004604	Contribution CAP Healthcare Education Sanitation	UNICEF
	AF004701	Sanitation	UNCHS
	AF004702	Sanitation	UNCHS
	AF004801	General	WFP
	AF004901	Medical Aid Healthcare	UNICEF
	AF005001	Contribution Emergency Appeal Medical Aid Rehabilitation	ICRC
	AF005002	Contribution Emergency Appeal Emergency Aid	ICRC
	AF005101	KAP	Dutch Embassy
	PK001509	Medical Aid Healthcare	HAF
	PK013101	Emergency Aid	ACBAR
	PK013201	Medical Aid Healthcare	HAF
1997	AF003002	Rehabilitation	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF004204	Rehabilitation Agriculture	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF004205	Education Women	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF004502	Emergency Aid	ACTED
	AF005501	Contribution to the International Conference on Afghanistan	DHAUN
	AF005601	Contribution CAP Mine clearing	DHAUN/UNOCHA
	AF005602	Contribution CAP Emergency Rehabilitation	WFP
	AF005603	Contribution CAP Medical Aid Healthcare Education Sanitation	UNICEF
	AF005604	Contribution CAP Repatriation	UNHCR
	AF005605	Contribution CAP	UNOPS

	Rehabilitation Agriculture		
AF005606	Contribution CAP Anti Narcotics	UNDCP	
AF005607	Contribution CAP Rehabilitation Agriculture	ICRC	
AF005608	Contribution CAP Medical Aid Healthcare	RCNL	
AF005609	Contribution CAP Medical Aid Healthcare	UNICEF	
AF005801	Rehabilitation	Save the Children	
AF005901	Rehabilitation Women	Stichting Vluchteling	
AF006001	Education	Stichting Vluchteling	
AF006101	Healthcare	SCFUS	
AF006201	Rehabilitation Technical Training	NOVIB	
AF006301	Mine Action Programme Training civilians	UNOCHA	
AF006401	Emergency Medical Aid Healthcare	AZG Belgie	
AF006601	Rehabilitation Civil Society	NOVIB	
AF006701	Rehabilitation Agriculture	SOH	
AF006901	Rehabilitation Agriculture	Stichting Vluchteling	
PK013102	Emergency Aid	ACBAR	
WW111514	DGIS-Mission	DGIS	
WW113501	Conflict Research + Extension	ICHR	
1998	AF006703	Sanitation	SOH
	AF006801	Emergency Assistance after earthquakes	RCNL
	AF006802	Emergency Assistance after earthquakes	OCHA
	AF007001	Medical Aid Healthcare	AZG
	AF007101	Medical Aid Healthcare	Health Net International
	AF007301	Sanitation	SOH
	AF007401	Emergency Assistance after earthquakes	NOVIB
	AF007601	Rehabilitation Agriculture Healthcare Community Development	Afghan Aid
	AF007701	Education Women	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF007901	Emergency Aid	ACBAR
	AF008201	Contribution CAP Medical Aid Healthcare Rehabilitation Agriculture	ICRC
	AF008301	Rehabilitation Agriculture	UNOPS

	AF008401	Repatriation	UNHCR
	WW133508	Rehabilitation Education	SCFUS
	WW133512	Evaluation Healthcare programme	ETC
	WW135101	Mine clearing	UNOCHA
	WW135107	Mine clearing	UNOCHA
	WW143001	Emergency Assistance after earthquakes	Dutch Ministry of Defence
	WW149611	Contribution Emergency Appeal	ICRC
Starting	AF001703	Emergency Appeal	UNOCHA
Years not	AF005701	Cultural Activities	SPACH
Specified	AF007002	Medical Aid Healthcare	AZG
	AF007201	Forensic Research	PHR
	AF007702	Education Women	Stichting Vluchteling
	AF008502	Rehabilitation Agriculture	AREA/NOVIB
	AF008701	Sanitation Healthcare	SOH
	AF008801	Medical Aid Healthcare	HNI

Source: Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Annexe 8 Gross Dutch Government Aid to Afghanistan in NLG, Divided per Character of the Aid, with Conflict-related Aid split out per DAC Sector Category³¹⁰

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Emergency distress relief	0	0	0	0	0	159,600	0	159,600
Humanitarian aid	5,000,000	8,000,000	5,500,000	13,766,171	11,505,389	13,376,050	7,845,281	64,992,892
Emergency medical relief	649,475	500,000	2,441,436	897,964	181,020	0	0	4,669,895
Refugee education relief	0	0	140,000	0	117,420	16,318	0	273,738
Emergency food relief	1,500,000	0	1,500,000	1,677,757	3,955,114	0	0	8,632,871
Reconstruction relief	2,131,964	1,950,000	1,250,000	2,307,868	2,897,094	7,334,481	4,950,000	22,821,408
Other conflict-related aid	3,519,946	2,282,333	1,147,090	2,606,283	1,682,567	3,002,202	2,436,554	16,676,976
Non-conflict-related aid	0	0	0	0	331,594	106,884	2,543,226	2,981,704
Total ODA	12,801,385	12,732,333	11,978,526	21,256,043	20,670,199	23,995,537	17,775,062	121,209,085

Sources: MIDAS, FOS, GBS, DAS.

