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# Local Afghan Power Structures and the International Military Intervention

*A review of developments in Badakhshan and Kunduz provinces*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the beginning of the 2001 intervention in Afghanistan, the contributing nations to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) have declared that their aim is to 'assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority' over the whole territory of Afghanistan. This report attempts to answer whether and to what extent ISAF forces have been successful in accomplishing their task in the two northeastern provinces of Kunduz and Badakhshan. To answer the question, this report maps the power distribution and the constellations between the most-significant political actors of both provinces and relates them to actions of the central government and the international actors working in Afghanistan. In unprecedented detail, this study takes the first step toward assessing ISAF's effects and uncovers developments on the grassroots level that have been largely unnoticed. It hopes to encourage further research on other regions and thereby kick-start a more-comprehensive lessons-learned process that goes beyond mere technicalities and acknowledges the social realities of power and rule in Afghanistan.

The power structures of Kunduz and, to a lesser extent, Badakhshan had already fragmented before the intervention in 2001. In contrast to Badakhshan, the distribution of power among Kunduz' commanders of armed groups changed considerably because of the fall of the Taliban. Affiliates of Jamiat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (Islamic Society of Afghanistan) became slightly superior to those of other politico-military parties. Mainly Pashtuns, but also members of other ethnicities without affiliation to the groups in power, were marginalised. In Badakhshan, Jamiat affiliates clearly dominated but were split between supporters of former President Burhanuddin Rabbani and the party's Shura-ye Nazar-e Shomal (Supervisory Council of the North) faction. Since the mid-2000s in Kunduz and since the late 2000s to a much lower degree in Badakhshan, the Taliban received major support from those parts of the population excluded from the provincial patronage networks. In Kunduz, they were therefore able to severely challenge existing power brokers in some districts at the end of the decade.

The government of Hamed Karzai has never been united. It has always consisted of several factions with patronage ties to the local level that compete for influence. To exert control over the provinces, President Karzai shifted positions to proxies in a 'divide and rule' manner or tried to create counterweights against opposing factions. Karzai's main competitors in Kunduz and Badakhshan were power brokers affiliated to the Jamiat party and especially its Shura-ye Nazar faction. In both provinces, he therefore cooperated with actors of the second-most-important groups: the Hezb-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (Islamic Party of Afghanistan), sometimes Rabbani's Jamiat faction and strongmen of the Ittehad-e Islami bara-ye Azadi-ye Afghanistan (Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan), later renamed Tanzim-e Dawat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (Organisation for the Islamic Call of Afghanistan).

Since 2004, Germany has led both provincial reconstruction teams (PRT) in Kunduz and Badakhshan and therefore provided most forces in these areas. In contrast to representatives of other nations, the Germans attempted only in a few instances to actively influence the major power structure. Once they tried to replace provincial chiefs of police in the context of police pay and rank reform (PRR). However, they did not intentionally target the power structures as such, but aimed at illegal and unprofessional behaviour of police officials in general. Generally, they kept to the legalistic principle of cooperating with official power holders and otherwise tried to stay neutral. But in some cases, they also worked with the strongest unofficial actors to prevent conflicts and trouble for the PRTs. In 2009, the Americans significantly reinforced their troops in Kunduz because the insurgency in the northeast had grown tremendously. They focussed on fighting the Taliban and their allies. To this end, they supported militias who belonged to local power brokers. A lack of strategy, related to the different interests involved, hampered all of ISAF's efforts, including those to actively influence the local power structure.

Comparable to the civil-war period, power brokers in Kunduz and Badakhshan constantly tried to balance each other's power assets by forming alliances or gaining similar advantages. The international military presence, however, changed the rules of the power games, preventing open large-scale violence, common from the 1990s until the early years of the intervention. Afghan power

brokers were therefore forced to achieve their aims without openly using mass violence – though they still applied it in a covert and limited way – and to transform their military power into a formalised and non-violent form. Also, the international community's Afghanistan project created incentives to refrain from large-scale violence and instead peacefully compete for the rents accessible in different forms from foreign donors. Many local commanders therefore directly or indirectly profited from international projects.

Local power structures in Badakhshan and Kunduz fluctuated but as a whole remained largely unchanged over the course of the intervention. This is confirmed by a detailed analysis of the distribution of major provincial and district positions. Though some actors were more successful in transforming their civil-war role into one suitable for the Karzai period, and a new class of educated intermediaries emerged, the differences were not decisive overall. This was especially true after the build-up of pro-government militias in the late 2000s again strengthened the major commanders. Furthermore, Karzai's efforts did not enable him to rule both provinces. However, he did succeed in denying his Jamiat competitors unchallenged domination over both areas.

The approach of the mainly German PRT forces – to focus on the official as well as, in some cases, the most powerful strongmen – cemented the existing power distribution. In addition, though the underprivileged segments of the population in both provinces initially greeted German efforts to prevent 'collateral damage', because they cooperated with government officials, locals saw them as accomplices of the ruling class. The Americans' counterinsurgency approach had the same effects since to fight the insurgents they allied with established power brokers and finally helped them to fight back attempts to challenge the latter's rule. Any changes of the local power structure the internationals attempted only worked in cooperation with local allies. The results of this study show that the post-2001 international intervention did not significantly change the power structure of Kunduz and Badakhshan province. Rather, it affected how the actors dealt with each other and strengthened some pre-2002 trends. Mostly, however, the local power brokers, who were mostly (former) commanders, determined the result of the power struggles.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	4
2. Terminology, methods and sources	6
3. Power structures in rural Afghanistan	7
3.1 History of local power structures	7
3.2 Afghan state formation	8
4. Kunduz	10
4.1 History of power structures in Kunduz	10
4.2 Power structure after the fall of the Taleban	11
4.3 Early international military efforts in Kunduz	16
4.4 Distribution of official positions	21
4.5 International key leader engagement in Kunduz	27
4.6 Power structure and growing insurgency	34
5. Badakhshan	43
5.1 History of power structures in Badakhshan	43
5.2 Power structure from 2001 to the establishment of the PRT	45
5.3 International military efforts in Badakhshan	49
5.4 Power structure since the first presidential elections	55
5.5 The Badakhshan insurgency	61
6. Conclusion	64
6.1 Failed centralisation of rule	64
6.2 Changes in the nature of power struggles	65
6.3 Limited efforts to influence the power structure	66
6.4 Changing power structures through intervention	68
Annex	70

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Roughly two months after the beginning of the 2001 international military intervention in Afghanistan, representatives of major Western states, the winning Afghan anti-Taleban alliance, as well as other leaders of non-Taleban armed groups, followers of the last king Zahir Shah and exiled Afghan technocrats gathered at the Bonn Conference to decide upon the future political order of the country. The US delegates, especially, significantly influenced the meeting's outcome, which was to build a basically Western-style formally institutionalised central state.<sup>1</sup> This model is so deeply ingrained in the minds of Western decision makers and internationally educated Afghan technocrats that an alternative was unthinkable. In addition, after a decade of interventions around the world, international organisations had developed the body of general knowledge and specific expertise to conduct state building missions designed after this model. Finally, representatives of the Western states concerned initially did not intend to allocate a large amount of resources to the Afghan state-building project. Conceptualised as a 'light footprint' approach, they therefore limited their efforts to the Afghan capital, Kabul, to focus on strengthening the central government.<sup>2</sup>

The major means to support the Afghan central government was to establish an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). It should at first help to secure the capital and seat of the interim government so that the planned political process can start and form new Afghan security forces.<sup>3</sup> As ISAF troop contributors recognised that they could

not reach their goals by limiting their efforts to the capital, they expanded their area of responsibility over Kabul in 2003 and put ISAF forces under NATO command. Using so-called provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), ISAF representatives tried to 'assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority' into the periphery.<sup>4</sup>

As the growing insurgency and low level of tax collection shows, however, the Afghan government has obviously not yet achieved thorough control over the periphery with the help of the international community. The decisive question is if and how local power structures changed at all during the international intervention. Has there been any progress towards the extension of rule by the central government? Did President Hamed Karzai strengthen his influence in the provinces or at least limit that of his local opponents? Have local power structures changed at all and, if so, in what ways? Apart from the internal factors leading to these outcomes, this study also focuses on the relevant contributions of the international actors. In the course of the intervention, participating governments spent enormous resources on the armed forces engaged in ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Much less went to developmental aid. Concerning outside influence, this study will therefore focus on the international military intervention.

The international military forces attempted to support the central government in various ways. After modestly supporting the UN and Afghan government by demobilising armed groups, one main effort was to train and mentor formal Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) that could serve the government to establish a monopoly on organised violence. They also tried to operationally support government forces in general security tasks and – especially after the insurgency became stronger – in fighting opponents. Besides that, they conducted so-called 'key leader engagement', which was loosely formalised and aimed to influence all kinds of decisive power brokers with all possible legal actions to ensure Western-style government practice. Of limited significance were reconstruction projects, usually termed as civil-military cooperation (CIMIC), which were to serve military purposes.

To assess whether the international military intervention affected Afghan power relations in a way that extended the rule of the Afghan

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan. A Cultural and Political History*, Princeton & Oxford, Princeton University Press 2010, 283–4; Timor Sharan, 'The Dynamics of Elite Networks and Patron-Client Relations in Afghanistan', *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 6, 2011, 1115–7.

<sup>2</sup> See Philip Martin, 'Intervening for Peace? Dilemma's [sic] of Liberal Internationalism and Democratic Reconstruction in Afghanistan', *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 13, no. 3, 2011, 9–19; Barfield, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 1], 294–302.

<sup>3</sup> This was not directly stated in the Bonn agreement of December 2001, but definitely guided Western concepts and was expressed more explicitly in subsequent treaties. See for instance *Berlin Declaration. International Afghanistan Conference in Berlin, 31 March-01 April 2004*, 1 April 2004, accessed 29 July 2013, 2, [http://mfa.gov.af/Content/files/berlin\\_declaration.pdf](http://mfa.gov.af/Content/files/berlin_declaration.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> According to the mission statement of the PRT Executive Steering Committee as of 27 January 2005, cited by *ISAF PRT Handbook*, 3 ed., 3 February 2007, 2.

government in the periphery, the first step is to understand how political rule in Afghanistan works. Therefore, this study will start with a short history on local power structures and central-state formation. The national Afghan government can hardly be described as a single actor. It would be misleading to define the relationship between the central government and the regions simply as one of centre-periphery antagonism.<sup>5</sup> Rather, competing central-government factions maintain patron-client relationships within the periphery. Political actors usually form groups to enhance their interests and compete for power.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, this study will focus on the relevant groups at the local level and ask whether any change in the distribution of power has occurred among the ruling actors as a result of the international intervention.

During the jihad against Afghanistan's communist governments and their Soviet backers, as well as during the following civil war, local Afghan power relations could be determined by analysing the outcome of military operations and the coalitions that antagonists formed for combat.<sup>7</sup> Since open violent conflict between non-insurgent power brokers rarely occurred after 2001, these relations must be analysed differently. Political actors in the Karzai era compete for access to international rents, which they can obtain in different ways. One important way is via government positions that provide good access to donors and their resources. At the same time, controlling the means of violence is still important even though actors apply them in a rather covert way. Therefore, the distribution of official positions, especially in the security sector, must be taken into account when looking at Afghan power structures.

Though it is common to assume that despite the international intervention 'the warlords' are still informally in power in Afghanistan, only a few published studies comprehensively map local power structures and their relationship to the foreign forces.<sup>8</sup> The numerous, mostly unpublished, provincial profiles usually focus more broadly, including different aspects of what Westerners consider as 'development', and do not deal with it in detail from a historical perspective. Therefore, we do not know much about the results of international forces' aims in Afghanistan to extend government control into the periphery. This study attempts to take the first step by assessing this question for the northeastern provinces of Badakhshan and Kunduz. Both provinces were among the first areas transferred from international to Afghan government control, in the process officially called 'transition'.<sup>9</sup> Analysing two

<sup>5</sup> See Conrad Schetter and Rainer Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing of the State! Seeing Violence in Afghanistan from Local Perspectives', in *From Fragile State to Functioning State. Pathways to Democratic Transformation in Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, and Afghanistan*, ed by Sabine Collmer, Berlin, Lit 2009, 138, 141.

<sup>6</sup> Sharan, 'The Dynamics of Elite Networks . . .', [see FN 1], 1109–15.

<sup>7</sup> See as an in-depth example, Nils Wörmer, 'The Networks of Kunduz. A History of Conflict and Their Actors, from 1992 to 2001', *AAN Thematic Report* 02/2012, Afghanistan Analysts Network, August 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, [http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/09/The\\_Networks\\_of\\_Kunduz\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/09/The_Networks_of_Kunduz_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> For instance Antonio Giustozzi and Dominique Orsini (Antonio Giustozzi and Dominique Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations in Afghanistan. Badakhshan between Patrimonialism and Institution-Building', *Central Asian Survey* 28, no. 1, 2009, 1–16) provide a comprehensive study of the power structure of Badakhshan but only focus occasionally on its relation to the internationals. Antonio Giustozzi and Theo Farrell (Antonio Giustozzi and Theo Farrell, 'The Taliban at War. Inside the Helmand Insurgency, 2004–2012', *International Affairs* 89, no. 4, 2013, 3–4) provide some details on the local power structure of Helmand under the conditions of international intervention but focus on dynamics surrounding the insurgency. The Liaison Office, (The Liaison Office, 'The Dutch Engagement in Uruzgan: 2006 to 2010. A TLO Socio-Political Assessment', *The Liaison Office*, 2010, 27–30) comprehensively assesses the impact of Dutch forces in Uruzgan and therefore only focusses to a limited extent on major power brokers. The follow-up of Susanne Schmeidl (Susanne Schmeidl, 'The Man Who Would Be King. The Challenges to Strengthening Governance in Uruzgan', *The Hague, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael*, November 2010, 33–5) gives more details on power structures but does not focus so much on the impact of the interveners.

<sup>9</sup> The Badakhshan districts of Arghanjkhwah, Argo, Baharak, Faizabad, Kishim, Shahr-e Bozorg, Tashkan, and Yaftal-e Sufla were already transitioned as part of tranche two on 27 November 2011. In tranche three of 13 May 2012, the districts of Darayim, Darwaz-e Bala, Darwaz-e Pain, Jurm, Khash, Khwahan, Kohistan, Kuf Ab, Raghestan, Shighnan, Shiki, Shohada, Tagab and Yamgan followed. Except for Khanabad district, the whole Kunduz province was also transferred to Afghan command. Khanabad and the remaining districts of Badakhshan followed in the second-to-last tranche (four), on 31 December 2012. NATO HQ, *Afghan Transition Map for T1, T2, T3 and T4*, December 2012, accessed 29 July 2013,

of these early 'transitioned' provinces makes sense since ISAF and Afghan decision makers have judged their aims as already fulfilled there. This study will contribute to our knowledge on what has been achieved so far and might help international actors understand whether their task has really been completed.

## 2. TERMINOLOGY, METHODS AND SOURCES

In this study, state-building is not seen as a technical exercise as policy-oriented scholars often do. Rather it is understood as a long-term-formation process of monopolising power.<sup>10</sup> 'Power' is seen as relational and part of every social interaction. Whether somebody is powerful therefore depends on how he or she is perceived by others. This perception, however, also rests on the objective, observable means of power given or available to him or her – e.g., weapons, number of followers, influence or financial resources. In the same sense, 'rule' is seen as an institutionalised form of power.<sup>11</sup> In this study the terms 'local' or 'sub-national' – in contrast to 'national' – describe all actions and social relations not related to Afghanistan as a whole but to significantly smaller spatial entities such as provinces or districts.

Practitioners and researchers alike frequently characterise actors in Afghanistan as 'warlords'. However, they mostly use the term in a pejorative way stating that these actors would be against state-building and some even say they are not interested in exerting political rule. Empirically grounded research criticised this notion by pointing to the constitutive role these actors have in initial processes of state formation.<sup>12</sup>

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[http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pictures/stock\\_2012/20130103\\_121219-ISAF\\_Transition\\_T4.jpg](http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pictures/stock_2012/20130103_121219-ISAF_Transition_T4.jpg).

<sup>10</sup> See what is still a basic text for this subject: Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, vol. 2: State Formation and Civilization, Oxford, Basil Blackwell 1982 [originally published in 1936].

<sup>11</sup> These definitions rest on Max Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, vol. 1, Berkeley, University of California Press 1978 [originally published in 1922].

<sup>12</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 138; Antonio Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud. Wars and Warlords in Afghanistan*, London, Hurst 2009, 5–7. See, in general: Alex Veit, 'Warlord: Nutzen und Mangel einer negativen Kategorie', in *Handbuch*

Accordingly, this study prefers the neutral term 'commander'. Here, this term describes political actors whose power mostly rests on the ability to apply organised violence. This paper will look, however, on all actors exerting power and rule, including government representatives, unofficial power brokers – including, but not limited to commanders – internationals, and insurgents.

To assess the effect the international military intervention had on single actors is not sufficient. Since power is relational, the strengthened or weakened power of one actor must be judged in the context of the whole power structure of the province concerned. Otherwise, it might go unnoticed that competing actors were strengthened through other meaningful ways. In general, the study will focus, first, on the Afghan actors' actions and relations and, second, on the relations of the, mostly German and American, international forces with those actors. Finally, both parts have to be analysed together to judge whether the actions of the latter had any effect on the local power structures.

The perception of Afghans serves to identify key local power brokers in northeastern Afghanistan. How local power brokers position themselves – such as with statements on other rulers and actions or alignments with armed groups and political parties – is seen as indicating their strength in relation to the other relevant players in the arena. As far as possible, this study also assesses their objective resources such as finances, weapons, and followers.

Basic empirical data on the local rulers' positioning and resources has been gathered from academic studies and news media. For more-detailed information, semi-structured interviews were conducted during three independent field trips to Badakhshan, Kabul and Kunduz between March 2011 and December 2012. Individuals who had close relationships with the interviewees established contact. Due to the lack of written sources and because gathering sensitive information in Afghanistan is difficult, the evidence given here is often anecdotal. Each anecdote, however, reveals the power distribution at the time concerned. By combining and triangulating as many anecdotes as possible, an overall picture can be created.

Another means to judge the state of power structures is to analyse the distribution of the most

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*Kriegstheorien*, ed by Thomas Jäger and Rasmus Beckmann, Wiesbaden, VS-Verlag 2011, 487–97.



important official positions in the provinces concerned: the posts of provincial governor, the chiefs of police and National Directorate of Security (NDS) as well as the members of parliament, who acted as important intermediaries to the centre. To gain more-detailed information, a list was compiled of all Kunduz provincial and district governors, chiefs of police, and NDS from 2002 until December 2012. The list includes the names of the position holders as well as their ethnicity and political affiliation.<sup>13</sup> The quality of the sources will not be explicitly discussed in the sense of historical source criticism due to the nature of this study as a policy paper. However, they were selected on this basis beforehand.

### 3. POWER STRUCTURES IN RURAL AFGHANISTAN

#### 3.1 History of local power structures

Since the construction of Afghanistan as a nation-state with clearly defined borders under Amir Abdul Rahman Khan (1880–1901), most central governments in Kabul struggled to enforce their will on actors in the countryside.<sup>14</sup> Even though the rulers of the centre widened their influence, they never managed to completely replace or manipulate the traditional, basically feudal, systems of rule in rural areas. The low degree of socio-economic differentiation made most of the population objectively less dependent on actors outside their local sphere. They therefore subjectively felt more-strongly bound to traditional solidarity networks than to a modern state order that remained abstract to them.<sup>15</sup> However, given the comparatively large amounts of money that Great Britain, Russia, and later the Soviet Union, the US, and other Western states distributed as subsidies or developmental aid to actors dominating the central government, the latter's influence has never been insignificant.<sup>16</sup> Therefore,

power brokers of the centre formalised intermediary positions to deal with the local level.<sup>17</sup>

Until the jihad against the communist government and the Soviet Union, old families of major landowners exercised personal rule over the lower strata of the rural population. Both groups were bound by reciprocal patron-client relationships, in which the landowners kept a large share of the agricultural surplus but also distributed parts of it in the community. As the monetisation of the economy allowed local rulers to accumulate more wealth than they could with agricultural products, the system gradually started to lose its legitimacy in the course of the twentieth century. After 1978, the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) attempted to destroy the rule of the traditional landowning class with land reform that included a radical redistribution of land. This attempt, however, came too early, as the PDPA government neglected the still strong reciprocal nature of the relationship between the landowners and the peasantry. As a result, insurgencies erupted throughout the country against the PDPA government and – after the Soviet intervention in late 1979 – its foreign supporters.<sup>18</sup>

In this struggle, the old ruling class largely lost its powerful position in the countryside, already in limbo due to the socio-economic changes in the system of redistribution. Bearing the brunt of the fight in the ensuing insurgency, their followers demanded stronger political participation. Most landowners also proved incapable of leading the resistance as they did not possess the necessary military expertise.<sup>19</sup> At the national level, they had to give way to revolutionary leaders who had a rural background but also had obtained a modern secondary education in (international) schools in Kabul and abroad. These individuals, such as Burhanuddin Rabbani or Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, mobilised followers all over Afghanistan with their egalitarian Islamist ideology and at the same time gathered international support.<sup>20</sup> At the local level,

<sup>13</sup> I am very thankful to Saber Zareef, B.A., who originates from Kunduz and compiled the list as a research assistant for this publication.

<sup>14</sup> Jan-Heeren Grevemeyer, *Afghanistan. Sozialer Wandel und Staat im 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, EXpressEdition 1987, 10–6.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 34, 59–60.

<sup>16</sup> Gilles Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending. Afghanistan: 1979 to the Present*, London, Hurst 2005, 24–25. In the numerous internal conflicts of the 20th century, the strongest power brokers of Afghanistan were therefore fighting for control of the capital. Ibid., 235.

<sup>17</sup> Government officials formalized the position of the 'Malek', usually a large landowner, as an intermediary position. Grevemeyer, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 14], 59–61.

<sup>18</sup> PDPA officials also used the reform to enrich themselves and benefit the party's clientele. Ibid., 72–9, 124–8.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 129, 133.

<sup>20</sup> Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, 69–81.

charismatic leaders who had obtained modern military and technical expertise often evolved as field commanders of the major Islamist parties' leaders and challenged the traditional ruling class. In many parts of Afghanistan, the traditional landowning class' representatives were either killed, fled the countryside or dramatically wound down their political aspirations.<sup>21</sup>

After the retreat of the Soviets and the fall of the PDPA government, the Islamist party leaders and their field commanders fought in fluid coalitions against each other for the control of the capital and the various parts of the country. The major leaders tried, to varying degrees, to establish formally institutionalised regimes in the regions under their control, as did the Taleban from the mid-1990s until their fall in 2001.<sup>22</sup> However, political rule continued to work mainly through personal patron-client relationships, and this is still the case today. These relationships can be described as hierarchical chains where one client is the patron of another client and so on, and these patron-client relationships permeate the whole society. As in the case of the traditional system of domination, they are reciprocal in nature as the patron provides support or material assets to the client, who in turn grants allegiance.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.2 Afghan state formation

Though many Afghan state representatives are not able to implement their orders in the periphery, they are not without power. To be influential, however, they must use intermediary personal patron-client relationships. Different from what Western authors and political actors often assumed, patron-client relationships do not necessarily mean political rule is 'unstable'. Rather, in light of the fluctuating distribution of power and resources as witnessed in Afghanistan during the last 30 years of war, the personal relationships between patrons and clients create some reliability and thereby stability. Nor do they prevent state formation since a state is constituted by groups of people who monopolise power, legitimised through a certain notion of political order. Even in Europe at the very beginning of the process of state formation, rulers had to successfully establish

stable patron-client relationships before later generations were able to formally institutionalise 'the state'.<sup>24</sup>

The enormous influx of foreign money since 2001 through Kabul granted comparatively large resources to government officials there. Hamed Karzai, the president of Afghanistan who was installed under enormous international pressure, especially by the US,<sup>25</sup> could therefore on the one hand convene relatively loyal technocrats who inherited an ideal of centralised rule. On the other hand, he could also win the allegiance of important local power brokers by handing out senior government positions.<sup>26</sup> However, the monopolisation of power in the hands of the central government remained incomplete after 2001 since many rulers in the periphery retained their weapons and, resting on local support, resisted the central government's orders, such as the order to disarm. Central government officials without a local clientele were also often unable to impose their will on this level. In addition, the central government should be seen as a contested field where different factions compete for power. All actors involved in this competition retain clients on the local level. Therefore, although the president is formally eligible to fill all sub-national government positions from a certain level

<sup>24</sup> Andreas Wilde, 'The Consistency of Patronage. Networks and Powerbrokers of the "Arzbeqi Clan" in Kunduz' in *Local Politics in Afghanistan. A Century of Intervention in the Social Order*, ed by Conrad Schetter, London, Hurst 2013, 73. This is often forgotten since the legalistic, reified image of 'the state' has been deeply ingrained in Western thinking. Joel S. Migdal and Klaus Schlichte, 'Rethinking the State', in *The Dynamics of States. The Formation and Crises of State Domination*, ed by Klaus Schlichte, Aldershot, Ashgate 2005, 10–22.