Note: The flows registered in the MIDAS system and other administrative systems of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (except for MIDAS+) form only part of the total gross ODA. The total amount of gross ODA, next to the activities mentioned in MIDAS, also consists of funds disbursed via the co-financing organizations (MFOs), VPO, PSO, VMP, SNV, GI/KPA, HPI, the reception of refugees, and smaller activities.³¹¹ Most of these funds are shown in MIDAS as lump-sum amounts given to the programmes and organizations. More specific information on the way that these funds have been spent has to be retrieved from the organization or programme concerned. At the same time

310 Data collection and analysis for this table was undertaken by J. van der Lijn.

311 Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs BSC, *Mini-questionnaire 1997, financiële stromen tussen Nederlanden ontwikkelingslanden* (The Hague, 21 August 1998).

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs registers non-ODA grants in its systems. In particular, NGOs that are not officially recognized by the DAC are to be found in this group of non-ODA activities. Therefore, this and the following tables concern 'Dutch development aid' instead of ODA. Dutch government aid is defined as: all ODA and non-ODA over which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has direct control of its allocation, and which, as a result, can be found on a per activity base in the registrational systems of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The categorization of aid data has mostly been retrieved from the DAS system, which uses the OECD-DAC CRS sector categorizations, as laid down by the DAC in 1991. Data from this system have been preferred above the categorizations mentioned in the MIDAS system, because they are more punctual. The categorizations in MIDAS are introduced into the system by the activity managers, whereas the categorizations in DAS are introduced by a special categorization division, which also consults the activity managers on its findings. MIDAS does not always adopt the differences of the DAS categorization with the MIDAS system. However, it is on the basis of the DAS findings that it is reported to the DAC. The MIDAS-categorization was only applied in the cases that activities were not administered in DAS. In the cases of MFO flows, the categorization was undertaken on the basis of the description of activities in their '*kenschetsen*' (profiles).

Annexe 9 Distribution of Dutch Government Aid, in NLG³¹²

Total Dutch government Aid (TDGA)

	NCR	CR	Total Dutch Government Aid	% CR of TDGA
1992	0	12,801,385	12,801,385	100%
1993	0	12,732,333	12,732,333	100%
1994	0	11,978,526	11,978,526	100%
1995	0	21,256,043	21,256,043	100%
1996	331,594	20,338,604	20,670,199	98%
1997	106,884	23,888,653	23,995,537	100%
1998	2,543,226	15,231,836	17,775,062	86%
	2,981,705	118,227,380	121,209,085	98%

Dutch government aid administered by the Dutch government

	NCR	CR	Total (NCR + CR)	% of TDGA	% CR of Total
1992	0	0	0	0%	-
1993	0	0	0	0%	-
1994	0	0	0	0%	-
1995	0	0	0	0%	-
1996	31,594	0	31,594	0.2%	0%
1997	0	8,663	8,663	0%	100%
1998	63,657	0	63,657	0.4%	0%
	95,251	8,663	103,914	0.1%	8%

312 Data collection and analysis for this tables was undertaken by J. van der Lijn.

Dutch government aid administered by the MFOs

	NCR	CR	Total (NCR + CR)	% of TDGA	% CR of Total
1992	0	1,089,100	1,089,100	8.5%	100%
1993	0	300,000	300,000	2.4%	100%
1994	0	0	0	0%	-
1995	0	380,734	380,734	1.8%	100%
1996	0	342,214	342,214	1.7%	100%
1997	0	255,111	255,111	1.0%	100%
1998	494,400	364,208	858,608	4.8%	42%
	494,400	2,731,367	3,225,767	2.7%	85%

Dutch government aid administered by the NGOs

	NCR	CR	Total (NCR + CR)	% of TDGA	% CR of Total
1992	0	3,712,285	3,712,285	29%	100%
1993	0	4,932,333	4,932,333	39%	100%
1994	0	5,978,526	5,978,526	50%	100%
1995	0	11,665,818	11,665,818	55%	100%
1996	0	11,595,997	11,595,996	56%	100%
1997	106,884	10,315,278	10,422,163	43%	99%
1998	1,955,518	9,917,628	11,873,146	67%	84%
	2,062,403	58,117,865	60,180,268	50%	97%

Dutch government aid administered by the IGOs

	NCR	CR	Total (NCR + CR)	% of TDGA	% CR of Total
1992	0	8,000,000	8,000,000	63%	100%
1993	0	7,500,000	7,500,000	59%	100%
1994	0	6,000,000	6,000,000	50%	100%
1995	0	9,209,491	9,209,490	43%	100%
1996	300,000	8,400,393	8,700,394	42%	97%
1997	0	13,309,600	13,309,600	55%	100%
1998	29,651	4,950,000	4,979,651	28%	99%
	329,651	57,369,484	57,699,135	48%	99%

Sources: MIDAS, FOS, GBS, DAS.