<sup>25</sup> See for example: Thomas Ruttig, 'The Failure of Airborne Democracy. The Bonn Agreement and Afghanistan's Stagnating Democratisation', in *Snapshots of an Intervention. The Unlearned Lessons of Afghanistan's Decade of Assistance (2001–11)*, ed by Martine van Bijlert and Sari Kouvo, Kabul, Afghanistan Analysts Network, 2012, 5, accessed 22 October 2013, [http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/09/Snapshots\\_of\\_an\\_Intervention.pdf](http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/09/Snapshots_of_an_Intervention.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> Haseeb Humayoon, 'The Re-election of Hamid Karzai', Afghanistan Report 4, *Institute for the Study of War*, January 2010, 20; Antonio Giustozzi, 'The Resilient Oligopoly. A Political-Economy of Northern Afghanistan 2001 and Onwards', *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, December 2012, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending* . . . , [see FN 16], 111–3.

<sup>22</sup> Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud* . . . , [see FN 12], 75–84, 108–10.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 297–8; Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending* . . . , [see FN 16], 128–9, 147–9.



upwards,<sup>27</sup> he must take into account the interests of the different central government factions and the distribution of power on the local level.<sup>28</sup>

Over the years, Karzai developed ways to deal with the local level that were similar to those of his predecessors. Only rarely did he use violent means to remove the means of power of defiant local rulers. Mostly, he aligns with some strongmen or group that competes with the target in a 'divide and rule' manner to prevent all competitors in a certain area from becoming too strong.<sup>29</sup> His most powerful means is distributing state positions. These positions provide formal legitimacy and rents – not due to their meagre wages but because they are decisive points of cooperation with the international actors and therefore grant access to large amounts of foreign money as well as the means of generating other forms of licit and illicit income.<sup>30</sup> To prevent senior national and sub-national government officials from becoming too strong, Karzai often rotates them at unpredicted intervals.<sup>31</sup>

To enhance their own interests, people must form coalitions that counter the interests of others. The formation of these groups is not random, however. To remain stable, individuals must be able to identify with their group as a whole, for example on the basis of kinship, locality, tribe, sub-tribe or

ethnicity. In reality, the closer the relationships are, the greater the group cohesion is. Most cohesion is found in groups built on kinship relations, followed by those of local solidarity networks, e.g. the village as well as politico-military associations such as the *tanzims*.<sup>32</sup> Least cohesion can be expected in so-called ethnic groups that are often not clear cut and too large and heterogeneous to be ruled by a few persons. Though partly resting on traditional identities, ethnic categories developed in a modern process hand in hand with the construction of the Afghan state. Though none of the *tanzims* established an explicitly ethnic agenda and recruited only members of one ethnicity, most are dominated by one ethnic group, that of their leader. As a result, in popular as well as foreign perception the *tanzims* became de facto representatives of the major Afghan ethnic groups during the 1990s.<sup>33</sup> In the context of politics, *tanzims* and ethnicities help orient actors interested in forming overarching units that extend the very local solidarity networks. However, most of these groups are not clear-cut, without conclusive regulations for membership and with changing affiliations.

<sup>27</sup> Anne Evans et al., 'Subnational Administration in Afghanistan. Assessment and Recommendations for Action', *World Bank/Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, March 2004, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Martine van Biljert, 'Between Discipline and Discretion. Policies Surrounding Senior Subnational Appointments', AREU Briefing Paper Series, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, May 2009, 8–9; Antonio Giustozzi, 'Dilemmas of Governance in Afghanistan. Between Patrimonialism and Bureaucratisation' in *Beyond the 'Wild Tribes'. Understanding Modern Afghanistan and its Diaspora*, ed by Ceri Oepfen and Angela Schlenkhoff, New York, Columbia University Press 2010, 98.

<sup>29</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 10.

<sup>30</sup> Therefore, political actors often also had to pay for these positions informally. Manija Gardizi, Karen Hussmann, and Yama Torabi, 'Corrupting the State or State-Crafted Corruption? Exploring the Nexus between Corruption and Subnational Governance', AREU Discussion Paper, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, June 2010, 9–10.

<sup>31</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 139. There are a few notable exceptions, like the governor of Balkh province, Atta Mohammad Nur, who has held this position since 2004.

<sup>32</sup> Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending* . . ., [see FN 16], 13–16. The leading mujahedin parties were called *tanzim* (Arabic: organisation). Though loosely organized compared to Western organisations, they gathered financial and material support from foreign donors during the jihad and politically rallied Afghan power brokers. As such, the mujahedin also used them to conduct military operations.

<sup>33</sup> Conrad Schetter, *Ethnizität und ethnische Konflikte in Afghanistan*, Berlin, Reimer 2003, 510, 527–8, 541–4; Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending* . . ., [see FN 16], 10–6, 257–68. The Hazaras are a striking case, where several *tanzims* compete to represent a particular ethnic group, with two major and several smaller *tanzims* competing for followers. On the other end of the spectrum, Jombesh-e Melli-ye Afghanistan (National Movement of Afghanistan) is the only *tanzim* within the Uzbek minority. See Robert Peszkowski, 'Reforming Jombesh. An Afghan Party on its Winding Road to Internal Democracy', AAN Briefing Paper 03/2012, *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, August 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://afghanistan-analysts.net/uploads/20120831Peszkowski-Jombesh-final.pdf>; Niamatullah Ibrahim, 'Ideology without Leadership. The Rise and Decline of Maoism in Afghanistan', AAN Thematic Report 03/2012, *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, August 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/09/Exec-Summary-Nibr-Maoists.pdf>.

## 4. KUNDUZ

### 4.1 History of power structures in Kunduz

#### 4.1.1 Power structures before the fall of the communist government

Only at the end of the nineteenth century, did what is Kunduz province today start to become densely settled.<sup>34</sup> Since it was an Uzbek khanate before the Afghans conquered it in the 1850s, Uzbeks constituted the majority. From the late 1800s until at least the 1950s, however, the central government shifted mainly Pashtun groups from the south to this region either as a punishment for rebellious tribes or in reward and to use them as proxies to rule locally.<sup>35</sup> Pashtuns therefore became more numerous and dominated the provincial administration. As the land was distributed equally among the Pashtun settlers, differences in land tenure among them were less grave and the landowner class was probably not as strong as in other provinces.<sup>36</sup> However, there was also a powerful class of landowners, who with state support have applied modern capitalist means of production since the 1930s. Afghan state and internationally sponsored cultivation efforts made Kunduz one of the most fruitful in the country.<sup>37</sup>

During the fight against the PDPA government and its Soviet backers, Kunduz witnessed the rise of powerful commanders as described above and the

descent of the old landowner class. The founder, Hekmatyar, of one *tanzim*, Hezb-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (Islamic Party of Afghanistan), hailed from Imam Saheb town of Kunduz province, though he did not focus his efforts on his home region.<sup>38</sup> Because the province offered many resources in terms of agriculture, cross-border trade or smuggling for the war economy, numerous commanders managed to establish autonomous fiefdoms. At the beginning of the jihad, most seem to have been affiliated with Harakat-e Inqilab-e Islami (Revolutionary Islamic Movement) *tanzim*.<sup>39</sup> In the course of the 1980s, the majority switched to Hezb and Jamiat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (Islamic Society of Afghanistan) or the latter's Shura-ye Nazar-e Shomal faction (Supervisory Council of the North) of Jamiatis under the leadership of the charismatic politico-military leader Ahmad Shah Massud. Some also joined Ittehad-e Islami bara-ye Azadi-ye Afghanistan (Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan).<sup>40</sup> However, in this personalised system of rule, none of the commanders managed to permanently rule over larger territories.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Kunduz struggles for power, 1992–2001

According to Nils Wörmer, after the fall of the PDPA government the power structures remained fragmented between commanders who were often only superficially loyal to the different *tanzims* and frequently changed sides in combat. This continued until the Taliban captured the province in 1997.<sup>42</sup> The only local commander who seemed to have the power to rule the whole province, Amir Mohammad Chugha,<sup>43</sup> was killed in 1994. During

<sup>34</sup> Until 1964 a province called Qataghan comprised today's administrative entities of Kunduz, Baghlan, and Takhar. Christian Bleuer, 'State-Building, Migration and Economic Development on the Frontiers of Northern Afghanistan and Southern Tajikistan', *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 3, 2012, 70.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas J. Barfield, 'The Impact of Pashtun Immigration on Nomadic Pastoralism in Northeastern Afghanistan', in compilation 'Ethnic Processes and Intergroup Relations in Contemporary Afghanistan', ed. by Jon W. Anderson and Richard F. Strand, Occasional paper No. 15 of the Afghan Council of the Asia Society, paper presented at the 11th Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association at New York City, 10 November 1977, 29; Erwin Grötzbach, *Kulturgeographischer Wandel in Nordost-Afghanistan seit dem 19. Jahrhundert*, Meisenheim (am Glan), Hain 1972, 55–6.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas J. Barfield, *The Central Asian Arabs of Afghanistan. Pastoral Nomadism in Transition*, Austin, University of Texas Press 1981, 69, 160–2; Grötzbach, *Kulturgeographischer Wandel* . . ., [see FN 35], 55–6, 68.

<sup>37</sup> Most noticeably through the Spinjar cotton company. Wilde, *Consistency of Patronage* . . ., [see FN 24], 68–72.

<sup>38</sup> Dorronsoro, *Revolution Unending* . . ., [see FN 16], 162–3. Hekmatyar belongs to the Kharoti tribe, mainly based in Paktika province. He moved to Kabul early on and became one of the (Islamist) political activists at Kabul University in the mid-1960s.

<sup>39</sup> Roy, *Islam and Resistance* . . ., [see FN 20], 127.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 128; Barnett R. Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan. State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, New Haven et al., Yale Univ. Press 1995, 234–7.

<sup>41</sup> Jamiat commander Abdul Qader 'Zabihullah' accumulated overwhelming power in the north, including Kunduz, but was killed by a mine in 1984. William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, 2nd ed., Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan 2009, 74; Roy, *Islam and Resistance* . . ., [see FN 20], 131.

<sup>42</sup> Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz' . . ., [see FN 7], 10, 17.

<sup>43</sup> Sometimes written as 'Chughai' or 'Chughay'.

this period, most belonged to Hezb and Jamiat or the Shura-ye Nazar, and some to Ittehad and Mahaz-e Melli-ye Afghanistan (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan). With General Abdul Rashid Dostum's forces advancing from the west in 1994, some commanders switched to his Jombesh-e Melli Islami-ye Afghanistan (National Islamic Movement of Afghanistan). In the 1990s these commanders fought in different coalitions against each other to occupy strategic positions. In 1993 Jamiat, Hezb and Mahaz were pitted against Jombesh. A year later, Jamiat and Ittehad fought Hezb und Jombesh. At times, the strongest commanders of Jamiat, the Pashtun Aref Khan and the Tajik Mir Alam Khan, battled each other.<sup>44</sup>

In September 1996, the Taliban captured Kabul and visibly demonstrated their power. A strong force approached Kunduz in June 1997 after failing to take Mazar-e Sharif. The importance of ethnicity in forming coalitions became visible: Perceiving the Taliban as the strongest force, and as representing Pashtuns, most major Pashtun commanders of Jamiat, Ittehad, Mahaz, and Hezb joined them until summer 1998. Prominent among those who changed sides was commander Aref Khan of Jamiat, who enjoyed large-scale support among the Pashtuns of the province and had his base in Kunduz district. The Pashtun Engineer Mohammad Omar of Ittehad possibly temporarily switched to the Taliban in 1998 at the neighbouring Takhar front. Other major commanders such as Uzbek Amir Abdul Latif Ibrahimi of Hezb and his brothers Haji Rauf and Qayum joined the Taliban, though they later switched back to Massud's forces.<sup>45</sup>

After Aref Khan's defection, Mir Alam became the strongest Jamiat commander. Receiving orders from Massud's Shura-ye Nazar, he, in an alliance with Jombesh, fought the Taliban the whole time. Since most other commanders defected to the Taliban they were able to take over all of Kunduz province and parts of neighbouring Takhar in 1998. In the aftermath, they distributed the most-important official positions among the major commanders who had switched to them in Kunduz. Until his still-mysterious murder in Pakistan in 2000, Aref Khan was provincial governor, followed by his brother Haji Omar Khan. Mirza Mohammad Naseri, who had a firm hold on Aliabad, and Arbab Mohammad Hashem, who enjoyed considerable support in Chahar Dara, became provincial chief of

police and commander of the local garrison respectively.<sup>46</sup>

The US military intervention following the al-Qaeda attacks of 11 September 2001 considerably changed the distribution of power among Kunduz' commanders of armed groups. The remaining anti-Taliban commanders gathered under the Jabha-ye Muttahid-e Islami-ye bara-ye Nejat-e Afghanistan (United Islamic Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan, often called 'Northern Alliance') and were supported by US Special Forces, operatives of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and US air power. Until November 2001 they conquered the whole Afghan north. As a result, many commanders left the Taliban side, while their last supporters gathered in Kunduz city. Mohammad Daud Daud, Atta Mohammad Nur, Mir Alam, and Abdul Motaleb Beg of Jamiat as well as Eng. Omar of Ittehad besieged the city in November 2001. The Ibrahimis had changed to their side again. In late November, the anti-Taliban coalition negotiated a peaceful surrender with the local as well as southern Taliban and their Pakistani backers. As a result, several of the most-important southern Taliban commanders and foreign fighters were evacuated by airlift to Pakistan, while the rest was imprisoned or managed to flee.<sup>47</sup>

## 4.2 Power structure after the fall of the Taliban

### 4.2.1 *Mir Alam and the commanders of Khanabad district*

After 2001, Mir Alam successfully recovered his fiefdom, which lay mainly in the Aqtash area of Khanabad district, and became the strongest single military commander of Kunduz. He was, however, not powerful enough to rule the whole province. Several interviewees for this report said that he accumulated considerable wealth with drug trafficking, part control of the money market, and 'taxation' of people in areas under his control. They also said he maintained a comprehensive spy network over the province. This information is corroborated by other reports.<sup>48</sup> His main source

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 23–34.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 38–40.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 41; interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012; interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2007 to 2009, Berlin, January 2012. See also field research by Linnart Holtermann, 'Endogene nicht-staatliche Gewaltakteure als alternative "Sicherheitsproduzenten"

<sup>44</sup> Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 10–20.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 22–5.

of power was the allegiance of his sub-commanders and foot soldiers he had established as he ascended to become Kunduz's most important Jamiat commander in the late 1990s.<sup>49</sup> He therefore drew mainly on his 'warrior charisma', gained during the fight against the Hezb, Aref Khan, and finally the Taleban. He did not manage to successfully transform his military power and legitimacy into the less-violent form that was required in the Karzai era.

Although he had cooperated with the Shura-ye Nazar leadership since 1989,<sup>50</sup> they seem not to have fully supported Mir Alam. Already Ahmad Shah Massud did not consider him a very efficient commander, due to his lack of higher secondary education.<sup>51</sup> Rather, he seems to have supported Mir Alam mainly because he was the last remaining major Jamiat commander after Aref Khan and several others defected. He preferred the young and energetic Daud Daud, as did Mohammad Qasem Fahim, who later became defence minister, vice president and de facto successor of Massud at the top of Shura-ye Nazar after the latter's death.<sup>52</sup>

In Khanabad district numerous other commanders affiliated with Hezb, Ittehad and, since the mid-2000s, the Taleban challenged Mir Alam's rule. Home of the deceased legendary Ittehad commander Amir Chugha, Khanabad was the last significant base of this *tanzim*.<sup>53</sup> Mir Alam's most important opponent, however, was Hezb and former Taleban commander Mohammad Omar, called 'Pakhsaparan' ('wall crusher') after an incident where he allegedly destroyed a mud wall with his bare hand.<sup>54</sup> Low-scale clashes were therefore common in Khanabad district.<sup>55</sup>

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in Räumen begrenzter Staatlichkeit? Die "Jihadi"-Milizen als staatlich geförderte Elemente der lokalen Sicherheitsarchitektur in der nordafghanischen Provinz Kunduz', master's thesis, University of Münster, 2011, 138.

<sup>49</sup> Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 41; Holtermann, 'Endogene nicht-staatliche Gewaltakteure . . .', [see FN 48], 138–9.

<sup>50</sup> 'Who Is Who in the Mujahideen. Commander Mir Alam', *AFGHANews* 8, 15 April 1992, 5, 8.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with former member of Massud's staff, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 147.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with police officer and former fighter of Jamiat commander, Kunduz, December 2012; Dexter

#### 4.2.2 Rule of the Ibrahimi family in Imam Sahib district

When members of the Ibrahimi family returned to Kunduz in November 2001, they immediately reactivated their networks, which were structured along ethnic (Uzbek) and political lines (affiliated with Hezb). They even integrated Hezb fighters who had defected to the Taleban into their forces. Latif and Rauf Ibrahimi also maintained a secondary affiliation to the ethnic Uzbek party Jombesh since the 1990s, though they were not formally members.<sup>56</sup> As before the Taleban, they were based in Imam Saheb, located at the border with Tajikistan. According to an interviewee and two reports, this allowed them to profit from the lucrative cross-border drug smuggling operation.<sup>57</sup> In addition, Latif Ibrahimi controlled the markets in the town of Imam Sahib and a brother-in-law of Rauf inhabited a position that allowed him to distribute access to water.<sup>58</sup> Occupying major provincial positions, the Ibrahimis again became the de facto rulers in the northern Imam Sahib district and managed to successfully transform their military power into a less violent, officialised rule.<sup>59</sup>

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Filkins, 'Will Civil War Hit Afghanistan when the U.S. Leaves?', *The New Yorker*, 9 July 2013, accessed 22 October 2013, [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/07/09/120709fa\\_fact\\_filkins](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/07/09/120709fa_fact_filkins).

<sup>55</sup> Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 'Clashes in Afghan Northeast Leave Three Dead', *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 4 October 2004; Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 147.

<sup>56</sup> Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud . . .*, [see FN 12], 180.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with former member of Provincial Council Kunduz, Kunduz, December 2012; Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 42; Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 152.

<sup>58</sup> Nasratullah Yarash and Katja Mielke, 'The Social Order of the Bazaar. Socio-Economic Embedding of Retail and Trade in Kunduz and Imam Sahib', ZEF Working Paper Series 79, *Center for Development Research University of Bonn*, June 2011, 30; Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 146.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Assadullah Wal Waliji, former political activist and analyst, Kabul, March 2011; interview with Nezam, advisor to parliamentarian speaker Haji Raouf Ibrahimi, Kabul, November 2012; Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 146–7.



### 4.2.3 Fate of the former Taleban supporters

While the most important local Taleban commanders died after the capture of Kunduz, those who functioned mainly in the economic and political spheres remained unharmed. In December 2001, Mohammad Hashem and Naseri, captured after their surrender in Kunduz city, died together with some sub-commanders in a helicopter crash. It is still unclear whether this was a staged 'accident', but either way it eliminated the highest Taleban military leadership in Kunduz and deprived Chahar Dara and Aliabad districts of their most-powerful commanders. Several hundred of the 3,000 to 4,000 Taleban sub-commanders and foot soldiers, who had surrendered in Kunduz to the men of Dostum, were killed shortly before on their way to Sheberghan in the Dasht-e Leili area of Jowzjan province. The bulk of this surrendered group had obviously been foreign fighters or Taleban foot soldiers from the south.<sup>60</sup>

Most local Taleban sub-commanders and foot soldiers who surrendered in Kunduz, however, seemed to reach their homes unharmed.<sup>61</sup> The same applies to key individuals who functioned mainly in the political and economic spheres during the Taleban time. Outside of Western nation-state warfare, actors – and in particular key leaders of the different sides in the Afghan internal wars – should not be seen as certain enemies. Since shifts in alliances are common and the enemy of today might become tomorrow's ally, they tried to keep up certain positive relationships to build upon in the future.<sup>62</sup>

In this way, Haji Omar Khan, the last provincial governor appointed by the Taleban after the fall of their regime, continued his business as one of the wealthiest persons of Kunduz. He gained great influence on market places in Kunduz city.<sup>63</sup>

Because of the role of his brother Aref Khan, many Pashtuns accepted him as an elder and representative.<sup>64</sup> Also, businessman Haji Amanullah Utmanzai who was probably even wealthier than Omar and had executed many financial deals for the Taleban, remained unharmed. He kept his property and relationships with those in the highest positions both of the new government and in the parallel Taleban structures.<sup>65</sup> According to him, he even met with Fahim.<sup>66</sup> He was part of the elders council (*shura*) of Kunduz, but an increasing number of residents seem to have viewed him as somebody who became too pragmatic and self-interested.<sup>67</sup>

The Pashtun Abidi family<sup>68</sup>, which had been very influential in the peripheral Dasht-e Archi district, and was successively affiliated with Hezb and the Taleban, seems to have lost much of its power to the Dawi family.<sup>69</sup> However, in light of their history as one of the more influential families in Kunduz since the beginning of the jihad, this appears to be a longer-term descent from an originally more powerful position. Their position therefore cannot be compared with that of the Ibrahimis.<sup>70</sup> Some sources claim that in the time after the fall of the Taleban, the Abidis reactivated their ties to them and the Hezb, but also kept in contact with the Ibrahimis.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Haji Omar Khan, businessman and former provincial governor of Kunduz, Kunduz, November 2012; Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 41.

<sup>65</sup> Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 41.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Haji Amanullah Utmanzai, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Nezam, Kabul, November 2012; with former commander of Qari Rahmatullah, Kabul, November 2012; interview with Nasiri, member of parliament for Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; interview with Engineer Kamal, member of parliament for Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Sometimes written 'Obaidi' or 'Obidi'.

<sup>69</sup> The Dawi family of Dasht-e Archi district is not related to the one with the same name who owns the oil company. Interview with former member of Provincial Council Kunduz, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Assadullah Wal Waliji, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2007 to 2009, Berlin, January 2012; Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 42.

<sup>60</sup> Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 2–3, 40.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with police officer and former fighter of Jamiat, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>62</sup> For instance, even though both were bitter enemies, after Mir Alam had driven Aref Khan out of Kunduz City, following the latter's defection to the Taleban, he did not prey upon his family. The same applied to Aref Khan concerning Mir Alam's family as he pushed him out of the province together with the Taleban, shortly after. Interview with General Bashir Basharat, Commander Operational Coordination Center-Province (OCC-P) Kunduz and former commander of Mir Alam, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>63</sup> See, based on intensive field research: Yarash and Mielke, 'Social Order of the Bazaar . . .', [see FN 58], 58.



#### 4.2.4 Distribution of formal positions among the victors

After the fall of the Taliban, the mainly non-Pashtun victors distributed the important official positions among themselves. Right after their victory, they decided the issue in a commanders' *shura*. They took each individual's contribution to the Kunduz campaign into account and tried to reach a certain ethnic balance to give the process legitimacy. Therefore, the Uzbek commander Abdul Latif Ibrahim became the governor of the province – the highest official position – which however allowed no direct access to means of violence. His brother Rauf was appointed as the local Afghan Border Police commander, which included forces mainly of the Imam Sahib district, and was allowed to control the cross-border traffic. Similar to what happened on the national level, the Tajik members of the Shura-ye Nazar, who had formed the core of the anti-Taliban coalition and had defended the non-Taliban bastions since the end of the 1990s, took the most important positions in the security apparatus. They used the enumeration of military units as developed by the communist government. Daud Daud became the head of the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps of the Afghan Military Forces (AMF)<sup>72</sup> and therefore formally commander in chief of all AMF units in the northeast. The position of the subordinated Kunduz-based 54<sup>th</sup> AMF Division commander went to Mir Alam.<sup>73</sup> The

<sup>72</sup> AMF was a term invented by the UN, obviously to separate these units from the Afghan National Army (ANA), which replaced the former as the regular armed forces of Afghanistan. Antonio Giustozzi, 'Military Reform in Afghanistan' in *Confronting Afghanistan's Security Dilemma. Reforming the Security Sector*, ed by Mark Sedra, BICC Brief 28, Bonn International Center for Conversion, 2003, 24. Some authors use the term 'Afghan Militia Forces'. Most common among experts, however, seems to be the former. See Mark Sedra, 'The Four Pillars of Demilitarization in Afghanistan' in *Afghanistan, Arms and Conflict. Armed Groups, Disarmament and Security in a Post-War Society*, ed by Michael Bhatia and Mark Sedra, London/New York, Contemporary Security Studies, Routledge 2008, 120; International Crisis Group, 'Disarmament and Reintegration in Afghanistan', ICG Asia Report no. 65, *International Crisis Group*, September 2003, 3.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Haji Momin Omarkhel, former mujahedin and district governor of Chahar Dara, Kunduz, November 2012; interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012. The brigades of the 54<sup>th</sup> division were led by Zabet Nurullah in Qala-ye Zal, Sidiq in Dasht-e Archi, Massud Sojani in Chahar Dara and by Gul Kirghez, who came from Panjshir. Interview with General Bashir Basharat, Kunduz, December 2012.

appointment of Daud Daud and Mir Alam was facilitated by Shura-ye Nazar members who occupied top positions in the ministries of Interior and Defence.<sup>74</sup>

Right after the fall of the Taliban, there were 18 districts and each had a governor, a police and an NDS chief. Their political affiliation reflected the power relations between the victorious and the defeated groups. The largest number, eight, belonged to Jamiat, six to Hezb, one to Ittehad and one to Nejat-e Melli, while two others were former communists.<sup>75</sup> In those districts where Taliban support had been highest, namely Aliabad, Chahar Dara, and Dasht-e Archi, the chief of police and NDS positions were taken over mainly by commanders of Jamiat. The high number of Hezb followers at the time did not indicate the strength of the party in Kunduz but rather that of the Ibrahim family, which was affiliated with them, since three officials linked to it were appointed in Imam Sahib district alone.

The former Ittehad commander Mohammad Ghulam Farhad was the only Pashtun among the provincial office holders; he became the provincial chief of police. Before, in 1997, he had changed sides three times in a month, finally ending up with the Taliban, but switched back about a year later.<sup>76</sup> Of the mentioned heads of district offices, only four were Pashtun during this time. Not only were the Pashtuns excluded from the leading provincial and district positions of Kunduz, but also widely from the subordinate positions. Many of them lost their positions in the state apparatus, which they had dominated before. While the new

<sup>74</sup> To distribute the positions, then Minister of Defence Fahim sent his deputy Atiqullah Barialay. Interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012; interview with police officer and former fighter of Jamiat, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>75</sup> However, the two communist security chiefs actually stayed in office even longer than the latter and rotated much less. Post-1991 'communist' in the sense of this study means that the persons concerned once served the PDPA government and, in contrast to others, never did so for a *tanzim* and still distinguished themselves from the mujahedin by a rather modern life-style and attitude.

<sup>76</sup> Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 24, 41; interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz City, November 2012 and with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012.

rulers did not fire all of them,<sup>77</sup> the Pashtuns as the main former supporters of the Taliban became clearly underrepresented.

The underrepresentation of Pashtuns in the state and especially the security apparatus benefitted those who illegally took land from them.<sup>78</sup> In some instances, those affiliated with the new ruling groups took the land of Pashtuns after the fall of the Taliban. The Pashtuns were not completely helpless, though: They mainly lost their land in areas where they were a clear minority, such as in Qala-ye Zal and Imam Sahib districts. But also in Dasht-e Archi and Chahar Dara, where they were more strongly represented, some Pashtuns lost land.<sup>79</sup> More often, refugees who had fled during the fighting in the 1990s found their land occupied when they returned after 2001.<sup>80</sup> These returnees had a diverse ethnic background; ensuing land conflicts therefore also concerned non-Pashtuns.<sup>81</sup>

#### 4.2.5 Clashes within the United Islamic Front

Inability to monopolise the organised means of violence characterised the security situation in the whole time under review.<sup>82</sup> Although most checkpoints on the streets, run by armed groups,

disappeared after 2001,<sup>83</sup> armed actors started to clandestinely use their weapons for kidnappings, night attacks on businesses and the like. The crime rate remained constantly high and access to means of violence remained decisive for fostering political interests.<sup>84</sup>

Commanders of the victorious anti-Taliban coalition soon clashed in their contest for power. Right after the capture of Kunduz city, commander Rauf of the Ibrahimi family integrated surrendered Taliban fighters into his force who had formerly fought with him in Hezb and had occupied the old fortress of Kunduz, Bala Hisar. Members of Mir Alam's groups, however, informed US air support liaison officers that Taliban still occupied this position. Being heavily bombarded by US war planes, Rauf had to move from his position, which was immediately after taken by Mir Alam's men.<sup>85</sup>

Even heavier was the clash a few months later in January 2002 between the commanders Nabi Gechi and Mohammad Tala. Both fought for power after killing the formerly allied commander Saifullah who claimed to rule the town of Qala-ye Zal following the fall of the Taliban. As a Turkman, Nabi received support from Jombesh, which had become the de facto representative of the Turkic ethnic groups, including Uzbeks and Turkmen, while the (mainly Tajik) Shura-ye Nazar backed his opponent. Eventually, the former was able to gather 120 to 300 men while Tala mobilised around 500 mostly former fighters of Saifullah. After two days of fighting, Nabi retreated to neighbouring Balkh province where he opened a fish restaurant and hotel.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 151.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with official of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office, Kunduz, November 2012; Human Rights Watch, 'Afghanistan. Paying for the Taliban's Crimes: Abuses against Ethnic Pashtuns in Northern Afghanistan', vol. 14, no. 2, *Human Rights Watch*, April 2002, 43.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with employee of the Norwegian Refugee Council, Kunduz, November 2012; UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Land Issues within the Repatriation Process of Afghan Refugees', 1 September 2003, 5.

<sup>81</sup> See the UNHCR data of returnees to Kunduz until 2004 given by Katarina Larsson, 'Kunduz Provincial Survey', Stockholm, *Swedish Committee for Afghanistan*, October 2004, 10. According to these numbers, returnees were ethnically relatively equally distributed over the districts. See also Amnesty International, 'Afghanistan: Out of Sight, out of Mind. The Fate of the Afghan Returnees', AI Index: ASA 11/014/200322, *Amnesty International*, June 2003, 22.

<sup>82</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 139, 146.

<sup>83</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, 'War and Peace Economies of Afghanistan's Strongmen', *International Peacekeeping* 14, no. 1, 2007, 83.

<sup>84</sup> Referring to data from 2003 to 2008: Lawrence Devlin et al., 'Conflict Analysis. Kunduz City, Kunduz Province', *Cooperation for Peace and Unity*, March 2009, 13. See also more recently: Tilmann Röder and Shabir Saleem, 'Provincial Needs Assessment. Criminal Justice in Kunduz Province', Embassy of the Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands Kabul/Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law (Kabul Office), 5 March 2011.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with police officer and former fighter of Jamiat, Kunduz, December 2012; International Crisis Group, 'Disarmament and Reintegration . . .', [see FN 72], 10.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Nabi Gechi, commander of non-state armed group in Qala-ye Zal, Kunduz, December 2012; Anna Badkhen, 'War's End Fails to Stop Afghans' Fighting', *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 February 2002, A1; David Filipov, 'Alliance that Drove out Taliban

Less violent was the competition within the Jamiat-dominated leadership of the province, mainly between Daud Daud and Mir Alam. Being around 16 years older, with extensive experience in the jihad and with a large clientele in Kunduz, Mir Alam contested Daud's formally higher position. Coming from Takhar province and never before having served for a longer period in Kunduz, Daud Daud could not rely on strong local backing. In contrast to Mir Alam, however, he was relatively educated, started to learn English at the time of the US intervention and due to his close ties with the Shura-ye Nazar leadership had much better connections to actors in the central government of that time.<sup>87</sup> As shall be demonstrated, Daud Daud was the superior competitor over government offices while Mir Alam proved to have stronger backing in Kunduz.

### 4.3 Early international military efforts in Kunduz

#### 4.3.1 Establishment of permanent bases

After the fall of the Taleban, US forces of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) established a Coalition Humanitarian Liaison Cell (CHLC) and, by April 2003, a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kunduz city.<sup>88</sup> The PRT consisted of 40 to 70 soldiers, among them around 15 National Guard Special Forces as well as a few civilian personnel. They mainly tried to keep in contact with the local authorities, searched for remaining al-Qaeda and Taleban fighters and trained militias that were supposed to be on the government's side. In this time, Americans also started humanitarian and infrastructure projects in the province.<sup>89</sup> The US

soldiers rented a building complex from the last provincial governor named by the Taleban, Haji Omar Khan, to host the PRT.<sup>90</sup> Under permanent international military presence, no large-scale armed conflicts between non-insurgent power brokers – as witnessed in 2002 – have erupted in Kunduz since then.

The number of international military personnel started to significantly rise with the arrival of German troops in October 2003; they replaced the US forces and took over the PRT location in Kunduz city by December 2003. Troop strength, composed of Germans who led the PRT and accompanied by small contingents from other European nations, initially reached 288 persons in 2004, increased to 470 in 2005, but decreased to 384 in 2006 and 450 in 2007.<sup>91</sup> In 2008 the number rose to around 1,000 soldiers and reached its height in 2010 with over 1,200.<sup>92</sup> Since the PRT was not directly

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<http://www.usip.org/files/file/resources/collections/histories/afghanistan/24.pdf>; Kurt Helmut Schiebold, 'KUNDUZ – eine Herausforderung', *Der Deutsche Fallschirmjäger* 2 2004, 17; Achim Wohlgethan, *Operation Kundus. Mein zweiter Einsatz in Afghanistan*, Berlin, Econ 2009, 7, 48, 92.

<sup>90</sup> United States Institute of Peace and Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 'Interview #24', [see FN 89]; Kurt H. Schiebold, 'KUNDUZ. Eine logistische Herausforderung', *Der Blaue Bund* 14, 2004, 30, 22.

<sup>91</sup> Smaller Belgian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Hungarian, Romanian, and Swiss contingents of two to 70 soldiers also served in the Kunduz PRT. In 2011, 320 Dutch police trainers deployed to Kunduz. Winni Nachtwei, 'Zur ISAF-Verlängerung. Auf verlorenem Posten in Kunduz und Faizabad?', 23 September 2004, 3, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://www.konfliktbearbeitung.de/downloads/file402.pdf>; Michael Schmunk, 'Die deutschen Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Ein neues Instrument zum Nation-Building', SWP-Studie 33/2005, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, November 2005, 16; Donald Rumsfeld, 'Staffing PRTs in Afghanistan', *The Rumsfeld Papers*, 18 August 2006, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/451/2006-08-18%20to%20Hadley%20re%20Staffing%20PRTs%20in%20Afghanistan.pdf>; Christina Alff, 'Regionale Wiederaufbauteams als wirksame Instrumente für Nation-building in Afghanistan?', *Geographische Rundschau* 60, no. 2, 2008, 61; Winfried Nachtwei, '(Klein-)Krieg bei Kunduz – Weizenrekordernte nebenan. Besuch in Kabul und Kunduz Mitte Juni 2009', 22 July 2009, accessed 29 July 2013, <http://www.nachtwei.de/index.php/articles/886>; 'Dutch Troops Pack Up as Exodus of Afghan Allies Gathers Pace', *Agence France-Presse*, 12 April 2012.

<sup>92</sup> Winfried Nachtwei, 'Besuch in West-, Süd-, Zentral-, Nord-Afghanistan. Viele Lichtblicke bei immer mehr Düsternis', 15 September 2008, 29, accessed 28 May

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Unraveling. Clashes in North Renew Old Feuds', *The Boston Globe*, 3 February 2002, A1.

<sup>87</sup> Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud* . . ., [see FN 12], 290; interview with former commander of Qari Rahmatullah, Kabul, November 2012; interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>88</sup> Donald P. Wright et al., 'The United States Army in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) October 2001-September 2005. A Different Kind of War', Fort Leavenworth, KS, US Army Combined Arms Center, 2010, 223, 227.

<sup>89</sup> United States Institute of Peace and Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 'Interview #24', 'Oral Histories: Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan, The Oral Histories Project on Stability Operations, United States Institute of Peace and Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 7 June 2005, accessed 28 May 2013,

supplied by a support base, it was – at least until 2006 – responsible for its own logistics. Only about one fourth of the troops therefore regularly served outside the PRT, mainly to conduct patrols or Psychological Operations or to establish Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) projects. Also, the ratio of combat to non-combat troops ('tooth-to-tail') was very low, with only one infantry company at the beginning, but became higher over time.<sup>93</sup>

In May 2006, the PRT moved to a plateau on the edge of Kunduz city and closer to the airport, a location that was better for defence and evacuation and that provided more space.<sup>94</sup> A US Embedded Training Team – to train the Afghan National Army (ANA) – and an American-run Regional Training Center (RTC) had been based in Kunduz since at least 2004, if not earlier, and were housed next to the PRT. This team cooperated with security forces trainers from a private security company, DynCorps.<sup>95</sup> A US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) cell was also stationed in Kunduz and formed a National Interdiction Unit (NIU) with Afghan police units.<sup>96</sup> With the 2010 'surge' of US troops to Afghanistan, around 1,000 American soldiers deployed to Kunduz, including Special

Forces Detachments.<sup>97</sup> The PRT was handed over to the ANSF in October 2013.<sup>98</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Strategy of the German-led PRT

German government officials chose Kunduz for a PRT mainly as a compromise between the German Ministry of Defence and the German Foreign Office. The former sought a place with minimal risk for its soldiers and initially proposed Charikar near Kabul. In contrast, the latter was in favour of Ghazni in southern Afghanistan, which in its eyes would have better served as a sign that Germany was actively taking 'international responsibility' and as a means to heal the relationship with the US, which they saw as damaged by the conflict over the Iraq intervention. Since it was logistically well situated, representatives of both ministries eventually opted for Kunduz.<sup>99</sup> Therefore, the decision to go to Kunduz was not part of a comprehensive plan related to Afghan socio-political conditions. Subsequently, the responsible actors in the German government were never able to agree on a common goal. As a result, they never developed a clear national strategy stating what the German PRT in Kunduz should exactly achieve besides abstract, undefined goals such as 'stability' or 'security'.<sup>100</sup> The German PRT never had a

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2013, [http://www.nachtwelt.de/downloads/bericht/sommer2008\\_reisebericht-afgh\\_nachtwelt](http://www.nachtwelt.de/downloads/bericht/sommer2008_reisebericht-afgh_nachtwelt); Christine Buchholz and Jan van Aken, 'Reisebericht Afghanistan, 29. Januar bis 3. Februar 2010', 3, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://dokumente.linksfraktion.net/pdfdownloads/7777295034.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGFkYDrVKGEZHDnHiWyHw42pu3rAA&bvm=bv.47008514,d.bGE>.

<sup>93</sup> Alff, 'Regionale Wiederaufbauteams . . .', [see FN 91], 61; Sascha Lange, 'Die Bundeswehr in Afghanistan. Personal und technische Ausstattung in der Einsatzrealität', SWP-Studie 2008/S 09, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, 2008, 12.

<sup>94</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung Fü S V 3, 'Unterrichtung des Parlamentes 19/06 über die Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr', 2006, 4, accessed 3 August 2013, <http://afghanistan.derwesten-recherche.org/#!/2006-19-01>.

<sup>95</sup> Werner Böhmert, *Erinnerungen an Kunduz. Ein Jahr in Afghanistan*, 2012, 29, 54, accessed 28 May 2013, [http://www.polizei-poeten.de/texte\\_pdf/Erinnerungen\\_Kunduz.pdf](http://www.polizei-poeten.de/texte_pdf/Erinnerungen_Kunduz.pdf); Embassy Kabul, 'Kunduz, Afghanistan. A Regional Hub for Security and Economic Growth', *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 22 December 2007, accessed 28 May 2013 <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/12/07KABUL4170.html>; jmelnick, 'New York National Guard Trains Afghan Police', CNN iReport, *CNN*, 18 October 2008.

<sup>96</sup> Mission USNATO, 'DEA Administrator Tandy Pushes NATO on CN Interdiction Support', *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 8 October 2007, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2007/10/07USNATO547.html>.

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<sup>97</sup> Reinhardt Zudrop, 'Der "Vernetzte Ansatz" – im PRT Kunduz. Von Reinhardt Zudrop, Kdr LLBrig 31, Kommandeur PRT Kunduz 29.03.-27.09.2010', *Der Deutsche Fallschirmjäger* 1, 2011, 8; Matthias Gebauer, 'Afghanistan. USA starten Truppenaufmarsch im Bundeswehrgebiet', *Spiegel Online*, 29 January 2010, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/afghanistan-usa-starten-truppenaufmarsch-im-bundeswehrgebiet-a-674705.html>.

<sup>98</sup> 'Bundeswehr übergibt Stützpunkt in Kundus', *Deutsche Welle*, 6 October 2013, accessed 22 October, <http://www.dw.de/bundeswehr-%C3%BCbergibt-st%C3%BCTzpunkt-in-kundus/a-17137806>.

<sup>99</sup> The German government did not publicly support the decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003, causing anger on the US side. Lutz Holländer, *Die politischen Entscheidungsprozesse bei Auslandseinsätzen der Bundeswehr 1999–2003*, Kieler Schriften zur politischen Wissenschaft, 19, Frankfurt a.M., Peter Lang 2007, 111–3; Ulf von Krause, *Die Afghanistaneinsätze der Bundeswehr. Politischer Entscheidungsprozess mit Eskalationsdynamik*, Wiesbaden, VS-Verlag 2011, 153, FN 282.

<sup>100</sup> Philipp Münch, 'Strategielos in Afghanistan. Die Operationsführung der Bundeswehr im Rahmen der International Security Assistance Force', *SWP-Studie S30*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, November 2011, 7–8; Martin Zapfe, 'Sicherheitskultur und Strategiefähigkeit. Die ressortgemeinsame Kooperation



mandate informed by a real multinational strategy. This was the result of the differing interests of the nations that contributed troops to ISAF.<sup>101</sup>

At best, operational aims and tactical guidelines were clear. According to these, the German commanders' focus was to support the local Afghan government. Besides that, they were to stick to the principle of strict neutrality, to keep in contact with as many people as possible, and by all means to avoid civilian casualties. Since German government representatives and staff officers assumed that the German populace would be pacifistic, they tried to evade confrontations that might cause casualties.<sup>102</sup> To this end, they established advanced medical facilities and imposed strict rules that limited the range of patrols and operations but ensured medical evacuation.<sup>103</sup>

German PRT commanders had the rank of colonel and some were therefore close to promotion to the rank of general. This and a common culture of uncertainty avoidance at the higher levels of the German armed forces led many of them to focus efforts on avoiding disturbances during their period of service in Afghanistan. German soldiers,

including officers, were on very short rotations of four to six months, which did not encourage them to take risks or to develop a local strategy that extended over the individual's time of service in Afghanistan. Also, due to the lack of strategy, the PRT commanders were relatively free in their operational decisions and usually tried to safeguard the lives of their soldiers first rather than risk them for uncertain goals. All in all, the German forces tended to avoid risks and focus on force protection.<sup>104</sup>

#### 4.3.3 Starting point of the key leader engagement

According to the American and NATO concept of key leader engagement (KLE), decision makers in the field should identify the major local leaders, gather information on them, and identify how they could be influenced to reach strategic aims.<sup>105</sup> Due to the hasty establishment of the German PRT and because the German foreign intelligence service (Bundesnachrichtendienst or BND) until the early 1990s only temporarily had an office in the Pakistani-Afghan borderlands and concentrated its efforts on Kabul, the German soldiers did not start with comprehensive information on the power structures in Kunduz.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, they remained largely unaware of the local struggles and coalitions even of the late 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>107</sup> Decisive components of KLE – strategy and information – were therefore lacking, hampering all efforts in this direction.

Besides lacking major capabilities for KLE, the Germans usually did not take serious steps to actively influence the power structure but rather

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der Bundesrepublik Deutschland für Afghanistan', PhD diss, University of Konstanz, 2011, 192–3.

<sup>101</sup> Center for the Study of the Presidency, *Afghanistan Study Group Report. Revitalizing Our Efforts, Rethinking Our Strategies*, 2 ed., Washington, DC, January 2008, 22. See the report of the G3/operations staff officer at the Bundeswehr Joint Forces Operations Command (*Einsatzführungskommando*) responsible for the PRT in this time period: Thomas Groeters, 'German General Staff Officer Education and Current Challenges', master's thesis, Fort Leavenworth, 'School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2006, 35.

<sup>102</sup> Kersti Larsdotter, 'Exploring the Utility of Armed Force in Peace Operations. German and British Approaches in Northern Afghanistan', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19, no. 3, 2008, 361–3; Timo Noetzel, 'Germany's Small War in Afghanistan. Military Learning amid Politico-Strategic Inertia', *Contemporary Security Policy* 31, no. 3, 2010, 487–8, 491–2; Andreas Kuehne, 'Scrutinizing and Assessing the Performance of the German and U.S.-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan', master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2008, 64.

<sup>103</sup> Gerd Brandstetter, 'Nation Building in Afghanistan. The German Provincial Reconstruction Team Concept – Means to Improve Efficiency of Effort', USAWC Strategy Research Project, US Army War College, March 2005, 11; Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, Vol. 4 of *Rand Counterinsurgency Study*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2008, 107.

<sup>104</sup> Larsdotter, 'Exploring the Utility . . .', [see FN 102], 361–3; Peter Dreist, 'Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan als Teil von OEF und ISAF. Ansätze und Genese' in *Auftrag Auslandseinsatz. Neueste Militärgeschichte an der Schnittstelle von Geschichtswissenschaft, Politik, Öffentlichkeit und Streitkräften*, ed by Bernhard Chiari, Freiburg, Br., Rombach, 2012, 247.

<sup>105</sup> Asymmetric Warfare Group, 'Afghan Key Leader Engagement (KLE)', Tactical Pocket Reference. A Guide for US Forces, *Asymmetric Warfare Group*, October 2009, accessed 3 August 2013, <http://info.publicintelligence.net/AWG-KeyLeaderEngagement.pdf>.

<sup>106</sup> Eric Gujer, *Kampf an neuen Fronten. Wie sich der BND dem Terrorismus stellt*, Frankfurt am Main/New York, Campus 2006, 86–7; Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, 'Der BND in Afghanistan', October 2008, 6, accessed 1 August 2013, <http://www.geheimdienste.info/texte/Den Haag Afgh.pdf>.