Note: Dutch development aid flows have been divided into two categories: conflict-related (CR) and non-conflict-related (NCR). Conflict-related aid is defined here as all aid disbursed with the intention

of altering or influencing the intensity, length or consequences of a conflict. This should be viewed in a broad sense. This means that the definition includes:

- All emergency or refugee aid (humanitarian, food, medical, educational, etc.) that is necessary as a consequence of the conflict during or after the conflict.
- All activities aimed at terminating or de-escalating the conflict. This includes all diplomatic and peace-building interventions (negotiations, demobilization, etc.).
- All interventions aimed at promoting cooperation among parties to the conflict.
- All relief aimed at rehabilitating all economic and societal sectors that have suffered from the conflict back to the pre-conflict level.
- All activities that support or stimulate ‘good governance’ in the broad sense (human rights, democracy, etc.) with the intention of reducing the effects of, terminating or preventing (the recurrence of) conflict.

In order to distinguish whether Dutch government aid activities were conflict-related or not, the objective of every activity (obtained from MIDAS) has been viewed and compared with this definition of conflict-related aid. If the MIDAS data were not sufficient to determine the character of the aim, the MIDAS activity objective was supplemented with information from the BEMO (*Beoordelingsmemorandum*) on the activity.

Dutch government development assistance to the developing world is disbursed in various ways. For every development assistance activity, MIDAS distinguishes administrative and executive organizations. These executive and administrative organizations vary from non-governmental to governmental, international, national, profit organizations, etc. The MIDAS system only mentions the names of these organizations, it does not categorize them. In this table these organizations have been categorized. We have chosen to show the flows according to their administrative organizations and not to their executing organizations, as the administrative organizations are deemed more important for the nature of the financial flows:

- *The Dutch government*: The Dutch government can be the activity administrator through various organizations (e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including DGIS), other ministries, Dutch embassies, or lower governmental authorities). In many cases the aid in this category is disbursed to a recipient government. A large part of the financial flows administered by the Dutch government is therefore bilateral (government to government) in character. However, this cannot be seen as the rule.
- *MFOs (Mede-Financierings Organisaties)*: are national non-governmental development organizations that receive an annual lump sum for disbursements on development cooperation projects from the Dutch government budget on development cooperation. The Dutch government does not define on which (type of) projects the funds should be spent. However, the Dutch government may also request a MFO to administer an activity with additional funding by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, a MFO can request the Dutch government to give additional funding for a certain project. The funds in this category are additional and do not belong to the lump sum.
- *(I)NGOs*: Funds disbursed by the Dutch government via non-governmental organizations are activities under the administration of non-governmental non-profit organizations, which can be international (INGOs) or national, Dutch or foreign. Excluded, however, are the MFOs and the SNV, which are distinguished as separate categories.

- *The IGOs*: Disbursements via Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) are funds that are under the administration of organizations such as the United Nations, or its specialized agencies, development banks, etc. This type of aid does not concern multilateral aid. According to the DAC definition of multilateral aid,³¹³ the funds disbursed via the IGOs in this category are not multilateral, since these funds are not pooled and they retain their Dutch identity. However, the development assistance activities in this category do have a multilateral character. In order to distinguish this category from multilateral and bilateral aid flows, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls it the ‘multibi’ aid flow.

The above tables indicate for each administrative flow:

- The distribution over conflict-related (CR) and non-conflict-related (NCR) assistance;
- The total amount disbursed through the respective channel;
- The percentage that this flow represents of the total Dutch government aid (TDGA);
- The percentage of the aid disbursed through the respective channel provided to conflict-related assistance.

Some additional projects have not been taken up in the tables:

- WW 042201: In 1995 three million guilders were earmarked for Afghanistan in the funds spent on the 1993 ICRC Emergency Appeal (MIDAS);
- WWW 109401: In the second voluntary contribution to the ICRC field budget 1996, three million guilders were earmarked for Afghanistan (MIDAS);
- WW 131501: In the 1997 ICRC emergency aid project, two million guilders were earmarked for Afghanistan (MIDAS).

313 OECD, Development Assistance Committee, statistical reporting directives, DAC(88)10 part 1 (24 February 1988).

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