<sup>107</sup> Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 2–4.



stuck to the aim of cooperating with the existing government officials. Equally important was their goal of avoiding conflicts and casualties. To this end, they searched for officially legitimised actors to prevent them from causing trouble for the PRT. This was especially true in the early days when the ISAF forces were based in the middle of the city with no possibilities for retreat. They had few combat troops and ammunition, and local Afghan guards with unclear loyalties guarded them. They were therefore objectively in a weak position.<sup>108</sup> They found it a challenge to actively engage local power brokers who did not act as desired, and insurgents who soon became stronger in Kunduz. Also, they could not benefit the groups they perceived as positive, in case the ruling actors were not in favour of those groups. To a certain extent, the Germans became hostages of their hosts.

Though housed by Haji Omar Khan, the Germans did not politically focus on him<sup>109</sup> or other representatives who did not belong to the anti-Taliban coalition, since they did not hold official positions and seemed weak. However, although Governor Latif had the highest political position in Kunduz until 2004, the Germans also did not focus on him. Perhaps they received information about his involvement in the drug trade.<sup>110</sup> A more convincing reason, however, is that they perceived Daud as being the strongest power broker of Kunduz, despite his weak local backing.<sup>111</sup> The latter therefore became their 'main point of contact' although they received evidence of his narcotics-trafficking activities.<sup>112</sup>

The Germans came to see Daud as the strongest power broker of Kunduz since they perceived his patron Fahim as the most powerful in the region.<sup>113</sup> Lacking detailed information, they seem

to have simply followed the official AMF hierarchy, which placed Daud over Mir Alam. In addition, Fahim assured German Defence Minister Peter Struck in August 2003 that German troops would be safe in Kunduz.<sup>114</sup> Following up on connections to Fahim as established by the BND as early as the mid-1990s, German decision makers kept up good relations with him after the beginning of the intervention and therefore trusted him.<sup>115</sup> Daud had also been one of the main partners of the US forces during their time in Kunduz.<sup>116</sup>

Daud skilfully balanced his policy towards the PRT. Before the arrival of the German contingent, he ordered his men to occupy the airport of Kunduz and warned the German decision makers in press interviews not to interfere with his affairs.<sup>117</sup> On the other hand, he diplomatically distanced himself from other 'warlords' by showing a peaceful and, in a Western sense, 'progressive' attitude, condemning 'ethnic hatred' and speaking out for development.<sup>118</sup> He also successfully sidelined Provincial Governor Latif Ibrahimi when German Foreign Minister Joseph Fischer officially visited Kunduz in April 2004. Right after his arrival, Daud greeted Fischer, though following protocol the

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Kunduz commander Brandstetter, 'Nation Building in Afghanistan . . .', [see FN 103], 9.

<sup>114</sup> 'Struck spricht mit afghanischem Verteidigungsminister über Kundus', *Agence France Presse*, 11 August 2003.

<sup>115</sup> Schmidt-Eenboom, *BND in Afghanistan*, [see FN 106], 5–6. The Germans regularly provided medical treatment to Fahim who was in bad health. Rick Hillier, *A Soldier First. Bullets, Bureaucrats and the Politics of War*, Toronto, HarperCollins 2010, 312–3; Hamid Shalizi and Tim Gaynor, 'Afghan Vice-President Fahim Recovering in Germany – Aide', *Reuters AlertNet*, 6 September 2010.

<sup>116</sup> United States Institute of Peace and Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 'Interview #24', [see FN 89]; Wright et al., *The United States Army . . .*, [see FN 88], 75, 80–1.

<sup>117</sup> 'Von der ehemaligen Taliban-zur Friedenshochburg', *Agence France Presse*, 28 August 2003; 'Wir führen unsere Aufgaben zu Ende', *Agence France Presse*, 20 April 2004.

<sup>118</sup> "'Freuen uns auf die Deutschen'", *Focus* 37, 2003, 220. Though still a commanding General, Daud therefore greeted the German minister of foreign affairs, Joseph Fischer, in a Western-style civilian suite during his visit. Willi Germund, 'Abmarsch zur Pistazien-und Obsternte', *General Anzeiger*, 3 September 2003; International Crisis Group, 'Disarmament and Reintegration . . .', [see FN 72], 12.

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<sup>108</sup> Winfried Nachtwei, 'Delegationsbesuch der "ISAF-Insel" PRT Kunduz am 31. Januar 2004', 2, accessed 4 October 2013, [http://www.nachtwei.de/downloads/kunduz\\_besuch\\_01\\_2004.pdf](http://www.nachtwei.de/downloads/kunduz_besuch_01_2004.pdf); Wohlgethan, *Operation Kundus . . .*, [see FN 89], 51, 57, 72–3.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Haji Omar Khan, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>110</sup> 'Afghanische Wirren', *Der Spiegel* 37, 2003, 19.

<sup>111</sup> See the report of the first German PRT commander, Schiebold, 'KUNDUZ – eine Herausforderung', [see FN 89], 18; and Groeters, 'German General Staff Officer . . .', [see FN 101], 37.

<sup>112</sup> Groeters, 'German General Staff Officer . . .', [see FN 101], 26.

<sup>113</sup> Nachtwei, 'Delegationsbesuch der "ISAF-Insel" . . .', [see FN 108], 2. See also the report of the later PRT

latter should have visited Governor Latif as the highest official of the province first.<sup>119</sup>

Daud and other commanders benefitted from a certain widespread, largely unconscious Western preference for members of the Shura-ye Nazar faction of Jamiat. It rested partly on press reports, often created by French journalists in the 1980s, that tended to romanticise its founder, Massud. Massud's party later became the last one to fight the Taleban, reinforcing this image. Equally appealing to Western advocates of 'state-building' and military officers was his ability to establish a relatively rationalised form of rule and military organisation and brilliantly lead his troops in combat.<sup>120</sup> German officers deployed to Kabul visited his grave in 2003, led by Massud's former commander and later Minister of Interior Bismillah Khan Mohammadi.<sup>121</sup> The PRT in Kunduz even supported the refurbishment of a memorial for him in Takhar in 2006.<sup>122</sup> Eventually, the principle of focussing on government officials first and the slight favouritism towards the Jamiat/Shura-ye Nazar members meant that the PRT's KLE policy went in a specific direction, even though this had not been clearly decided beforehand.

#### 4.3.4 International efforts to disarm commanders

International actors' first major attempt to influence local power structures in Afghanistan was the Demobilisation Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) programme. Mainly funded by Japan but implemented by the UN and the Afghan transitional government, its aim was to collect the arms of the AMF under the umbrella of the Afghanistan New Beginnings Program (ANBP) and

thereby help establish a monopoly of violence. The representatives of the Jamiat-led Ministry of Defence (MoD), mainly, decided on who should be disarmed and in what order.<sup>123</sup> International military forces only supported this effort logistically or with information.<sup>124</sup> As commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> AMF Corps, General Daud cleverly supported the decision to select Kunduz as the first location for DDR in Afghanistan.<sup>125</sup> By this, he earned credit with the international community and the central government, where he sought a position. He also sidelined his opponent Mir Alam, whose 54<sup>th</sup> AMF Division was part of the 6<sup>th</sup> AMF Corps and therefore to be dissolved jointly. This was a severe blow to Mir Alam since his official and unofficial legitimacy rested almost solely on his position as a military commander, while Daud already showed that he was able to act in non-military roles.

In October 2003, the demobilisation of the 54<sup>th</sup> AMF Division officially started with a huge ceremony.<sup>126</sup> As in other parts of Afghanistan, its members, however, had predominantly handed in outdated arms and their heavy weapons systems, such as tanks and artillery.<sup>127</sup> Except as symbols of power, the latter had become useless since international air power could easily identify and destroy them in a confrontation. In a still-volatile security situation with no monopoly over the means of violence, commanders did not want to give up their best assets – their stockpiles of small arms and ammunition. In addition, they were suspicious of their competitors who could exploit their weakness after disarming and attack.

Unlike the technical military term indicates, the AMF formations were armed groups of the jihad

<sup>119</sup> Johannes Leithäuser, "Wir helfen gerne", *FAZ.NET*, 20 April 2004, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/afghanistan-wir-helfen-gerne-1160759.html>; Konrad Freytag, 'Operation Afghanistan – ein Situationsbericht', *Europäische Sicherheit* 53, no. 8, 2004, 11.

<sup>120</sup> Roy, *Islam and Resistance* . . . , [see FN 20], 181–3, 220–1; Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud* . . . , [see FN 12], 282–3, 286–7.

<sup>121</sup> Karl Ernst Graf Strachwitz, 'Charismatischer Führer oder Kriegsverbrecher? Achmad Schah Massud', in *Wegweiser zur Geschichte. Afghanistan*, ed by Bernhard Chiari, Paderborn et al., 3rd ed., Schöningh 2009, 203–4.

<sup>122</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung Fü S V 3, 'Unterrichtung des Parlamentes 31/06 über die Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr', 2006, 6, accessed 29 May 2013, <http://afghanistan.derwesten-recherche.org/#!/2006-19-01>.

<sup>123</sup> Barbara J. Stapleton, 'Disarming the Militias. DDR and DIAG and the Implications for Peace Building', AAN Occasional Paper 02/2013, *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, April 2013, 6–7; Sedra, 'The Four Pillars . . .', [see FN 72], 119–34.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with former DDR case worker, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>125</sup> International Crisis Group, 'Disarmament and Reintegration . . .', [see FN 72], 12.

<sup>126</sup> Amir Shah, 'U.N.-Sponsored Disarmament Program Begins in North Afghanistan', *Associated Press*, 21 October 2003.

<sup>127</sup> Interview with former DDR case worker, Kunduz, December 2012; Gran Hewad, 'Legal, Illegal: Militia Recruitment and (Failed) Disarmament in Kunduz', *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 10 November 2012, accessed 29 July 2013, [www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=3108](http://www.aan-afghanistan.org/index.asp?id=3108).

and civil war times whose members were personally loyal to their commanders and tied to them by pre-existing patron-client relationships.<sup>128</sup> In this sense, Mir Alam and the other major commanders did not only keep hidden weapons depots but also maintained patron-client relations with their fighters.<sup>129</sup> In addition, they managed to transfer their followers into legalised security forces.<sup>130</sup> Rauf Ibrahimy kept the command of his men and their weapons, as they now constituted the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Afghan Border Police Brigade.<sup>131</sup> Mir Alam also transferred numerous followers into the security forces where they constituted a valuable network. As a result, by 2004 only 10 per cent of Kunduz's 400 police officers were professionally trained and none in the lower ranks.<sup>132</sup>

#### 4.4 Distribution of official positions

The following chapters map the power structure of Kunduz as visible in the competition for and distribution of official positions. Through this, the effect that the international military engagement had on the whole landscape of power brokers can be ascertained.

##### 4.4.1 Distribution of political positions until 2006

In his position as interim president, Hamed Karzai had to cope with the members of the Shura-ye Nazar, the faction of Jamiat that initially occupied the most important official positions below the president on the national level after the fall of the Taliban. As the staunchest Taliban-opposing

group, it was headed by then Minister of Defence Fahim. Since most Shura-ye Nazar members came from northeastern Afghanistan, they dominated networks in this region. To gradually expand his control over this part of the country, Karzai therefore had to limit his political opponents' influence there. A suitable means was to install non-Shura-ye Nazar and non-Jamiati proxies.<sup>133</sup> In accordance with the usual time in office – two years for leading provincial and district posts – he rotated the major positions in 2004.

At first, Karzai replaced Latif Ibrahimy and made him governor of Faryab.<sup>134</sup> As his successor, he named the Pashtun Eng. Mohammad Omar in March 2004. By doing so, he also satisfied the demands of Omar's patron with whom he closely cooperated, Abdul Rabb Rasul Sayyaf, the leader of Ittehad which was now called Tanzim-e Dawat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan (Organisation for the Islamic Call of Afghanistan).<sup>135</sup> In spring 2004, former Uzbek commander Motaleb Beg, like Omar a very influential powerbroker from Takhar and familiar with Kunduz at least since he fought there as a Jamiat commander in the 1990s, became provincial chief of police. In late 2003, he had publicly announced his allegiance to Jombesh.<sup>136</sup> Before his appointment as provincial chief of police of Kunduz, he held this position in Takhar. While there, a large amount of heroin was found in one of his cars and he therefore lost his post. He threatened to destabilise the situation in Takhar. A compromise was reached, however, and he swore allegiance to Karzai and received the position in Kunduz.<sup>137</sup> General Daud left the area in August 2004 when he became the national deputy minister of interior, responsible for counternarcotic operations.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>128</sup> International Crisis Group, 'Afghanistan. Getting Disarmament Back on Track', Update Briefing Asia Briefing no. 35, *International Crisis Group*, February 2005, 2.

<sup>129</sup> Mir Alam even told this frankly to French journalists: Françoise Chipaux, 'L'Afghanistan sous le Joug des Milices', *Le Monde*, 15 September 2004, 20.

<sup>130</sup> Böhmert, *Erinnerungen an Kunduz* . . . , [see FN 95], 26–7.

<sup>131</sup> International Crisis Group, 'Disarmament and Reintegration . . .', [see FN 72], 10; telephone interview with former German intelligence officer, deployed to Afghanistan in 2005 and 2006, 6 August 2012.

<sup>132</sup> Antonio Giustozzi and Mohammad Isaqzadeh, *Policing Afghanistan. The Politics of the Lame Leviathan*, London, Hurst 2013, 99. Böhmert, *Erinnerungen an Kunduz* . . . , [see FN 95], 24, who trained Afghan policemen in Kunduz from 2004 until 2005 gave the similar figure of 10–15 per cent.

<sup>133</sup> Giustozzi, *Resilient Oligopoly* . . . , [see FN 26], 41–3.

<sup>134</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 146.

<sup>135</sup> Thomas Ruttig, 'Islamists, Leftists – and a Void in the Center. Afghanistan's Political Parties and Where They Come From (1902–2006)', *Afghanistan Office Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*, 2006, 22.

<sup>136</sup> Frozan Rahmani, "'I Regret Participation in the Civil War': Baik', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 4 August 2011, accessed 22 October, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/08/04/i-regret-participation-civil-war-baik>; Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud* . . . , [see FN 12], 147.

<sup>137</sup> Larsson, 'Kunduz Provincial Survey . . .', [see FN 81], 15; Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh, *Policing Afghanistan* . . . , [see FN 132], 90, 136.

<sup>138</sup> 'Afghan President Replaces Powerful Warlord', *Agence France Presse*, 31 August 2004.

The most important power brokers of this time period, Latif and Rauf Ibrahimi, Eng. Omar, Omar Khan, Utmanzai and, supposedly, Daud supported Karzai as a candidate in the first presidential elections in 2004. They did this obviously in return for the positions they had received or maintained.<sup>139</sup> Until the end of the period under review, Mir Alam sought to become the provincial chief of police to compensate for the loss of his post as commander of the 54<sup>th</sup> AMF Division and therefore supported Karzai as well. As a result of their support, the latter received a large majority, 45.6 per cent, of the votes in Kunduz during the 2004 elections in contrast to 24.6 per cent for Jombesh founder Dostum and just 18.4 per cent for Shura-ye Nazar representative Yunos Qanuni.<sup>140</sup>

While trying to get a position for a client, Mir Alam seems to have been behind clashes with Motaleb Beg's police forces in 2005.<sup>141</sup> Probably to prevent any disturbance of the parliamentary elections that year, Karzai therefore gave Mir Alam the position of chief of police of neighbouring Baghlan province in June 2005.<sup>142</sup> To become the chief of police, he had to hand over a large cache of 765 weapons plus ammunition to Motaleb Beg as part of the DDR's follow-up programme, the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG).<sup>143</sup> In Baghlan, Mir Alam could draw on contacts from the jihad period since he had fought there.<sup>144</sup> However, he quarrelled with the Jamiat commander of the North and Northeast Highway Police brigade turned 20<sup>th</sup> AMF Brigade, Abdul Khalil Andarabi. According to US government information, they competed for the control of drug traffic routes and were arch enemies. Since Andarabi and his

influential father, Juma Khan, originated from this province, he apparently gathered more supporters and edged out Mir Alam.<sup>145</sup>

In the parliamentary elections of the following year, 2005, the candidates who received the most votes were all former power brokers of the jihad and civil war era. Since strongmen often shaped voting in rural areas, these results can be seen as partly reflecting the power structure.<sup>146</sup> Most votes went to Haji Omar Khan, demonstrating his still-large backing among the province's Pashtuns. Next was Rauf Ibrahimi who obviously profited from his family's extended networks and control of Imam Sahib. Third was Karim Fazel Aimaq, a former Jamiat commander of once Kunduz Governor Qari Rahmatullah, who also received a seat but ranked second to last.<sup>147</sup> Representatives of more modern urban groups followed, probably benefitting from the stricter control of ballot boxes in Kunduz city.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Embassy Kabul, 'Kunduz Politics . . .', [see FN 142]. The enmity between them may have originated in the jihad period, when Andarabi was fighting for Hezb most of the time, while Mir Alam followed (at different times) Mahaz, Harakat, and allegedly also the Jabha-ye Mellī-ye Nejat-e Afghanistan (Afghanistan National Liberation Front, ANLF). Interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012; 'Who Is Who . . .', [see FN 50], 5.

<sup>146</sup> See in general Andrew Wilder, 'A House Divided? Analysing the 2005 Afghan Elections', *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, 2 December 2005, 16–7; Electoral Complaints Commission of Afghanistan, 'Final Report', *Electoral Complaints Commission of Afghanistan*, March 2006, 14.

<sup>147</sup> Afghanistan 2005 Elections Joint Electoral Management Body, 'Kunduz Wolesi Jirga. Certified Results; Results by Vote Order', *Afghanistan 2005 Elections Joint Electoral Management Body*, 2005, 1, accessed 1 August 2013, [http://d8680609.u106.forthost.com/assets/pdf/reports/certified\\_17\\_kunduz\\_wj\\_vo\\_e.pdf](http://d8680609.u106.forthost.com/assets/pdf/reports/certified_17_kunduz_wj_vo_e.pdf); interview with former commander of Qari Rahmatullah, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>148</sup> The Uzbek woman Ustad Shukria Paikan Ahmadi from Kunduz city, whose husband had been an influential communist Khalqi follower, ranked fourth; Al-Haj Pohanmal Mo'in Mrastyal, a former Mahaz commander from Khanabad who later joined the modernist Haq wa 'Adalat party, was sixth; and the ninth and last place belonged to Fatima Aziz, a wealthy medical doctor. Before them, the Turkmen and Hezb affiliate Haji Mohammad Amin Qaney ranked fifth and the Kandahari Pashtun Nazek Mir Sarfaraz was seventh. Interview with Afghan head of local NGO office and former senior government official, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012; interview with Afghan head of international NGO office, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>140</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, 'Afghanistan Presidential Election Results – 2004', accessed 29 July 2013, [http://www.iec.org.af/public\\_html/Election%20Results%20Website/english/english.htm](http://www.iec.org.af/public_html/Election%20Results%20Website/english/english.htm).

<sup>141</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 145.

<sup>142</sup> Embassy Kabul, 'Kunduz Politics of Corruption in the Baghlan Police Forces', *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 20 December 2005, accessed 2 November 2012, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2005/12/05KABUL5181.html>.

<sup>143</sup> Radio Afghanistan, 'Commander Surrenders Weapons in Afghan North', *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 25 June 2005; Stapleton, 'Disarming the Militias . . .', [see FN 123], 7–8.

<sup>144</sup> 'Who Is Who . . .', [see FN 50], 5, 8.



#### 4.4.2 The provincial government of Engineer Omar

Eng. Omar was one of the longest-serving governors in Afghanistan during the post-Taleban time, in office for more than six years until 2010 when he was killed. His time in office will therefore be dealt with in detail. Since Eng. Omar came from neighbouring Takhar province, he did not have a huge clientele in Kunduz. As mentioned before, however, he had fought as a commander in Kunduz during the 1990s and therefore must have had contacts on which to build. His governance was characterised by attempts to stay neutral and prevent conflicts among differing groups.<sup>149</sup> This was especially important since he could not rely on strong local backing; he seems to have feared being replaced by a large conflict. One way he kept peace was to include as many groups as possible in his patronage chains. He achieved this by distributing the resources from international development projects.<sup>150</sup> Like other office holders, he also extracted money from the province, partly to pay decision makers in Kabul in order to keep his position. On several occasions, Kunduz residents, especially in the context of water management, blamed him for favouring his home province Takhar, where he owned large parcels of land.<sup>151</sup> Trying to balance his own interests with those of numerous differing groups, he acted in the domains of many and was perceived controversially. Until the end of his time in office, he remained foremost a client of Sayyaf and his Dawat *tanzim*.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Interview with former senior NDS official of Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; interview with official of the provincial administration and political activist, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>150</sup> Friederike Böge and Christoph Ehrhardt, 'Wie Afghanistan funktioniert. Zermüht zum Korruptionsmakler', *FAZ.NET*, 25 November 2009.

<sup>151</sup> Vincent Thomas, Wamiqullah Mumtaz, and Mujib Ahmad Azizi, 'Mind the Gap? Local Practices and Institutional Reforms for Water Allocation in Afghanistan's Panj-Amu River Basin', Case Study Series,, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit* June 2012, 71, 76; The Liaison Office, 'Sub-National Governance Capacity Needs Assessment in Northeastern Afghanistan. Badakhshan, Baghlan, Balkh, Kunduz, Samangan and Takhar', *The Liaison Office*, November 2010, 98.

<sup>152</sup> Interview with Ahmadullah Archiwal, researcher and journalist from Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012; Ahmad Nawid, '02: Martyred. How Kunduz Deals with the Assassination

To prevent conflicts, Governor Omar also established a balance of power between the competing groups in Kunduz.<sup>153</sup> In January 2006, he warned PRT officials of ensuing land conflicts on the heels of increasing refugee returnees. The Pashtun refugees, especially, he stated, would claim land that was often illegally occupied by others.<sup>154</sup> In a famous land conflict between largely Uzbek versus Pashtun farmers in the Ashqalan area of Kunduz district in 2006 he, however, did not intervene in favour of the latter, probably to prevent any accusation of being biased towards his own ethnic group or of not being torn in the conflict himself.<sup>155</sup>

By the mid-2000s, Eng. Omar seems to have been convinced that the Pashtuns were at a disadvantage in Kunduz. Contemporaries from different groups, including German intelligence personnel, claim that about that time he bought motorcycles for Kandahari Pashtuns<sup>156</sup> from Kunduz who fought on the Taleban side.<sup>157</sup> This

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of its Gouverneur [sic] Omar', *Afghanistan Today*, 19 October 2010, accessed 29 July 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-today.org/article/?id=34>; Malyar Sadiq Azad, 'Governor Recruitment in Afghanistan', The Killid Group, 11 December 2010, 29 July 2013; The Liaison Office, 'Sub-National Governance ...', [see FN 151], 98.

<sup>153</sup> Interview with official of the provincial administration and political activist, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>154</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung Fü S V 3, 'Unterrichtung des Parlamentes 01/06 über die Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr', Bundesministerium der Verteidigung Fü S V 3, 2006, 3, accessed 29 May 2013, <http://afghanistan.derwesten-recherche.org/#!/2006-01-01>.

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Ahmadullah Archiwal, researcher and journalist from Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012; Röder and Saleem, 'Provincial Needs Assessment ...', [see FN 84].

<sup>156</sup> The term Kandahari points to the historical region of origin of these Pashtuns, who only latter settled in Kunduz with the waves of immigrants arriving since the late 1800s.

<sup>157</sup> Interviews with German officer and former member of the PRT leadership, Berlin, September 2010; former senior NDS official of Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; Ahmadullah Archiwal, Kabul, November 2012 and with former commander of Qari Rahmatullah, Kabul, November 2012. See also Antonio Giustozzi and Christoph Reuter, 'The Insurgents of the Afghan North. The Rise of the Taleban, the Self-Abandonment of the Afghan Government and the Effects of ISAF's "Capture-and-Kill Campaign"', AAN Thematic Report 04/2011, *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, May 2011, 13; Kristóf



may be interpreted as Omar's attempt to balance the province's power structure. There is dissent on whether back in 1998 Eng. Omar switched to the Taliban side for a short period while fighting on the Taloqan front.<sup>158</sup> If this is true, his background may have facilitated contacts with them.

As the Taliban had gained enormous power by 2008 in some districts, he seems to have feared that they were too strong and could become a threat even to him.<sup>159</sup> He actively encouraged the international forces to take a tougher stance on them. He did so with more vigour after the Taliban in August 2009 killed his brother, Nur Khan, who served as a district chief of police for Dasht-e Archi.<sup>160</sup> In addition, he became a staunch supporter of anti-Taliban militias in Kunduz.<sup>161</sup>

In 2007, Karzai wanted to replace Eng. Omar with the governor of Jowzjan, Juma Khan Hamdard, a native of Balkh province and Hezb-e Islami member who was driven out of office by violent demonstrations incited by his long-time enemy

Jombesh leader Dostum in May 2007.<sup>162</sup> Karzai probably also acted on German demands to replace him.<sup>163</sup> At the same time, his move fit the strategy of positioning Jamiat antagonists in the northeast. In reaction to Karzai's desire to replace him, Eng. Omar mobilised supporters in Kunduz, including businessman Utmanzai whom he allegedly paid for supporting him, and his networks in Kabul, which meant mainly Sayyaf.<sup>164</sup> Mir Alam also mobilised protesters and publicly signed a petition against Karzai's decision. He did this because he was severely at odds with Hamdard whom he had fought against in the jihad.<sup>165</sup> Due to the pressure from various sides, Karzai backed down, though he had already signed the decree to replace Eng. Omar with Hamdard.<sup>166</sup>

#### 4.4.3 Distribution of political positions after the first parliamentary elections

En route to the presidential elections of 2009, Karzai managed to win over the most important possible opposition leaders on the national level, including Fahim, and with them their local clientele. Of those with a real chance to challenge him, only former United Islamic Front foreign minister and Shura-ye Nazar affiliate, Dr Abdullah Abdullah, maintained his candidacy.<sup>167</sup> The most important power brokers in Kunduz, Eng. Omar, the Ibrahimis, Mir Alam, Omar Khan, Utmanzai, and officials of the Afghan Mellat (Afghan Nation) and Jombesh parties, publicly rallied support for Karzai.<sup>168</sup> However, Karzai lost significant support

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Gosztonyi and Jan Koehler, 'PCA Analyse Nordafghanistan. Im Auftrag der GTZ', *Analysis Research Consulting*, January 2010, 72.

<sup>158</sup> Denying that he did so: Michael Bhatia, 'Kunduz, Takhar and Baghlan. Parties, Strongmen and Shifting Alliances' in *Afghanistan, Arms and Conflict. Armed Groups, Disarmament and Security in a Post-War Society*, ed by Michael Bhatia and Mark Sedra, London/New York, Contemporary Security Studies, Routledge 2008, 251; interview with Malim Chari, member of parliament for Kunduz; interview with former district governor, November 2012; interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012, and numerous other interview partners in Kunduz and Kabul, who were not in every case on good terms with him. On the other hand, many see evidence that he did switch to the Taliban side, such as Wörmer, 'Networks of Kunduz . . .', [see FN 7], 31, and some interview partners. One interview partner argued that he did so because his father was in their hands: Afghan head of international NGO office, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>159</sup> 'Tote Zivilisten in Afghanistan. Ministerium begegnet Spekulation sehr scharf', *Netzeitung*, 1 September 2008.

<sup>160</sup> Embassy Kabul, 'Kunduz Governor Nervous as Security Trends Negative', *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 20 November 2008, accessed 13 October 2012, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2008/11/08KABUL3025.html>; Alan Cullison and Matthew Karnitschnig, 'Afghan Insurgency Tests German Troops', *Wall Street Journal*, 16 November 2009; Gosztonyi and Koehler, 'PCA Analyse Nordafghanistan . . .', [see FN 157], 72.

<sup>161</sup> Embassy Kabul, 'Unconventional Security Forces. What's Out There?', *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 12 November 2009, accessed 12 October 2012, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/11/09KABUL3661.html>.

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<sup>162</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 140.

<sup>163</sup> Interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>164</sup> Interview with Afghan head of international NGO office, Kunduz, December 2012; interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>165</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 140.

<sup>166</sup> Interview with Ahmadullah Archiwal, Kabul, November 2012; Bundesministerium der Verteidigung Fü S V 3, 'Unterrichtung des Parlamentes 27/07 über die Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr', 2, accessed 29 May 2013, <http://afghanistan.derwesten-recherche.org/#!/2007-27-01>.

<sup>167</sup> Humayoon, 'Re-election of Hamid Karzai', [see FN 26], 11–8.

<sup>168</sup> Interview with Afghan head of international NGO office, Kunduz, December 2012; interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz,

in Kunduz as the presidential elections, discussed below, demonstrated.

Karzai won Mir Alam's public support even though the latter, together with Motaleb Beg, lost his position as provincial chief of police after a joint international and Ministry of Interior (MoI) Police Rank Reform Commission suggested their removal in June 2006.<sup>169</sup> Karzai objected to the commission's suggestions in the cases of 14 chiefs of police, but apparently agreed to the removal of Mir Alam and Motaleb Beg.<sup>170</sup> During the election campaign of 2009, Karzai allied with Mir Alam's enemy Hamdard against the governor of Balkh, Mohammad Atta Nur.<sup>171</sup> Therefore, Karzai would likely again reward Hamdard by attempting to place him as Kunduz governor, as he had done in 2007.<sup>172</sup> Despite his public support for Karzai, Mir Alam was said to have ordered his followers secretly to vote for Abdullah, which seems plausible in the light of the latter events.<sup>173</sup>

Despite public support by major local power brokers, Kunduz was one of the few provinces in which Karzai was defeated by Abdullah with twice as many votes. This is likely a result of Mir Alam's secret support for Abdullah, and probably also support from others, but also of Abdullah's ability to mobilise Pashtun voters. Being of mixed Tajik and Pashtun origin, he held several speeches in

Pashto during the election campaign.<sup>174</sup> In Kunduz, many Pashtuns reportedly voted for Abdullah since they thought that with his Jamiat/Shura-ye Nazar ties he might be better able to protect them in the northeast.<sup>175</sup> Another factor was that Assadullah Omarkhel – who came from an influential Pashtun family of Kunduz, led the Dawat in the northeast and was a leading figure for many Pashtuns – supported Abdullah.<sup>176</sup> This was another example of Jamiat and Ittehad/Dawat affiliate cooperation that took place in Kunduz but not in Kabul.

Greater control of anti-Taleban militias over the countryside, which will be discussed in further detail below, significantly shaped the second parliamentary elections of September 2010.<sup>177</sup> Votes in almost 20 per cent of the polling centres of Kunduz were disqualified. Heavy manipulation took place in Khanabad especially, where militias fought for control.<sup>178</sup> Rauf Ibrahim received most votes this time, demonstrating how much his family had consolidated its rule. But many inhabitants of Imam Sahib also probably voted voluntarily for him, hoping that he might deliver well based on his already established connections in Kabul.<sup>179</sup> Afterwards, Rauf even became parliamentary speaker and therefore received a nation-wide influential position.<sup>180</sup> Haji Omar, however, was not elected this time. This may have

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November 2012; interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012; 'Support for Karzai, Abdullah Swells', *Pajhwok Afghan News* (online), 29 June 2009, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://pajhwokelections.af/viewstory.php?storyid=50>.

<sup>169</sup> Embassy Kabul, 'PRT/Kunduz: New Police Chiefs Raise Hopes for Fundamental Improvements in Northeast', *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 25 June 2006, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/06/06KABUL2862.html>; Embassy Kabul, 'PRT/Kunduz. New Police Chief in Kunduz Province', *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 22 June 2006, accessed 28 May 2013, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/06/06KABUL2829.html>.

<sup>170</sup> Andrew Wilder, 'Cops or Robbers? The Struggle to Reform the Afghan National Police', Issues Paper Series, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, July 2007, 39–40.

<sup>171</sup> Humayoon, 'Re-election of Hamid Karzai', [see FN 26], 14.

<sup>172</sup> See chapter 4.5.2.

<sup>173</sup> Interview with Afghan head of international NGO office, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>174</sup> Humayoon, 'Re-election of Hamid Karzai', [see FN 26], 21.

<sup>175</sup> Interview with Afghan head of local NGO office and former senior government official, Kunduz, December 2012,

<sup>176</sup> Interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>177</sup> See, for the results: Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Afghanistan Komisiun-e Mostaqel-e Entekhabat, 'Lest-e kandidate barenda dar natayej-e tasdiq shuda naha'i-ye entekhabat-e wolesi jirga welayat-e Kunduz', *Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Afghanistan Komisiun-e Mostaqel-e Entekhabat*, accessed 2 August 2013, [http://www.iec.org.af/results\\_10/pdf/kunduz.pdf](http://www.iec.org.af/results_10/pdf/kunduz.pdf).

<sup>178</sup> Martine van Bijlert, 'Untangling Afghanistan's 2010 Vote. Analysing the Electoral Data', AAN Briefing Paper 03/2011, *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, February 2011, 19, accessed 22 October, [http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/10/AAN-2011-Untangling\\_the\\_vote.pdf](http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/10/AAN-2011-Untangling_the_vote.pdf).

<sup>179</sup> Noah Coburn, 'Connecting with Kabul. The Importance of the Wolesi Jirga Election and Local Political Networks in Afghanistan', AREU Parliamentary Election Brief 1, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, May 2010, 3–4.

<sup>180</sup> Interview with Nezam, Kabul, November 2012.

been a result of his weak political position as well as the fact that he commanded none of the legalised anti-Taleban militias to protect the ballot box.<sup>181</sup> It seems that increased numbers of German and US forces ensured better control of ballot boxes in Kunduz city. Also, many modernist politicians who represented urban groups were elected.<sup>182</sup> Representatives of *tanzims*, however, also received a large share of votes.<sup>183</sup>

#### 4.4.4 Distribution of official positions below the provincial level

Since the central and provincial governments did not appoint officials without considering local power relations and since local power brokers actively influenced these decisions, the distribution of official positions reflects the state of power structures. Therefore, the distribution of the most-important district positions – district governor, chief of police, chief of NDS – among affiliates of the different *tanzims* below the provincial level will be displayed here.<sup>184</sup> Staying in office for a long a time as possible is more favourable. Therefore, for one faction to have few affiliates in office for a longer time is better than having many for shorter times.

Until the end of 2005, the distribution of district positions shows that Jamiat affiliates were overall best positioned, followed closely by those of Hezb. However, the power relations significantly differed from district to district. Especially in Aliabad,

Chahar Dara, and Dasht-e Archi districts, the power balance favoured followers of Jamiat, who occupied most security positions. This is evidence that the former local Taleban commanders were not absorbed into the government apparatus, and their positions were taken by the victorious Jamiat. District positions were distributed quite evenly in Qala-ye Zal and Khanabad, mainly between Jamiat and Hezb with respect to their number and time span. A follower of Ittehad/Dawat filled one position, in Khanabad, reflecting the district's history as Amir Chugha's former stronghold and its current fragmented state. Hezb followers clearly outweighed all other factions in Imam Saheb, because it was the birthplace of the *tanzim*'s leader Hekmatyar and the power base of the Ibrahimis. Hezb affiliates dominated Imam Saheb district to a significantly higher degree than Jamiatis dominated other districts.

After 2005, the slight Jamiat dominance among senior district officials slightly lost in significance, but showed some nuances. In terms of number of positions and time in office, Jamiatis only moderately dominated Aliabad, Dasht-e Archi, and Chahar Dara districts. This may be indicative of efforts to contain the insurgency by reducing Jamiat's dominance. Khanabad remained fragmented, though no Hezb official – only two Ittehad/Dawat affiliates – was in office after 2005. In Qala-ye Zal, Jamiat affiliates continued to moderately outweigh others. However, the two communist security chiefs actually stayed in office even longer than the Jamiat affiliates and rotated much less. In Imam Sahib, the overwhelming Hezb superiority was broken but remained significant.

Evidence indicates that Pashtuns in Kunduz were underrepresented in the provincial administration during the whole period under review.<sup>185</sup> The ethnic backgrounds of district officials partly confirm this. According to data, the biggest mismatch occurred in the districts believed to have Pashtun majorities: Aliabad and Dasht-e Archi.<sup>186</sup> In

<sup>181</sup> Some claim that Rauf's men beat up the representatives of Haji Omar during the elections. Interview with former member of Provincial Council Kunduz, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>182</sup> The following candidates can be counted in this group: Eng. Kamal who received support from the often-jobless educated youth and received the second most votes; Jombesh member Nazari Turkmen who came from a wealthy family, had strong ties to Turkey and came next in number of votes; Shaista Baz Nasiri was number four; Said Daud Naderi six; Ustad Shukria Paikan Ahmadi seventh; and Doctor Fatima Aziz eighth. Interview with Engineer Kamal, Kabul, November 2012; Nazari Turkman, member of parliament for Kunduz, Kabul, December 2012; interview with Nasiri, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>183</sup> The third-most votes went to Jamiat affiliate Abdulwodud Paiman from Panjshir, who never lived in Kunduz himself. Fifth most votes were received by Turkmen Hezb functionary Malim Chari. Interviews with Afghan head of local NGO office and former senior government official, Kunduz, December 2012; interview with Malim Chari, November 2012.

<sup>184</sup> See annex.

<sup>185</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 34; interview with Zaher Nazm, director of education Kunduz, Kunduz, November 2012; interview with Engineer Kamal, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>186</sup> In 2002 the UNHCR gave these percentages: 55% Pashtun, 25% Tajik, 12% Uzbek, and 8% Turkmen for Chahar Dara; 40% Pashtun, 35% Uzbek, 15% Tajik, and 10 % Turkmen for Dasht-e Archi; and 47 % Pashtun, 20% Hazara, 45% Tajik, and 18% Uzbek in Aliabad district. The percentages for the latter district do not add up. It is the only one in which the figure given for Tajiks does not match the descending order in the profile; therefore, it seems to be wrong. Ethnicity is not a clear-cut, static

Chahar Dara, the number of Pashtun officials corresponded with their assumed share of the population of 55 per cent. The majority of the named Pashtun district officials in the latter two cases, however, served as district governors, which formally gave them no access to means of violence. In Chahar Dara, all Pashtun security officials were former communists or had no party affiliation. Also, as shown above, officials affiliated with Jamiat, which tended to represent the Tajik population by the 1990s, had a disproportionately large share in districts with considerable numbers of Pashtuns. Only in Qala-ye Zal, Khanabad and Imam Sahib districts did the number of Pashtun major district officials seemed to match their assumed share of the population. In Imam Sahib, they had a disproportionately small share of district security positions.

To gain more influence, political actors on the national and sub-national levels appointed clients for positions in the provincial administration.<sup>187</sup> These positions were decisive for creating support among the educated and urban population since, due to the difficult economic situation, private businesses offered few jobs for people in these groups. No encompassing data could be collected on which power brokers distribute these subordinate positions or to whom. Most positions on the provincial level were in line ministries, branches of the national ministries in Kabul. Since ministerial actors decided based on personnel issues, actors with good relations to the centre had an advantage in the competition for state positions. Rauf Ibrahim, after he became speaker of the parliament's lower house, became particularly influential in this respect. According to several interviewees, he was able to influence staff

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identity, and since the last census took place in 1979 and was not even completed, numbers are always problematic. However, true or not, the figures given here seem to reflect what most people thought were the quantitative relations and acted upon. UNHCR Sub-Office MAZAR-i-SHARIF, 'District Profile Chahar Dara', UNHCR Sub-Office Mazar-i-Sharif, 12 September 2002; UNHCR Sub-Office MAZAR-i-SHARIF, 'District Profile Archi', UNHCR Sub-Office Mazar-i-Sharif, 12 September 2002; UNHCR Sub-Office MAZAR-i-SHARIF, 'District Profile Ali Abad', UNHCR Sub-Office Mazar-i-Sharif, 12 September 2002.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Motaleb Khan, school manager for the education department Kunduz, Kunduz, November 2012; Rainer Glassner, Katja Mielke, and Conrad Schetter, 'EZ-Kontextanalysen mit Fokus auf Akteure, Netzwerke und Institutionen in Nordostafghanistan (Kunduz, Takhar) und Südostafghanistan (Paktia, Khost)', 14 January 2008, 34–5.

decisions made by a number of ministers and to enlarge his own clientele.<sup>188</sup> This again confirms the Ibrahimis' successful policy of consolidating their power under the conditions of the Karzai era.

## 4.5 International key leader engagement in Kunduz

### 4.5.1 Patterns of the PRT's key leader engagement

Though the decision makers responsible for the PRT's KLE certainly became more professional, the general problems remained in place even after the initial years: the lack of an overall strategy and of detailed (background) information on local actors. A major cause of the intelligence problems was that the German armed forces and the BND had a conventional understanding of reconnaissance. It placed technical intelligence first and did not emphasise enough the decisive human intelligence (HUMINT). Since a special career structure did not exist for intelligence officers, compared to other Western armed forces, few qualified analysts were available. Also, after 2007 the armed forces transferred HUMINT analysis completely to the BND in spite of the fact that they did not have the resources and expertise for it.<sup>189</sup> The short rotations of German personnel also prevented the development of long-term 'institutional memory'.<sup>190</sup> For example, at some point during the deployment of the Germans in Kunduz, the name of one power broker was found in 13 different transcriptions in the PRT's HUMINT database.<sup>191</sup>

The PRT's international military forces tried to patrol most of Kunduz province frequently. These efforts remained restricted, however, by the safety rules the German MoD and operational commanders alike imposed on their troops and by the low number of combat forces. As elaborated

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<sup>188</sup> Interview with Engineer Kamal, Kabul, November 2012; interview with former member of provincial council Kunduz, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>189</sup> Philipp Münch, 'Wahrnehmung und Analyse der Taliban durch die Bundeswehr' in *Der Taliban-Komplex. Strukturen, Strategien und Ideologien*, ed by Conrad Schetter and Jürgen Klußmann, Frankfurt a.M., Campus 2011, 231–41; Schmidt-Eenboom, *BND in Afghanistan*, [see FN 106], 6; Gujer, *Kampf an neuen Fronten . . .*, [see FN 106], 87.

<sup>190</sup> Zapfe, 'Sicherheitskultur und Strategiefähigkeit . . .', [see FN 100], 224–5.

<sup>191</sup> Telephone interview with German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz in 2010, June 2011.



below, after 2006 the Kunduz insurgency spread and increasingly limited ISAF's range of action; by 2009, the PRT was patrolling around the provincial capital but rarely extended beyond Kunduz district. German decision-makers usually strictly followed their legal interpretation, which said that they were not entitled to enforce Afghan laws. Therefore, they often did not investigate crimes unless Afghan officials explicitly requested they do so.<sup>192</sup> Doing otherwise would have meant becoming involved in power struggles between Afghan allies, which would have increased the likelihood of conflicts between them and resulted in casualties. Formal and informal power brokers avoided violence and the collection of illicit 'taxes' from ordinary Afghans when the internationals were watching.<sup>193</sup>

Among the district officials, only Nezamuddin Nashir – who between 2002 and 2012 served as district governor in Chahar Dara and Khanabad – seemed unequivocally positive in the eyes of the Germans. A grandson of Shir Khan, the famous governor and moderniser of what is today Kunduz, he came from the still-wealthy but politically disempowered landowner class and did not participate in the jihad and civil war. He also had family connections to Germany – which certainly made him appear trustworthy for the Germans. Afghans and internationals alike judged the behaviour of Nashir, who was trained as a lawyer, as literally incorruptible. That he was already wealthy and did not possess a large clientele may have helped. However, because he did not have many followers, he was not very powerful.<sup>194</sup> In July 2012, a bomb exploded under his car. Since he was convinced that the police had placed it there, he successfully applied for a Schengen visa from the German embassy and fled to Europe.<sup>195</sup>

<sup>192</sup> Marc Lindemann, *Unter Beschuss. Warum Deutschland in Afghanistan scheitert*, Berlin, Econ 2010, 36–7.

<sup>193</sup> Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 145–6.

<sup>194</sup> Interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2007 to 2009, Berlin, 10 January 2012; interview with family member of Nashir, Kabul, November 2012; interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012; Christoph Reuter, 'Rezept für den Bürgerkrieg', *Der Spiegel*, 2011, 49, 97.

<sup>195</sup> Interview with family member of Nashir, Kabul, November 2012; '7 killed in Kunduz, Ghazni Blasts', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 16 July 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2012/07/16/7-killed-kunduz-ghazni-blasts>.

#### 4.5.2 Dealing with Provincial Governor Eng. Omar

In the eyes of the Germans in Kunduz, Eng. Omar's strategy of maximum inclusion appeared as an overly corrupt policy since he distributed assets to persons who were not formally eligible for them. Confrontations between the Germans and him increased over time.<sup>196</sup> By 2007 at latest, officials from the German armed forces and Foreign Office pushed hard at the highest levels of the Afghan state to fire him.<sup>197</sup> Karzai's attempt to replace Eng. Omar with Juma Khan Hamdard seemed to offer the perfect opportunity. In a report to parliament in July 2007, the German MoD heralded the news that Omar would be removed.<sup>198</sup> As mentioned before, this did not happen.

German military PRT officials as well as those from the Foreign Office, however, kept on trying to have Eng. Omar fired during the following years. The reason was that they still viewed him as an extremely corrupt actor with little backing among the population and, as pointed out above, a Taliban supporter.<sup>199</sup> They took the formal route of gathering evidence of the governor's corrupt actions and presenting it to local law-enforcement agencies. He, however, repelled these attacks and remained in office.<sup>200</sup> In spring 2009, the Germans started another initiative to remove Eng. Omar. On a visit to Kabul in April 2009, German Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank Walter Steinmeier personally asked Minister of Interior Hanif Atmar to remove him. Atmar agreed, but no action followed.<sup>201</sup> Until

<sup>196</sup> Interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012, interview with former commander of Qari Rahmatullah, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>197</sup> In September 2007, Eng. Omar told German journalists, without being asked, that it would be a bad idea to release him from office. Willi Germund, 'Mullahs und Gotteskrieger in Afghanistan. Die Taliban planen die Rückkehr nach Kundus', *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 13 September 2007, 3.

<sup>198</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung Fü S V 3, 'Unterrichtung des Parlamentes 27/07 . . .', [see FN 166], 2.

<sup>199</sup> Zudrop, 'Der "Vernetzte Ansatz" . . .', [see FN 97], 8–9.

<sup>200</sup> Interview with German officer and former member of the PRT Kunduz leadership 2008 to 2009, Berlin, September 2010.

<sup>201</sup> 'Afghanistan Attacks: Germany Upping Pressure in Hunt for Taliban Leaders', *Spiegel Online International*, 27 May 2009, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/afghanistan-attacks->



his assassination in October 2010, Eng. Omar fought verbal battles with the Germans whom he accused of not taking a tough enough stance against the Taliban.<sup>202</sup>

#### 4.5.3 Policy towards commander Mir Alam

As indicated before, the PRT leadership's policy concerning the most-important former commander on the Shura-ye Nazar side, Mir Alam, was incoherent but showed some patterns. As they were used to doing with powerful actors, PRT officials tried to establish a positive relationship with Mir Alam, even though he had no formal position. To this end, the jihadi commander, who was said to have an alcohol problem, received free medical treatment at the PRT several times.<sup>203</sup> At the same time, however, aware of his role as a commander of non-state armed groups in the province and unwilling to change the power structure, PRT commanders did not help fulfil Mir Alam's wish to become provincial chief of police.<sup>204</sup> The German government officials probably also pushed for his removal as Baghlan chief of police in Kunduz since representatives of the German Police Project Office advised the Rank Reform Commission of 2006.<sup>205</sup>

In January 2007, the National Interdiction Unit (NIU) was searching for drugs and raided Mir Alam's compound.<sup>206</sup> Members of the US Congress thought the operation was a great success.<sup>207</sup> The

Germans, however, stayed away from counternarcotic operations to avoid unnecessary conflict and refrain from taking means of earning money from the impoverished rural population. Already in 2004, the first German PRT commander complained about unannounced British and US counternarcotic operations in Kunduz.<sup>208</sup>

The emerging Taliban threat improved Mir Alam's standing with the internationals. On 19 May 2007, a heavy attack against international forces in Kunduz killed three and wounded four Germans; only two days later, Mir Alam offered to hand in more weapons as part of the DIAG process.<sup>209</sup> Mir Alam obviously did this to show his good will and again offer his service as a cooperation partner. The same year, the Germans increasingly used him as a source to gather information about the insurgency and hoped that he might help to contain it since the rocket attacks against the PRT originated from Khanabad district, where Mir Alam was particularly influential.<sup>210</sup> Having gathered information about his weapons depots in the Siah Ab area of Kunduz district, however, the Germans in 2008 started an operation to uncover them. Formally correct, to this end they cooperated with the provincial head of the NDS. As a perfect example of the information deficit, however, those responsible for the planning did not recognise that the NDS head was a former associate of Mir Alam; he informed Mir Alam in advance and, unsurprisingly, the operation failed.<sup>211</sup>

In 2008 and 2009, with increasing Taliban attacks against the PRT forces, the Germans again tried to win Mir Alam's support. To this end, they invited

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germany-upping-pressure-in-hunt-for-taliban-leaders-a-627190.html.

<sup>202</sup> Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, 'Violence Encroaches on Northern Afghanistan', *NPR: Morning Edition*, 26 October 2009; Cullison and Karnitschnig, 'Afghan Insurgency Tests . . .', [see FN 160].

<sup>203</sup> Interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2007 to 2009, Berlin, January 2012. This was explicitly seen as a method to influence 'warlords' by German military doctors. See Christian Willy et al., "'Einsatzchirurgie.'" Experiences of German Military Surgeons in Afghanistan', *Langenbeck's Archives of Surgery* 396, 2011, 513.

<sup>204</sup> Anita Blasberg and Stefan Willeke, 'Afghanistan. Das Kundus-Syndrom', *Zeit Online*, 8 March 2010, accessed 22 October, <http://www.zeit.de/2010/10/DOS-Kundus>.

<sup>205</sup> Wilder, 'Cops or Robbers? . . .', [see FN 170], 40.

<sup>206</sup> Jan Koehler, 'Auf der Suche nach Sicherheit. Die internationale Intervention in Nordost-Afghanistan', *SFB Governance Working Paper Series* 17, Berlin, Sonderforschungsbereich 700 November 2008, 15.

<sup>207</sup> 'One Hundred Tenth Congress of the United States Committee on Foreign Affairs U.S. House of Representatives to Condoleezza Rice/Robert M. Gates',

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Washington, DC, 7 February 2007, 2, accessed 28 May, <http://publicpolicy.press.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/letter-02-07-2007.pdf>.

<sup>208</sup> 'Bundeswehr in Afghanistan. Gefahr durch strebsame Drogen-Bekämpfer', *Spiegel Online*, 31 January 2004, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/bundeswehr-in-afghanistan-gefahr-durch-strebsame-drogen-bekaempfer-a-284457.html>.

<sup>209</sup> 'Afghan Daily Reports Continuing Surrender of Illegal Weapons', *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 27 May 2007.

<sup>210</sup> Interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2007 to 2009, Berlin, January 2012.

<sup>211</sup> Interview with former senior NDS official of Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2008 to 2009, Berlin, March 2010; Hewad, 'Legal, Illegal . . .', [see FN 127]; Blasberg and Willeke, 'Das Kundus-Syndrom', [see FN 204].

him into the PRT for a large dinner.<sup>212</sup> Mir Alam, certainly surprised over the zigzag course of the PRT officials, however, focussed on his goal of winning the Germans' support for his claim to become provincial chief of police. The Germans, however, did not change their views on this particular point.<sup>213</sup>

#### 4.5.4 Policy towards the provincial chiefs of police

At the beginning of the international engagement in 2002, from among the main donor countries in Afghanistan, Germany received the task of leading Afghanistan's police reform and build-up. The German Police Project Office (GPPO) focussed on intensively training the new Afghan National Police (ANP) leadership. To this end, they re-established the Kabul Police Academy (KPA), which was supposed to train the new ANP leadership. Due to the poor security situation in the period before the first presidential elections, the US committed to building and reforming the main ANP body by 2004. Spending much more on the ANP project than the Germans were, the US representatives became the dominant actors on this field. Since 2005, the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) – organised and led by the US Department of Defense – focussed on turning the ANP into a counterinsurgency force while the Germans followed a more civilian-police model.<sup>214</sup>

The German and US representatives, together with the MoI, started a pay and rank reform (PRR) programme in 2005 to reduce the ANP's top-heavy structure in favour of mid-level police ranks and to raise salaries. A Rank Reform Commission, consisting of MoI and ANP delegates as well as advisors from CSTC-A and GPPO, judged the professional capabilities of all police officers. Representatives of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the US Department of State vetted their human-rights accounts. Police officers who did not pass the tests would be demoted or not appointed to important positions.<sup>215</sup> Filling provincial chief of police

positions was an important means for Karzai to influence conditions on the local level either through patronage or by establishing counterweights. Therefore, tension existed between international rules and Karzai's politicking.

In June 2006, Karzai appointed 86 police generals, including the provincial chiefs of police, but 52 had not been on the list he had agreed upon with the Rank Reform Commission. In fact, the commission had dismissed 14 of these officials; others had already been matters of compromise. After further negotiations, Karzai agreed to appoint 'only' three of the 14 most-heavily-contested chiefs of police in January 2007.<sup>216</sup> During the process, the US representatives were much more pragmatic regarding the professional skills and human rights accounts of the ANP officers than their German counterparts who observed the preconditions more strictly and demanded to replace more than the mentioned 14 chiefs of police.<sup>217</sup> The German policy was, however, not part of an effort to strategically influence the provincial power structure in a specific way but instead a result of their stronger adherence to the formal process. There is evidence that the Germans tried to influence Afghan power structures by engaging in the police sector. This attempt targeted the national level as it strengthened relations to the MoI and – especially through the KPA – to the professional senior ANP leadership, where the BND kept several informants before 1979.<sup>218</sup> Since Afghan decision-makers mostly did not observe the internationalised formal procedures to appoint senior police officers in the following time,<sup>219</sup> this strategy did not pay off.

<sup>212</sup> Interview with former senior NDS official of Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2007 to 2009, Berlin, January 2012.

<sup>213</sup> Blasberg and Willeke, 'Das Kundus-Syndrom', [see FN 204].

<sup>214</sup> Andrew Wilder, 'Cops or Robbers? . . .', [see FN 170], 19–21; Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh, *Policing Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 132], 140–1.

<sup>215</sup> Wilder, 'Cops or Robbers? . . .', [see FN 170], 39–40.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 40–2; International Crisis Group, 'Reforming Afghanistan's Police', Asia Report no. 138, *International Crisis Group*, 30 August 2007, 12; Markus Feilke, 'German Experiences in Police Building in Afghanistan', *GRIPS Policy Research Center Discussion Paper* 10–02, 2010, 10; email communication with former European diplomat who participated in the police reform process, October 2013.

<sup>217</sup> Email communication with former European diplomat who participated in the police reform process, October 2013.

<sup>218</sup> Schmidt-Eenboom, *BND in Afghanistan*, [see FN 106], 7.

<sup>219</sup> International Crisis Group, 'Policing in Afghanistan. Still Searching for a Strategy', Crisis Group Asia Briefing no. 85, *International Crisis Group*, 18 December 2008, 12.

At the provincial level, the Germans were generally very critical of chiefs of police with mujahedin backgrounds. Representatives of the PRT criticised Motaleb Beg due to evidence of his involvement in drug trafficking.<sup>220</sup> At least one PRT commander publicly accused Motaleb Beg of being corrupt.<sup>221</sup> Mostly, however, they seemed to have kept silent, indicating to outsiders that their relationship was positive, since he was the official provincial chief of police.<sup>222</sup> Most likely, representatives of the GPPO at the Rank Reform Commission recommended Motaleb Beg – and probably also Mir Alam – to be removed from office in 2006.

The internationals were positive about the provincial chiefs of police of Kunduz, Sayed Ahmad Sameh (2006–07) and Abdul Razeq Ayub Yaqubi (2008–10), who had been professionally trained as officers by the Soviets.<sup>223</sup> The Germans were especially satisfied with Yaqubi whom they regarded as very reliant and not corrupt.<sup>224</sup> Like Nashir, however, these chiefs of police were not very influential and, with their limited local power base, not efficient in fighting the insurgency.<sup>225</sup>

After serving as chief of police of Baghlan, Abdul Rahman Sayedkheli ‘Mawlana’ was appointed as chief of police of Kunduz in September 2010. At the same time, General Daud became active again in the province as commander of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Pamir Police Zone, which covered the northeast. The Germans suspected both of being involved in illicit activities,<sup>226</sup> but not to the extent that Motaleb Beg

was. Since he was now directly responsible for law enforcement in the northeast, Daud prosecuted his former partners in the drug business, whom he had protected as deputy Mol.<sup>227</sup> Both cooperated with the internationals and efficiently fought the Taliban, as pointed out below. Eventually, Daud, in his official Afghan government position even served as consultant for the community policing part of the rule-of-law project of the German government development agency, Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). This aspect of the project focussed on the police force’s conformity with formal law.<sup>228</sup> Caught by Daud’s charisma,<sup>229</sup> the Germans and other internationals seem to have perceived him and Sayedkheli as not *too* corrupt, but efficient in observing their duties. To them, both offered good alternatives to the powerful, but overtly corrupt, mujahedin police commanders on the one side and the not corrupt, but weak, professional police officers on the other side of the spectrum.

No matter how the Germans judged them, in accordance with their mandate they generally cooperated with the local police. Since they usually did not have either the formal permission or the information on insurgents, during police operations they usually formed a ring around the supposed location of the suspects while Afghan security forces prosecuted them. Due to their lack of local knowledge, they could not judge whether persons were captured legitimately or not and had to rely on the Afghan side.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>220</sup> Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh, *Policing Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 132], 90.

<sup>221</sup> Interview with former member of Provincial Council Kunduz, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>222</sup> Meinrad Angermayer, ‘“Law and Order” in Nordafghanistan’, *Der Infanterist* 1, 2004, 57.

<sup>223</sup> Interview with German officer and former member of the PRT Kunduz leadership 2008–2009, Berlin, September 2010; Embassy Kabul, ‘PRT/Kunduz: New Police Chiefs . . .’, [see FN 169].

<sup>224</sup> Interview with German officer and former member of the PRT Kunduz leadership 2008–2009, Berlin, September 2010.

<sup>225</sup> See on Yaqubi: The Liaison Office, ‘Sub-National Governance . . .’, [see FN 151], 99.

<sup>226</sup> See, citing a BND report on Daud Daud’s drug trafficking involvement: Julian Reichelt, ‘Krieg in Afghanistan. Geheimdienst-Akten’, *Bild.de*, 1 December 2011. Already in 2005, German government officials criticised Karzai’s decision to appoint Sayedkheli as chief of police of Parwan even though the national Police Appointment Panel had rejected it. Email

communication with former European diplomat who participated in the police reform process, October 2013.

<sup>227</sup> Interview with senior official of the Ministry of Agriculture originating from Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; Paul Watson, ‘The Lure of Opium Wealth Is a Potent Force in Afghanistan’, *Los Angeles Times*, 29 May 2005; Graeme Smith, ‘Afghan Officials in Drug Trade Cut Deals across Enemy Lines’, *Globe and Mail*, 21 March 2009; Glassner, Mielke, and Schetter, *EZ-Kontextanalysen* . . ., [see FN 187], 42–3.

<sup>228</sup> Interview with Afghan GIZ employee, Kabul, November 2012; interview with German GIZ employee, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>229</sup> ‘Alter Gestus im neuen System. Polizeichef Daud war immer ein stolzer Kämpfer’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 30 May 2011, 3; Nachtwei, ‘Delegationsbesuch der “ISAF-Insel” . . .’, [see FN 108], 6.

<sup>230</sup> Interview with former member of the leadership of QRF 2, Berlin, June 2010; Robert Eckhold, *Fallschirmjäger in Kunduz. Wir kamen, um zu helfen, und erlebten den perfiden Terror!*, Limbach-Oberfrohna, Command 2010, 180–5.

#### 4.5.5 Dealing with former Taliban supporters

When the PRT compound was moved from the middle to the edge of Kunduz City in May 2006, its staff lost contact with former landlord Haji Omar Khan and thereby with a power broker who was seen by many as a representative of the Pashtun population.<sup>231</sup> PRT officials had recognised Haji Amanullah Utmanzai as an important power broker at least since 2005, but it was not until 2008 that they actively and openly cooperated with him. This became most visible when he negotiated a compensation of 20,000 US dollars for members of a local family who were accidentally killed by German forces.<sup>232</sup> Until the end of the time under review, he was a welcome guest at the PRT.<sup>233</sup>

German military decision makers recognised the increasing land conflicts involving returnees that governor Omar had warned the PRT about in 2006.<sup>234</sup> However, they did not significantly change their policy, possibly because they became increasingly occupied with security issues due to insurgent attacks. Nevertheless, in several cases PRT officials and former and active Taliban commanders attempted to negotiate settlements. The best-documented case involved former-Taliban commander Haikal from Aliabad district. In late 2006 and early 2007, he negotiated with representatives of the PRT and also tried to acquire development projects for his clientele. Either

because security in his area worsened or because of internal issues in the PRT, these talks ended without a result.<sup>235</sup> In any case, Haikal seems to have been merely a sub-commander who had fought with several *tanzims* and who exerted limited influence among the Taliban.<sup>236</sup> Several sources indicate that between 2008 and 2009, active Taliban commanders tried to reach agreements with the PRT, including for material benefits and support. However, these were rejected by the German side.<sup>237</sup>

#### 4.5.6 Economy and intervention

The international intervention greatly affected the economic base of Afghan power brokers. Poppy cultivation in Kunduz decreased after the PRT was established. However, this crop has never been important in this province as it does not have the right geographical conditions.<sup>238</sup> The international funds spent in the form of aid were much more important. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) alone spent around 894 million euros on developmental cooperation to the country from 2002 to May 2013, of which the major part went to Kabul and the northern provinces.<sup>239</sup> The German armed forces, mainly stationed in the northern provinces, paid 6.8 million euros for their Afghan personnel and bought goods worth almost 3 million euros from 2002 until 2007.<sup>240</sup> In Kunduz, they invested around 2.7 million euros from 2004 to the fall of 2012 on CIMIC projects.<sup>241</sup> From 2008

<sup>231</sup> In 2012, he claimed that he was contacted only once afterwards. Interview with Haji Omar Khan, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>232</sup> Interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2007 to 2009, Berlin, January 2012; 'Das Problem ist erledigt', *Der Spiegel* 37, 2008, 116–7; 'Nach Zwischenfällen. Jung auf Stippvisite in Kundus', *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, 2 September 2008; Ansgar Graw, 'Afghanistan. Jung verhindert Blutrache an Deutschen in Kundus', *Welt Online*, 2 September 2008, 22 October 2013, <http://www.welt.de/politik/article2385298/Jung-verhindert-Blutrache-an-Deutschen-in-Kundus.html>.

<sup>233</sup> See Stefan Klein, 'Augen auf und durchhalten', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 8 October 2008, 3; 'Kampf ums Vertrauen', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 14 May 2012, 8; and the picture in Oswald Rosch, 'Schauplatz Afghanistan. Das Provincial Reconstruction Team Kunduz', *Der Infanterist* 2, 2011, 29, 31. Interview with Haji Amanullah Utmanzai, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>234</sup> See the article by the then deputy commander of the Bundeswehr Joint Forces Operations Command Rainer Lutz Glatz, 'Bundeswehr in Afghanistan. Eine Lageeinschätzung', *Europäische Sicherheit* 58, no. 5, 2009, 28.

<sup>235</sup> Interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2007 to 2009, Berlin, 10 January 2012; Koehler, *Auf der Suche nach Sicherheit* . . ., [see FN 206], 34–5.

<sup>236</sup> Interview with Ali Mohammad, former Jamiat and Taliban commander of Lala Maidan, Kunduz, December 2012; interview with Malim Chari, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>237</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 35.

<sup>238</sup> Adam Pain, 'Water Management, Livestock and the Opium Economy. Opium Poppy Cultivation in Kunduz and Balkh', Case Study Series, Kabul, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, June 2006, 12.

<sup>239</sup> Letter of the BMZ to the author, 6 June 2013.

<sup>240</sup> E. Michael Brand, 'Bundeswehrbeamter – kein Job wie jeder andere. Die Wehrverwaltung des Bundes – einer der größten Dienstleister der Bundesrepublik', *Wehrtechnik* 40, no. III, 2008, 33.

<sup>241</sup> Data provided by the German armed forces Bundeswehr Joint Forces Operations Command to the author.



to August 2010, the US forces' Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) projects accounted for around 6.2 million US dollars.<sup>242</sup> In the absence of reliable data and assessments independent of the ministries concerned, determining the effect these foreign funds had on the local power structures is difficult.

However, the general conclusion can be drawn that it was mainly the existing power brokers who profited from these funds. Some local commanders profited from international projects by getting involved in the reconstruction business in Kunduz. Unsurprisingly, the major construction firm in Imam Sahib belonged to the Ibrahimi family.<sup>243</sup> The main companies active in the province, however, came from Mazar-e Sharif (owned by Ahmad Wali) and Kabul (owned by Nasir). Clandestine attacks on competing firms and kidnappings of wealthier persons remained endemic through the period. Thus, having access to arms and fighters remained significant in the business sector, giving commanders who provided their men as 'security personnel' a superior position.<sup>244</sup> In the larger towns and cities, development agencies rented houses from local power brokers. The German government development agencies' *Deutsches Haus* (German House) in Kunduz city was owned by Haji Rauf Ibrahimi,<sup>245</sup> while UNAMA's local office was in a complex owned by Haji Amanullah

Utmanzai.<sup>246</sup> The unusually high rents seem to have served as quasi protection money.<sup>247</sup>

On the countryside of Kunduz as well, international developmental organisations could not evade the influence of local power brokers who were often former commanders.<sup>248</sup> Working within bureaucratic procedures to satisfy donor demands and lacking knowledge on local conditions, they relied on educated local staff to implement projects. As happened all over Afghanistan, these well-paid Afghans emerged in Kunduz as a new class of power holders. Being connected to commanders, they often served as intermediaries with the international organisations, since the former usually did not have the required education but did have the power to delay and obstruct projects.<sup>249</sup> Commanders, in some cases worked directly for Afghan or international developmental organisations or established their own.<sup>250</sup> The most well-known case is that of former Pashtun commander of Aref Khan, Dadgul Delawar, who worked for the German non-governmental organisation (NGO) Katachel e.V. Its founder, Sybille Schnehage, accused him in early 2010 of having misappropriated around 500,000 euros.<sup>251</sup>

<sup>246</sup> Interview with head of Afghan NGO with representatives in Kunduz, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>247</sup> The latter was supposed to pay USD 6,000 per month and per building. Interview with head of Afghan NGO with representatives in Kunduz, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>248</sup> Katja Mielke, Iskandar Abdullayev, and Usman Shah, 'The Illusion of Establishing Control by Legal Definition. Water Rights, Principles and Power in Canal Irrigation Systems of the Kunduz River Basin, Afghanistan' in *Negotiating Local Governance. Natural Resources Management at the Interface of Communities and the State*, ed by Irit Eguavoen and Wolfram Laube, Berlin/New Brunswick, NJ, ZEF Development Studies 14, Lit/Transaction Publishers 2010, 198–200; Thomas, Mumtaz, and Azizi, *Mind the Gap? . . .*, [see FN 151], 67–8.

<sup>249</sup> See, based on intensive field research in Kunduz: Katja Mielke, 'Constructing the Image of a State. Local Realities and International Intervention in North-East Afghanistan' in *Local Politics in Afghanistan. A Century of Intervention in the Social Order*, ed by Conrad Schetter, London, Hurst 2013, 254–5.

<sup>250</sup> Interview with Mohammad Gul Zubair, former advisor to commander Aref Khan, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>251</sup> 'Veruntreuung von Geldern. Mitarbeiter von Afghanistan-Hilfe beschuldigen sich gegenseitig', *Spiegel Online*, 18 January 2010, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/veruntreuung-von-geldern-mitarbeiter-von-afghanistan-hilfe-beschuldigen-sich-gegenseitig-a-672525.html>; 'Verfahren eingestellt. Schnehage hat keine Hilfgelder

<sup>242</sup> 'RC North CERP and Reconstruction & Development Project Reported in CIDNE – Update as of 18 August 2010', accessed 29 May 2013, <http://info.publicintelligence.net/RC-N.xls>.

<sup>243</sup> Jochen Stahnke, 'Afghanistan. Vor der großen Neuverteilung', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 February 2012, 3.

<sup>244</sup> Interview with businessman and owner of a construction firm, Kunduz, November 2012; interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012. See also: Giustozzi, 'War and Peace Economies . . .', [see FN 83], 78; Samuel Hall, 'Economic Assessment and Labour Market Survey of Mazar-i Sharif, Pul-i Khumri, Kandahar City and Kunduz City', Report commissioned by Mercy Corps, 2011, 90.

<sup>245</sup> Glassner, Mielke, and Schetter, *EZ-Kontextanalysen . . .*, [see FN 187], 46; interview with Engineer Kamal, Kabul, November 2012.



Afterwards, he emerged as one of the two biggest landowners in Khanabad district.<sup>252</sup> Like the military, international developmental aid organisations had to silently acknowledge the role of established local power brokers. To implement projects, they had to distribute funds to them through various channels.

## 4.6 Power structure and growing insurgency

### 4.6.1 Taleban rule in Kunduz

Measured mainly by attacks against international and Afghan government forces, support for the insurgents in Kunduz significantly grew after spring 2006, although it was often unnoticed outside the province.<sup>253</sup> Until spring 2009, the Taleban managed to openly control most of Chahar Dara, smaller areas of Aliabad and Dasht-e Archi districts, and spots in the remaining districts.<sup>254</sup> In some areas of Kunduz, they therefore re-established their rule. Although insurgents could be found in all the districts, the number of active insurgents in Kunduz remained small the entire time, reaching only around 500 at its highest point.<sup>255</sup> Though coercion played a significant role, what mattered was the active or passive support or mere acquiescence of the mostly rural population. In many of these areas, the insurgents received more

legitimacy than the ruling (official) power brokers.<sup>256</sup>

As shown above, in Aliabad, Chahar Dara, and Dasht-e Archi districts most leading government positions, especially in the security branch, went to non-Pashtun affiliates of Jamiat and, to a lesser degree, to followers of Hezb. A major part of Hezb's constituency was therefore integrated into the power structure and patronage system of the province – as was its political wing on the national level, too.<sup>257</sup> Hezb-affiliated officials sometimes played double games, working for the government but also occasionally supporting their fellow former *tanzim* members. A significant number of former Hezb commanders and fighters also fought for the insurgent wing of the Hezb, led by Hekmatyar (the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin, HIG), or joined the Taleban.<sup>258</sup> All in all, however, the HIG was significantly weaker in Kunduz than elsewhere<sup>259</sup> and evidently because many Hezb affiliates were integrated into the state's patronage system.

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veruntreut', *WAZ-online.de*, 15 December 2010, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.waz-online.de/Gifhorn/Gifhorn/Uebersicht/Verfahren-eingestellt-Schnehege-hat-keine-Hilfsgelder-veruntreut>.

<sup>252</sup> Interview with official of the UNHCR office, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>253</sup> See the supplementing data of the analysis of the leaked US Significant Activity database for Afghanistan: Andrew Zammit-Mangion et al., 'Point Process Modelling of the Afghan War Diary. Supporting Information', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 109, 2012, 31, accessed 29 May 2013, <http://www.pnas.org/content/suppl/2012/07/13/1203177109.DCSupplemental/SM01.mpg>.

<sup>254</sup> See in detail Florian Brosch, 'Strategische Leitlinien für den Afghanistaneinsatz der Bundeswehr', *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* 4, no. 35, 2011, 524–26.

<sup>255</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, (Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 35) gave the number of insurgents for 2008 as 580. In the fall of 2009, the deputy director of the counterterrorism department at the MoI, Sayed Anwar Ahmadi, estimated the number of insurgents in Kunduz as up to 400 fighters. Wahidullah Mohammad, 'Taliban Expand Insurgency to Northern Afghanistan', *Terrorism Monitor* VII, no. 36, 2009, 10.

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<sup>256</sup> See the report of the British journalist who had been abducted by Taleban in Chahar Dara district and brought to territory controlled by them. He reported that the people seemed to acknowledge them as legitimate rulers and that the latter also paid for expenses. Stephen Farrell, 'The Reporter's Account. 4 Days with the Taliban', *At War Blog – NYTimes.com*, 9 September 2009, accessed 30 July 2013, <http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/09/the-reporters-account-4-days-with-the-taliban/>. Even a survey, conducted in January and February 2010 in Kunduz for the US military, concluded that the district government enjoyed the least political legitimacy in Imam Sahib, Aliabad, and Chahar Dara while the Taleban were seen very positively in the latter district. Dasht-e Archi was not included in the survey. Human Terrain System, *Social Science Research & Analysis (SSRA). Kunduz Province Survey*, 2010, 22, 44, 49.

<sup>257</sup> International Crisis Group, 'From Presidential to Parliamentary Elections', *International Crisis Group*, November 2004, 26.

<sup>258</sup> Interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz from 2008 to 2009, Berlin, March 2010.

<sup>259</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 22. Further evidence is that no ISAF press release from 1 December 2009 to 30 September 2011 mentioned that a HIG group was targeted by international forces in Kunduz. Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, 'A Knock on the Door. 22 Months of ISAF Press Releases', AAN Thematic Report 10/2011, *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, October 2011, 16. Also, no major insurgent attack is known to the author for which HIG claimed responsibility.

The former mainly Pashtun supporters of the Taliban who had no Hezb ties, however, were not integrated.<sup>260</sup> As a direct result of this power distribution, many of them again supported the Taliban in the 2000s. These were the educated Pashtuns who had lost their jobs in the state apparatus<sup>261</sup> as well as returnees from rural areas who found their land occupied by others. The number of returnees to Kunduz reached its height in 2004 and 2005, right before the violence erupted in 2006.<sup>262</sup> Government officials seem to have observed this development and since the mid-2000s distributed significantly more leading district positions in Chahar Dara, Dasht-e Archi, Imam Sahib, and Khanabad to Pashtuns. However, the cycle of violence had already started by then.

The Taliban seem to have been warmly welcomed in the mentioned areas since they drove out suppressive government officials and introduced the Taliban justice system, which was considered legitimate by many local residents. They also avoided the strict rules of behaviour they imposed before 2002.<sup>263</sup> Most people of Kunduz seem to have perceived the PRT soldiers in a positive light because they largely tried to avoid civilian casualties and act respectfully.<sup>264</sup> However, since the international forces mainly cooperated with government officials, the estranged parts of the population, which were mainly Pashtun, did not

turn to them. They increasingly perceived the soldiers as accomplices of the new rulers. Negotiations between the PRT and former or current supporters of the Taliban, on the other hand, had failed.<sup>265</sup>

Several local sub-level commanders, with or without former affiliation to the Taliban, changed to the Taliban's side as they became stronger. Though the Taliban initially started as a mainly Pashtun movement in Kunduz, relying on old Taliban and Hezb networks, they eventually ethnically broadened their base.<sup>266</sup> The Pakistan-based Taliban leadership supported their efforts and sent more fighters, facilitators, and resources to northern Afghanistan around 2008.<sup>267</sup> Since the local Taliban's activities had already increased in Kunduz, this strategic decision should not be seen as causing their resurgence but as a supporting factor. Rather, shifts in the power structure of the province after 2001, as described above, had led to growing support for the Taliban among the local population.

Since 2006, the Taliban more aggressively attacked the PRT forces in Kunduz whom they viewed as accomplices of the ruling class. The PRT forces successfully repelled all attacks, killing numerous insurgents. No ISAF unit was ever completely destroyed. However, trying to avoid casualties among civilians and their own troops, the mainly German soldiers did not offensively engage attackers. The insurgents therefore gathered experience and, from May until fall 2009, engaged the international forces almost daily in open battles.<sup>268</sup> Supported by foreign fighters,

<sup>260</sup> Hezb in Kunduz seems to have represented the Turkic people (Uzbeks and Turkmen) more strongly than Pashtuns as visible by the ethnicity of the leading district officials compiled for this study. Twelve of them were Pashtuns, ten Uzbeks, five Turkmen, four Tajiks, and three Hazaras.

<sup>261</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 34.

<sup>262</sup> See, citing UNHCR figures: Devlin et al., 'Conflict Analysis . . .', [see FN 84], 16. The same held true for the number of returnees from foreign countries to the northeast as a whole. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Cumulative Returns (Northeast Region) From 03 Mar 2002–31 October 2012'. See also Schetter and Glassner, 'Neither Functioning, nor Failing . . .', [see FN 5], 152.

<sup>263</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 18–9, 36.

<sup>264</sup> Interview with Haji Omar Khan, Kunduz, November 2012; interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012; Mirwais Wardak, Idrees Zaman, and Kanishka Nawabi, 'The Role and Functions of Religious Civil Society in Afghanistan. Case Studies from Sayedabad & Kunduz', *Research and Advocacy Department Cooperation for Peace and Unity*, July 2007, 46–7.

<sup>265</sup> In this sense, the survey concluded that most people of Chahar Dara district perceived ISAF convoys as the biggest threat and far more spoke out for reconciliation with the Taliban. Together with Aliabad, this was the district where people had the most negative experiences with ISAF. Dasht-e Archi district was not included in the survey. Human Terrain System, *Social Science Research & Analysis*, [see FN 256], 12, 16, 28.

<sup>266</sup> Interview with Ali Mohammad, former Jamiat and Taliban commander of Lala Maidan, Kunduz, December 2012; Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 15–7, 25, 27.

<sup>267</sup> Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, 'Northern Exposure for the Taliban' in *Decoding the New Taliban. Insights from the Afghan Field*, ed by Antonio Giustozzi, London, Hurst 2009, 257; Matthew DuPee and Anand Gopal, 'Tensions Rise between Hizb-i-Islami and the Taliban in Afghanistan', *CTC Sentinel* 3, no. 8, 2010, 20.

<sup>268</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 17. Wahlperiode, *Drucksache 17/7400*, 25 October 2011, 40. See the report of the then commander of the Regional Command North: Jörg

especially of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the Taliban professionalised their attacks and increased ISAF casualties.<sup>269</sup> The German forces reacted defensively, increasing the number of armoured vehicles and decreasing the range of their patrols.<sup>270</sup>

#### 4.6.2 Power politics and the build-up of anti-Taliban militias

As local support to the police and military, officials of the Afghan Mol and NDS, the US and later also the ISAF worked out plans to use informal militias. These efforts, which started in the mid-2000s or even before, were boosted by the presidential elections in 2009, as security was needed for the voting process. The Americans, especially, tried to control these efforts by formalising them in several programmes and procedures.<sup>271</sup> However, Afghan actors did not always observe the largely unrealistic formal arrangements. Due to the growing Taliban threat, Eng. Omar asked the Mol to form militias under the Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3) in Kunduz. The Mol rejected this request.<sup>272</sup> In the summer of 2009, Minister of Interior Atmar asked the 56 most-important former mujahedin of Kunduz how to defeat the Taliban. Obviously seeing that it was to their

advantage, they responded that militia units should be formed.<sup>273</sup>

The militia programme, started as an instrument against insurgents, became significant in the power structure of the province as the major local actors competed to be in it. NDS officials managed the programme and formalised militias – using a traditional Pashto term for self-defence militias – as ‘arbaki’. Political actors in Kunduz therefore turned to the NDS to be included in the programme.<sup>274</sup> Between June and September 2009, the NDS started to distribute money and ammunition, and sometimes weapons, to militias. Since the NDS leadership in Kunduz was affiliated with Mir Alam, it seems to have mainly supported his sub-commanders, who resided in the Aqtash area of Khanabad district, thereby allowing him to integrate a major part of his clientele into the militia programme.<sup>275</sup> The NDS in Kabul, headed by Shura-ye Nazar-affiliate Amrullah Saleh, also facilitated this.<sup>276</sup>

Other power brokers became suspicious that Mir Alam would grow much stronger with NDS support. Especially the Ibrahimis feared that he might attempt to take control of the whole Khanabad district.<sup>277</sup> They therefore successfully pushed the NDS to form an arbaki unit in Imam Sahib under the command of the district chief of police, Qayum Ibrahim, brother of Raouf and Latif.<sup>278</sup> To keep the province’s balance of power,

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Vollmer, ‘Panzergranadierbrigade 37 im Einsatz in Afghanistan. Einsatzerfahrung als Kommandeur des Regionalkommando NORD vom 10. Januar bis 03. Oktober 2009’, *Der Panzergranadier* 26, 2009, 12–3.

<sup>269</sup> Guido Steinberg and Nils Wörmer, ‘Escalation in the Kunduz Region. Who Are the Insurgents in Northeastern Afghanistan?’, SWP Comments no. 33, Berlin, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, December 2010, 5–6; Nachtwei, ‘Besuch in West-, Süd-, Zentral-, Nord-Afghanistan . . .’, [see FN 92], 29; Deutscher Bundestag, 17. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 17/4792, 14 February 2011, 14–7. The data of the latter source does not indicate the provinces where the soldiers were wounded or killed. Open-source data, however, clearly shows that more than two thirds of the attacks against German forces in Afghanistan happened in Kunduz. Florian Wätzel and Joachim Krause, ‘Das deutsche Engagement in Nordafghanistan. Eine Bilanz’ in *Jahrbuch Terrorismus 2009*, ed by Institut für Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Kiel, Opladen, Budrich 2009, 322.

<sup>270</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 16. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 16/6114, 23 July 2007, 16–7.

<sup>271</sup> Mathieu Lefèvre, ‘Local Defence in Afghanistan. A Review of Government-Backed Initiatives’, AAN Thematic Report 03/2010, *Afghanistan Analysts Network* May 2010, 2–6.

<sup>272</sup> Embassy Kabul, ‘Unconventional Security Forces . . .’, [see FN 161].

<sup>273</sup> Interview with former chief of police of Chahar Dara and commander of Jamiat, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>274</sup> Interview with former senior NDS official of Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>275</sup> The then provincial chief of NDS, Abdul Majid Azimi was a former functionary of Mir Alam. Majid’s successor Mohammad Daud Ibrahim, who took office in August 2009, was the brother-in-law of Mir Alam. Hewad, ‘Legal, Illegal . . .’, [see FN 127]; Embassy Kabul, ‘Unconventional Security Forces . . .’, [see FN 161]; Gosztanyi and Koehler, ‘PCA Analyse Nordafghanistan . . .’, [see FN 157], 82; Susanne Koelbl, ‘Jeder gegen jeden’, *Der Spiegel* 9, 2010, 104.

<sup>276</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘“Just Don’t Call It a Militia”. Impunity, Militias, and the “Afghan Local Police”’, *Human Rights Watch*, September 2011, 28. The NDS seems to have used the Pashto term ‘arbaki’ (singular: arbakai) to legitimise these by majority non-Pashtun militias. Giustozzi and Reuter, ‘Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .’, [see FN 157], 25.

<sup>277</sup> Interview with Nezam, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>278</sup> Embassy Kabul, ‘Kunduz Authorities Turn to Militias as Security Deteriorates’, *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 19 October 2009, accessed 22 October 2013,

Eng. Omar established contact with Mir Alam's local rival in the Aqtash area, Mohammad Omar of Hezb, as well as with Taleban commander Silab in Gor Tapa whom he convinced to change sides.<sup>279</sup> Also fearing to lose influence, Nezamudin Nashir, who became district governor of Khanabad in December 2009, heavily protested against the militias and accused them of committing crimes and collecting 'taxes'.<sup>280</sup>

Eng. Omar also fulfilled requests of power brokers from Qala-ye Zal district to materially support and thereby legitimise Commander Nabi Gechi, whom they persuaded to return from exile in Mazar-e Sharif right before the 2009 elections.<sup>281</sup> Behind this request were real fears of the mainly Turkmen population and of the Jamiat-affiliated District Governor Mohammad Nazir that the Taleban were in a position to take control.<sup>282</sup> Since Nabi had followed Hezb before turning to Jombesh fighting Shura-ye Nazar and since he was backed by ethnic Turkmen Hezb follower, local resident, and later district governor of Qala-ye Zal, Malim Chari,<sup>283</sup> this request was also a move to outbalance the efforts of the NDS and Mir Alam.

This competition for the NDS militia programme shows that it initially benefitted the power brokers of Jamiat/Shura-ye Nazar. Very soon, however, Hezb affiliates caught up and balanced the Jamiat/Shura-ye Nazar's presence in the militia

programme. Concerning their official function, the militias quickly prevented the Taleban from exerting open control in most areas of Qala-ye Zal, Imam Sahib, and most thoroughly in the Aqtash area.<sup>284</sup> However, they also established their own rule over the local population, demanding 'taxes' and harassing people in numerous documented cases. As Pashtuns were not well represented among the militiamen, the latter often singled them out.<sup>285</sup> Especially in Aqtash, militias often clashed for control of certain areas.<sup>286</sup>

#### 4.6.3 Militia policy of the internationals

US officials welcomed Afghan efforts to form anti-Taleban militias but were critical of the growing importance of the NDS in these efforts in Kunduz.<sup>287</sup> To support but also to control the militias, in July 2009 they tried integrating them into the national Community Defense Initiative (CDI) of the US Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A).<sup>288</sup> This meant that US Special Forces trained them, operated with them, and provided development projects as well as sometimes cash to them.<sup>289</sup> In this sense they cooperated directly with

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<http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/10/09KABUL3366.html>; Stahnke, 'Vor der großen Neuverteilung', [see FN 243].

<sup>279</sup> Filkins, 'Will Civil War Hit . . .', [see FN 54]; interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz City, 23 November 2012; interview with police officer and former fighter of Jamiat, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>280</sup> 'German Troops Face Pitched Battles in Afghanistan as Insurgency Spreads', *Times Online*, 3 May 2010, accessed 22 October, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/asia/afghanistan/article2498826.ece>; Human Rights Watch, "'Just Don't Call It a Militia' . . .', [see FN 276], 32–6.

<sup>281</sup> Embassy Kabul, 'Kunduz Authorities Turn to Militias . . .', [see FN 278]. According to Nabi Gechi, he received 190,000 Afghani, ten weapons, and a Toyota Ranger pick-up truck with fuel from Eng. Omar. Interview with Nabi Gechi, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>282</sup> Embassy Kabul, 'Militias in Kunduz. A Tale of Two Districts', *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 3 January 2010, accessed 31 July 2013, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/01/10KABUL12.html>. See also Holtermann, 'Endogene nicht-staatliche Gewaltakteure . . .', [see FN 48], 143–4.

<sup>283</sup> Interview with Malim Chari, Kunduz, November 2012.

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<sup>284</sup> Holtermann, 'Endogene nicht-staatliche Gewaltakteure . . .', [see FN 48], 137, 146–7; Department of Defense, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan and United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces*, April 2010, 31–2, 37.

<sup>285</sup> Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, 'From Arbaki to Local Police. Today's Challenges and Tomorrow's Concerns', Spring 1391 (2012), 34/43; Koelbl, 'Jeder gegen jeden', [see FN 275], 103. Also see Human Rights Watch, "'Just Don't Call It a Militia' . . .', [see FN 276], 32–42; interview with Engineer Kamal, Kabul, November 2012; interview with official of the local UNHCR office, Kunduz, November 2012.

<sup>286</sup> The Afghanistan NGO Safety Office, *ANSO Quarterly Data Report. Q.4 2010*, 3. According to an NDS official, in 2011 about 70 per cent of security incidents in Kunduz were caused by arbaki. Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, 'From Arbaki to Local Police. . .', [see FN 285], 43.

<sup>287</sup> Interview with former senior NDS official of Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>288</sup> 'Afghan Militias Battle Taliban with Aid of U.S.', *New York Times*, 22 November 2009, A1; Koelbl, 'Jeder gegen jeden', [see FN 275], 103. The CDI was later renamed Local Defense Initiative (LDI). Human Rights Watch, "'Just Don't Call It a Militia' . . .', [see FN 276], 23.

<sup>289</sup> Lefèvre, 'Local Defence in Afghanistan . . .', [see FN 271], 15; Human Rights Watch, "'Just Don't Call It a Militia' . . .', [see FN 276], 23.



Mir Alam to oust the Taliban.<sup>290</sup> US decision makers seemed to realise, however, that these efforts also benefitted actors who did not support the central government.<sup>291</sup>

Contrary to the US position, the Germans remained cool towards 'local security forces' and requested instead that the Kunduz police force be expanded with an extra 2,500 policemen.<sup>292</sup> In February 2010, the German Ministry of Defence issued a decree that prohibited cooperation with militias.<sup>293</sup> Troops on the ground, however, felt unable to avoid them because their American allies cooperated with militias, and soon these 'local security forces' became omnipresent. Many Germans acknowledged that covert insurgent activities declined in areas under militia control and cooperated with and even trained them.<sup>294</sup>

On the national level, Minister of Interior Atmar realised, probably in fall 2009, that power brokers used the NDS arbaki programme to gain influence in Kunduz. Even though he had once been an advocate of pro-government militias, he condemned them in Kunduz.<sup>295</sup> Karzai also feared that he would lose control as a result of the CDI. He therefore pushed the US representatives for a compromise, which led to the establishment of the

Afghan Local Police (ALP) programme in August 2010. The ALP decree formally limited these units to their communities and ruled that they should report to the Kabul-appointed provincial chief of police and nationally to the MoI.<sup>296</sup> Since the US was still paying for the programme and their Special Forces were implementing it, they retained influence.<sup>297</sup> The Germans remained reluctant and mostly did not influence the programme. The US militia policy initially seems to have strengthened Mir Alam. With the follow-up programmes, however, the competing Hezb commanders also profited, as will be shown below.

#### 4.6.4 International military operations against Taliban rule

Starting in late 2007, the German operational commanders in Afghanistan slowly began a more offensive approach, often referring – in contrast to the MoD – to 'counterinsurgency'.<sup>298</sup> By April 2009, the officials in the German MoD and chancellery concluded that a tougher stance was required to prevent further casualties. They changed their interpretation of the national rules on the application of violence and communicated this to German ISAF commanders.<sup>299</sup> From April to early fall 2009, the Germans conducted several operations in Kunduz to fight back the Taliban.<sup>300</sup> The German approach to counterinsurgency, however, heavily influenced by the premises of conventional warfare, tended to focus on amassing forces, capturing space, and 'regaining the initiative', involving infantry fighting vehicles as light tanks and therefore needing heavy engineering equipment. Since 2010 mechanised

<sup>290</sup> Friederike Böge, 'Afghanistan: Mit den Mudschahedin gegen die Taliban', *FAZ.NET*, 5 November 2009; Koelbl, 'Jeder gegen jeden', [see FN 275], 104.

<sup>291</sup> The Report to Congress of April 2010 stated that 'the security situation in east Kunduz improved' but also that militias in Khanabad were 'neither supporting the anti-Afghan forces nor the Afghan Government'. Department of Defense, *Report on Progress . . .*, April 2010, [see FN 284], 31–32, 37.

<sup>292</sup> Interview with former senior NDS official of Kunduz, Kabul, 20 November 2012; Embassy Kabul, 'Kunduz Authorities Turn to Militias . . .', [see FN 278].

<sup>293</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 17. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 17/2878, 8 September 2010, 17.

<sup>294</sup> Yaroslav Trofimov, 'Afghan Militia Wins Uneasy Peace', *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 May 2012, A8; email communication with former German staff officer of Task Force Kunduz, January 2012. Also see the reports of the German officers: Sebastian Knaust, 'Soldaten freuen sich auf die Rückkehr', *Volksstimme*, 30 June 2012, 11, and Marcel Bohnert, *200 Tage Kunduz. Als Kampfkompanie in Afghanistan*, Helmut Schmidt University/Armed Forces University Hamburg, 5 December 2012, min 1:00:00, accessed 2 August 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwGTWcTvPvO&list=PLeKRBmqOZONU3ex8Qh7WruVXiZX8gDB2&index=1>.

<sup>295</sup> 'Afghan Militias Battle Taliban', [see FN 288].

<sup>296</sup> Human Rights Watch, "'Just Don't Call It a Militia' . . .', [see FN 276], 55–6.

<sup>297</sup> Joe Quinn and Mario A. Fumerton, 'Counterinsurgency from Below. The Afghan Local Police in Theoretical and Comparative Perspective', November 2010, 4, 24. Joe Quinn served as a counterinsurgency advisor at ISAF's COIN Advisory and Assistance Team (CAAT) in Kabul.

<sup>298</sup> Noetzel, 'Germany's Small War . . .', [see FN 102], 493–4; Philipp Münch, 'The German Approach to Counterinsurgency. Concepts and Practice' in *Afghanistan in the Balance. Counterinsurgency, Comprehensive Approach and Political Order*, ed by Hans-Georg Ehrhart, Sven Gareis and Charles Pentland, Kingston, ON, Queen's Policy Studies 2012, 57.

<sup>299</sup> Münch, 'Strategielos in Afghanistan . . .', [see FN 100], 16, 18; Ralf Beste et al., 'Zähne für die Schildkröte', *Der Spiegel* 28, 2009, 25.

<sup>300</sup> Department of Defense, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, October 2009, 17.



artillery was also used.<sup>301</sup> These operations were only temporarily successful since the insurgents mostly avoided clashing with superior forces, fled and later returned.<sup>302</sup>

The more offensive German military approach led to an air strike on 4 September 2009, which was ordered by the PRT commander. The Taliban had kidnapped two civilian fuel trucks during the night, killed one of the drivers, and got stuck on a riverbank in the Kunduz River. The Germans, who since spring 2009 had four soldiers killed and around 20 wounded, received a message from a local source that the Taliban commander for Aliabad district, Abdul Rahman, together with sub-commanders Saidi, Naser and Amanullah were in the vicinity of the trucks. The decision-makers seem to have seen this as a unique chance to reduce insurgent attacks. After two hours of observation, the PRT commander called US air support and decided to 'destroy the hijacked tankers and the insurgents around them'. By this time, however, Abdul Rahman and Naser, at least, had left the scene, and probably Saidi too. The crowd remaining consisted mostly of civilians from mainly Pashtun villages who stole the fuel of the trucks. Up to 142 mainly non-Taliban persons were killed by the following US air strike.<sup>303</sup> Since the most important Taliban commanders had escaped, the bombing did not seem to significantly weaken the insurgents. As the sharp increase in security incidents right after the bombing indicates,<sup>304</sup> it rather seemed to have damaged the reputation of ISAF as well as that of the provincial officials, who applauded the strike, and therefore strengthened support for the Taliban.<sup>305</sup>

<sup>301</sup> Münch, 'German Approach to Counterinsurgency . . .', [see FN 284], 59–61.

<sup>302</sup> Interview with former senior NDS official of Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; interview with former member of the leadership of QRF 2, Berlin, June 2010; Matthias Gebauer and Shoib Najafizada, 'Situation Worsens in Northern Afghanistan. Taliban Makes Blitz Comeback near Kunduz', *Spiegel Online International*, 3 August 2009, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/situation-worsens-in-northern-afghanistan-taliban-makes-blitz-comeback-near-kunduz-a-640142.html>.

<sup>303</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 17. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 17/7400, [see FN 268], 43–70, 84, 98. (trans. P. Münch).

<sup>304</sup> John O'Loughlin et al., 'Peering into the Fog of War. The Geography of the WikiLeaks Afghanistan War Logs, 2004–2009', *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 51, no. 4, 2010, 493.

<sup>305</sup> See on the attitude of local residents after the bombing: Gul Rahim Niazman, 'Mixed Feelings',

Increased US efforts under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) since mid-2009 were more important in fighting back the Taliban.<sup>306</sup> US Special Forces began to systematically kill and capture insurgent leaders and facilitators.<sup>307</sup> German Special Forces also conducted some operations, but these were limited to capture missions.<sup>308</sup> In general, the German ISAF forces were rarely comprehensively informed of the US Special Forces operations in advance, but provided intelligence and sometimes even named targets.<sup>309</sup> After a well-planned insurgent ambush on Good Friday 2010 inflicted three casualties and wounded seven, followed by comparable losses in Baghlan, the Germans again acted more cautiously.<sup>310</sup> As far as is publicly known, from August 2009 until December 2012, Afghan, ISAF and OEF forces captured at least 30 and killed 31 persons they identified as insurgent leaders. By October 2010 around two-thirds of the 2009 Taliban leaders of Kunduz were captured or killed or had fled.<sup>311</sup> The intelligence on insurgents, however, is often insufficient and many innocent people were likely killed as well, negatively affecting the reputation of the internationals.<sup>312</sup> However, as shown below,

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*Afghanistan Today*, 19 May 2011, accessed 31 July 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-today.org/article/?id=112>.

<sup>306</sup> In summer 2009, the US Special Forces Task Force 373 (later 3–10) was permanently stationed in Mazar-e Sharif to conduct operations in the north. Matthias Gebauer et al., 'Protokoll eines Krieges', *Der Spiegel* 30, 2010, 75.

<sup>307</sup> Anthony Bell, David Witter, and Michael Whittaker, 'Reversing the Northeastern Insurgency', *Afghanistan Report* 9, Washington, DC, *Institute for the Study of War*, April 2011, 10–1; Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 35–9.

<sup>308</sup> Münch, 'Strategielos in Afghanistan . . .', [see FN 100], 18.

<sup>309</sup> Telephone interview with German human intelligence officer who served in Kunduz in 2010, June 2011; Ulrike Demmer et al., 'Abschusslisten Made in Germany', *Der Spiegel* 31, 2010, 28–32.

<sup>310</sup> Münch, 'Strategielos in Afghanistan . . .', [see FN 100], 23.

<sup>311</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 30–2; Philipp Münch, 'Engaging Leaders of Non-state Armed Groups. Evidence from Northeastern Afghanistan', *Polish Quarterly of International Affairs* 22, no. 1, 2013, 86. According to aggregated ISAF press releases from December 2009 to September 2011, 97 persons have been killed during these operations in Kunduz. Strick van Linschoten and Kuehn, 'A Knock on the Door . . .', [see FN 259], 15.

the campaign, together with the Afghan militia offensive, decisively pushed the Taliban back.

#### 4.6.5 Replacements in the security apparatus

The Shura-ye Nazar faction also successfully used efforts to contain the Taliban to improve their own power position. Around the 2010 parliamentary elections, Karzai replaced several high-level officials, a move which had implications for Kunduz. In June he released Amrullah Saleh from his post as national NDS chief. However, to keep the balance in his cabinet, he gave another security agency to a Shura-ye Nazar-affiliated person and Bismillah Khan Mohammadi became the Minister of Interior.<sup>313</sup> Since the latter was mainly responsible for the militias, the Shura-ye Nazar faction still had a hold on this issue.

In September 2010, the appointments of two other famous commanders of Massud also affected the security set up in Kunduz. General Daud returned as 303<sup>rd</sup> Pamir Police Zone commander to the north, probably directly appointed by Bismillah.<sup>314</sup> The charismatic Sayedkheli became the Kunduz provincial chief of police. He had gained a legendary reputation in Shura-ye Nazar as the defender of his home area, Shomali near Kabul, against Taliban and Pakistani forces in the late 1990s.<sup>315</sup> In Kunduz, Sayedkheli effectively

managed public relations by posting press articles and even internet videos of his actions. He also successfully sidelined the mayor of Kunduz City, Mohammad Ghulam Farhad, by introducing an urban cleaning project for the provincial capital. Therefore, he gained a positive reputation among large parts of the populace.<sup>316</sup>

Bismillah, Daud, and Sayedkheli acted as a triumvirate in fighting the Taliban in Kunduz. From his ministerial position, Bismillah provided 1,125 ALP positions for the organisational chart (*tashkeel*) of the province in addition to the original 1,810 regular ANP officers. Of these ALP positions, 300 each went to Chahar Dara, Dasht-e Archi, and Imam Sahib, while Kunduz district received 225.<sup>317</sup> In Kunduz, Sayedkheli therefore could use the ALP positions to establish a clientele.<sup>318</sup> Mir Alam's force, which was mainly in Khanabad, was not integrated. Since no complaints by him are known, it seems that he preferred to remain in the NDS-operated arbaki programme. Nabi Gechi on the other hand, who had fought against Shura-ye Nazar in 2002, protested that he was not integrated.<sup>319</sup>

In October 2010, Sayedkheli negotiated successfully with Taliban leaders, most of whom were Tajiks, in Aliabad and the south of Chahar Dara district who had previously fought on the insurgents' side. He persuaded them with positive incentives – assets in the form of ALP positions and goods from the internationally funded Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) to

<sup>312</sup> Kate Clark, 'The Takhar Attack. Targeted Killings and the Parallel Worlds of US Intelligence and Afghanistan', AAN Thematic Report 05/2011, *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, May 2011, 12–8; Open Society Foundations Regional Policy Initiative on Afghanistan and Pakistan, 'The Cost of Kill/Capture. Impact of the Night Raid Surge on Afghan Civilians', *Open Society Foundations and The Liaison Office*, 19 September 2011, 10–2. A USAID official, who worked in Kunduz from March 2010 to March 2011 confirmed in an anonymous interview that US military representatives tried to use them in 'targeting meetings' to find out whether local Afghans were 'good' or 'bad'. United States Institute of Peace and Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 'Interview #155', *Oral Histories: Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq and Afghanistan*, The Oral Histories Project on Stability Operations, *United States Institute of Peace and Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*, 8 April 2011, accessed 12 November 2012, <http://www.usip.org/files/file/resources/collections/histories/afghanistan2/155.PDF>.

<sup>313</sup> Mark Moyer, *Afghanistan's New Minister of Interior. A Potential Game Changer*, Orbis Operations Research Report 16 July 2010.

<sup>314</sup> Filkins, 'Will Civil War Hit . . .', [see FN 54].

<sup>315</sup> Interview with former fighter on the Shomali front, Kabul, December 2012.

<sup>316</sup> Ahmad Nawid, '04: Tackling the Dust and the Taliban', *Afghanistan Today*, 10 November 2010, accessed 31 July 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-today.org/article/?id=54#sthash.R4KIO0qe.dpuf>; interview with senior official of the Ministry of Agriculture originating from Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>317</sup> Interview with Haji Momin Omarkhel, former district governor of Chahar Dara, Kunduz, November 2012, and with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012; Department of Defense, 'Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan', December 2012, 81; Gul Rahim Niazman, 'Law Enforcers or Liability?', *Afghanistan Today*, 1 August 2011, accessed 31 July 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-today.org/article/?id=142>. This went officially in force in November 2010. Röder and Saleem, 'Provincial Needs Assessment . . .', [see FN 84].

<sup>318</sup> Human Rights Watch, "'Just Don't Call It a Militia' . . .', [see FN 276], 36.

<sup>319</sup> Interview with Nabi Gechi, Kunduz, December 2012; Friederike Böge, 'Waffen für die Dörfer. In Kundus stellt die Nato eine neue Lokalpolizei auf', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16 May 2011, 6.

‘reintegrate’ insurgents<sup>320</sup> – and with threats – such as the US campaign targeting Taliban commanders.<sup>321</sup> These successful negotiations allowed Sayedkheli’s ANP and US infantry forces, together with militias led by Mir Alam’s sub-commander Nawid, to recapture Aliabad and the south of Chahar Dara district in October and November 2010.<sup>322</sup> During this operation, the Germans took the village of Qatliam in Chahar Dara, populated mainly by Uzbeks. After the operation it was occupied by Nawid’s fighters.<sup>323</sup>

#### 4.6.6 *Taleban reaction: targeting power brokers*

The US targeting campaign and the Afghan militia campaign delivered a serious blow to the Taliban in Kunduz; after 2010, they did not control significant territory anymore. However, they continued to exist as an armed group and successfully changed their strategy, refocusing on clandestine operations after mid-2010.<sup>324</sup> They started an intensified assassination campaign against government officials and pro-government

militia leaders that continues at the time of writing. In the course of these operations, they killed at least two district governors, four senior NDS officials, the Provincial Chief of Police Sayedkheli in March 2011, the chief of the northern police zone (Daud) in May 2011, and the head of the anti-terror police department in January 2013.<sup>325</sup> They were probably also behind the assassination of the major power brokers: Governor Eng. Omar in October 2010 in Takhar, the Imam Sahib District Chief of Police Qayum Ibrahimi in March 2013, and Motaleb Beg in December 2011.<sup>326</sup>

At least 19 pro-government militia commanders were assassinated between 2010 and the end of 2012, though the Taliban did not declare responsibility in every case. Among those killed were the most important defectors: Ziaullah and Silab.<sup>327</sup> Targeting militia commanders served two purposes. First, they tried to punish those commanders who defected from the Taliban to prevent others from following them. Second, they used the assassinations to win legitimacy among

<sup>320</sup> By January 2012, among 21 provinces, Kunduz had the third-highest number of insurgents (288) who had officially received APRP benefits. International Crisis Group, ‘Talking about Talks. Toward a Political Settlement in Afghanistan’, Asia Report no. 221, Kabul/Brussels, March 2012, 19–22, FN 155.

<sup>321</sup> Florian Broschk, ‘Dynamics of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Northern Afghanistan’, *Orient* 53, no. II, 2012, 46–8; interview with Mirza Ali Darai, former Jamiat commander of Aref Khan, Kunduz, December 2012; interview with Wahidullah Rahmani, member of the Kunduz Peace Council, Kunduz, December 2012. The most important commander of these was the Tajik Ziaullah from Chahar Dara who eventually operated in Aliabad.

<sup>322</sup> Human Rights Watch, ‘“Just Don’t Call It a Militia” . . .’, [see FN 276], 36.

<sup>323</sup> Christian von Blumröder, ‘Partnering: Auflage, Auftrag und Chance. Erfahrungen des 1. Kontingents Ausbildungs- und Schutzbataillon Kunduz von Juli 2010–Januar 2011’, *Der Deutsche Fallschirmjäger* 3, 2011, 7–12; interview with German officer, formerly part of the leadership of the Task Force Kunduz, Berlin, July 2011. See, for the correct writing of the village name: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Untitled and unreleased report on human rights violations in Afghanistan 1978–2001, 2005], no. 4.102 f, accessed 31 July 2013, <http://www.flagrancy.net/salvage/UNMappingReportAfghanistan.pdf>.

<sup>324</sup> The number of German soldiers wounded through IEDs increased by June 2010 and exceeded the number directly shot at. Deutscher Bundestag, 17. *Wahlperiode*, *Drucksache 17/4792*, [see FN 269], 14–7.

<sup>325</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, ‘Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .’, [see FN 157], 26; Broschk, ‘Dynamics of Insurgency . . .’, [see FN 321], 48–9; ‘Kunduz: Selbstmordattentäter tötet Anti-Terror-Funktionär’, *Spiegel Online*, 26 January 2013, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/kunduz-selbstmordattentaeter-toetet-anti-terror-funktionaer-a-879862.html>; Münch, ‘Engaging Leaders of Non-state Armed Groups . . .’, [see FN 311], 87.

<sup>326</sup> Eng. Omar and Mutaleb Beg were assassinated in a mosque and at a funeral. Suicide bombers killed the latter and Qayum. In all three cases, numerous bystanders died. Therefore, refraining from declaring responsibility seems reasonable so that one does not risk losing legitimacy. However, it is also thinkable that business or political rivals killed them.

<sup>327</sup> Waheedullah, ‘Militia Commander Shot Dead in Kunduz’, *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 28 May 2011, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/05/28/militia-commander-shot-dead-kunduz>; ‘Kunduz : Commander Killed in a Bombing’, *Gulf Times*, 11 September 2011; ‘Local Police, His Son Killed in N. Afghan Town’, *Xinhua*, 25 September 2011, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://english.people.com.cn/90777/7604701.html>; ‘3 Including Pro-Gov’t Figure Killed in N. Afghanistan’, *Xinhua*, 9 March 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/7753469.html>; ‘Local Policeman Kills Commander in Kunduz’, *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 4 April 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2012/04/04/local-policeman-kills-commander-kunduz>; ‘Police Commander among 16 Killed’, *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 26 July 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2012/07/26/police-commander-among-16-killed>.

the common people who in many instances suffered at the hands of the militias. With regards to Kunduz's power balance, the Taleban targeting campaign seems to have weakened the Jamiat/Shura-ye Nazar faction most since they occupied most positions in the security sector and lost their most charismatic leaders. The Taleban operations therefore set back the efforts to appoint Shura-ye Nazar followers as started by Sayedkheli and Daud Daud.

#### 4.6.7 Distribution of state positions after Eng. Omar

The current situation displays a still-fragmented power structure in Kunduz, with no group obtaining decisively more influence than the others. Eng. Omar's death was followed by a relatively long interim period of two months with no governor in office. Finally, Anwar Jagdalak, who came from the Kabul area rather than Kunduz, succeeded him. That Jagdalak was appointed as provincial governor after a gap of two months shows that finding a compromise was difficult. Being a Pashtun, he fit into the ethnic balance as it was established. He was a man of Karzai as well as of Jamiat and therefore seemed to have satisfied both sides.<sup>328</sup> Obviously afraid of Taleban assassins, he rarely left his heavily fortified compound and remained largely passive.<sup>329</sup> It seems that he felt forced to react to the widespread criticism against militias in Kunduz and therefore ordered in August 2011 that 4,000 militiamen should disarm.<sup>330</sup> However, this never happened, and he no longer seems to focus on it.<sup>331</sup>

Right after the 2010 parliamentary elections, Karzai installed the High Peace Council (HPC), officially to facilitate negotiations with the insurgents. He also used its internationally provided budget to buy important political actors and influence the power structure. He appointed Jamiat leader Burhanuddin

Rabbani as the HPC head, thus preventing him from joining the opposition.<sup>332</sup> This appointment also helped Karzai legitimise the HPC since most members were Pashtuns and Hezb and former Taleban followers.<sup>333</sup> The same tendency was evident for Kunduz as Utmanzai was appointed as the province's representative in the HPC.<sup>334</sup> In this sense, the head of the HPC's local branch in Kunduz became Pashtun Dawat leader Assadullah Omarkhel.<sup>335</sup> Both publicly harshly spoke out against the militias; Omarkhel even explicitly stated that they would be used by the NDS to strengthen Jamiat in Kunduz.<sup>336</sup>

After Sayedkheli's death, Samiullah Qatra became provincial chief of police in Kunduz around June 2011. Being a Jamiati from Badakhshan, he was close to Mir Alam and also an advocate of the militia programme.<sup>337</sup> Probably to hold Mir Alam at bay, in November 2012 Karzai replaced Qatra – even by Afghan standards, he had a reputation of

<sup>332</sup> Thomas Ruttig, 'The Ex-Taleban on the High Peace Council. A Renewed Role for the Khuddam ul-Furqan?', AAN Discussion Paper 04/2010, *Afghanistan Analysts Network* 2010, 4, FN 4.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 1; International Crisis Group, 'Talking about Talks . . .', [see FN 320], 26.

<sup>334</sup> Interview with Haji Amanullah Utmanzai, Kunduz, December 2012; Ruttig, 'Ex-Taleban on the High Peace Council . . .', [see FN 332], 4.

<sup>335</sup> Interview with Assadullah Omarkhel, head of the Kunduz branch of the HPC, Kunduz, December 2012; Hewad, 'Legal, Illegal . . .', [see FN 127].

<sup>336</sup> Böge, 'Waffen für die Dörfer . . .', [see FN 319]; Waheedullah, 'Call to Rein in Kunduz Militias', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 9 May 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2012/05/09/call-rein-kunduz-militias>; Hewad, *Legal, Illegal . . .*, [see FN 127]; Wahidullah, 'Tribal Militia Adding to Security Problems in Kunduz', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 8 March 2011, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/03/08/tribal-militia-adding-security-problems-kunduz>; interview with Assadullah Omarkhel, head of the Kunduz branch of the HPC, Kunduz City, 8 December 2012. Privately, Utmanzai held the same opinion. Interview with Haji Amanullah Utmanzai, businessman and member of the High Peace Council, Kunduz City, 2 December 2012.

<sup>337</sup> Interview with official of the UNHCR office, Kunduz, November 2012; Hewad, 'Legal, Illegal . . .', [see FN 127]; Alissa J. Rubin, 'Afghan Rape Case Turns Focus on Local Police', *New York Times*, 28 June 2012, A4; Tobias Matern, 'Afghanistan und die Taliban. Im Angebot: Ein normales Leben', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 22 June 2011, 8.

<sup>328</sup> Interview with Haji Amanullah Utmanzai, Kunduz, December 2012; Röder and Saleem, 'Provincial Needs Assessment . . .', [see FN 84].

<sup>329</sup> Interview with official of UNAMA from Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; interview with official of the provincial administration and political activist, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>330</sup> Ray Rivera, 'Afghanistan Seeks to Disband Some Independent Armed Militias', *New York Times*, 3 August 2011, A9.

<sup>331</sup> Gul Rahim Niazman, 'The Short Arm of the State', *Afghanistan Today*, 17 January 2012, accessed 31 July 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-today.org/article/?id=203>.



being heavily 'corrupt'<sup>338</sup> – with Khalil Andarabi, the former's archenemy from Baghlan. He took a more distanced stance towards the militias.<sup>339</sup>

Probably as a counterweight to the arbaki programme of the NDS, the US armed forces introduced Nabi Gechi's men and militias in both Aliabad and another district to their national Critical Infrastructure Programme (CIP) in spring 2011. US Special Forces ran the CIP and only used it in Regional Command North.<sup>340</sup> In December 2011, however, Karzai ordered that all non-government militia programmes should be abandoned.<sup>341</sup> The CIP funding for Nabi thus ran out at the end of September 2012. He now asks for money from the local population.<sup>342</sup>

## 5. BADAKHSHAN

### 5.1 History of power structures in Badakhshan

#### 5.1.1 Power structures until the fall of the communist government

The area of what is today Badakhshan province was always geographically and politically peripheral in modern Afghanistan.<sup>343</sup> The harsh mountainous conditions allowed only a meagre subsistence economy in the valleys. The

agricultural surplus was not sufficient to provide the taxes to establish larger fiefdoms. On the other hand, since water was always accessible, the subsistence agriculture was still enough to establish smaller fiefdoms in the valleys, which could be easily defended at their entries.<sup>344</sup>

In other parts of Afghanistan, an educated class was able to establish itself. In contrast, in the second half of the twentieth century in Badakhshan, the traditional ruling class strongly dominated the patron-client relations at the village level, leaving no room for the educated class.<sup>345</sup> Therefore, not surprisingly, Badakhshan became a hotbed of the newly formed Islamist but also leftist resistant movements. The most influential of these groups became the Jamiat-e Islami-ye Afghanistan of local resident Burhanuddin Rabbani. Also Badakhshan was one of the first places the poorly planned first Islamist insurrection of 1975 happened.<sup>346</sup>

After the beginning of the jihad in 1979, which first started in Badakhshan province among other provinces, commanders took power as elsewhere in Afghanistan. Most joined Jamiat, which became the dominant *tanzim* in this province. From 1981, however, in quests for power several commanders switched to Hezb-e Islami-ye Afghanistan. Hezb attracted the Uzbeks in this Tajik-dominated province.<sup>347</sup> Ittehad-e Islami bara-ye Azadi-ye Afghanistan had some minor influence, mainly in Shohada district.<sup>348</sup> But even within the dominating Jamiat faction, splits occurred as, since 1984, Massud tried to extend his influence to Badakhshan.<sup>349</sup>

<sup>338</sup> Interviews with former senior NDS official of Kunduz, Kabul, November 2012; interview with UNHCR official, Kunduz City, 25 November 2012.

<sup>339</sup> Interview with Khalil Andarabi, Kunduz provincial chief of police, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>340</sup> Department of Defense, 'Report on Progress . . .', December 2012, [see FN 317], 81; Trofimov, 'Afghan Militia Wins . . .', [see FN 294]; interview with senior official of the provincial administration, Kunduz, November 2012; interview with Ali Mohammad, former Jamiat and Taleban commander of Lala Maidan, Kunduz, December 2012.

<sup>341</sup> Department of Defense, 'Report on Progress . . .', December 2012, [see FN 317], 81.

<sup>342</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 17. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 17/11496, 19 November 2012, 2. Nabi himself claims that the people pay him voluntarily. Interview with Nabi Gechi, Kunduz, December 2012. Others, however, state that the population is under pressure to do so. Interview with Nazari Turkman, member of parliament from Qalaye Zal district, Kabul, December 2012.

<sup>343</sup> Jan-Heeren Grevemeyer, *Herrschaft, Raub und Gegenseitigkeit. Die politische Geschichte Badakhshans 1500–1883*, Wiesbaden, In Kommission bei O. Harrassowitz 1982, 24.

<sup>344</sup> Wolfgang Holzwarth, 'Segmentation und Staatsbildung in Afghanistan. Traditionale sozio-politische Organisation in Badakhshan, Wakhan und Sheghnan' in *Revolution in Iran und Afghanistan*, ed by Kurt Greussing and Jan-Heeren Grevemeyer, Frankfurt am Main, Syndikat 1980, 187–8.

<sup>345</sup> M. Nazif Shahrani, 'Causes and Contexts of Responses to the Saur Revolution in Badakhshan' in *Revolutions & Rebellions in Afghanistan. Anthropological Perspectives*, ed by M. Nazif Shahrani and Robert L. Canfield, [Berkeley], Research Series no. 57, Institute of International Studies, University of California 1984, 153–9.

<sup>346</sup> Roy, *Islam and Resistance . . .*, [see FN 20], 74–6.

<sup>347</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 2–3.

<sup>348</sup> Interview with The Liaison Office (TLO) researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>349</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 3.



### 5.1.2 *Badakhshan struggles for power 1992–2001*

After the fall of the PDPA government in 1992, Rabbani and Massud took over central-government control in Kabul and became president and minister of defence, respectively. Initially successfully, Rabbani attempted to rule the province through clients, especially from his home area, Yaftal in the centre of Badakhshan near the provincial capital Faizabad. In the 1990s, he divided the districts to create positions to distribute among his clientele, especially the local commanders. However, the commanders enjoyed a high degree of autonomy.<sup>350</sup> Integrating former pro-government militias, some regular soldiers, and the forces of local Jamiat commanders, Massud formed the 29<sup>th</sup> Division near Faizabad. The division was a coordination council and name for a network of Jamiat commanders and their followers rather than a regular military unit in the Western sense of the word. At the beginning, a Rabbani affiliate from Yaftal, Basir Khaled, commanded the division.<sup>351</sup>

Rifts between Rabbani and Massud increased and the latter in 1994 transferred the command of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division further east – to his local client, Najmuddin Waseq in Baharak district – and away from the former's power base. To compensate, Massud formed a new 338<sup>th</sup> brigade, not subordinated to the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, in Yaftal. Nazir Mohammad, a young<sup>352</sup> follower and supposed brother-in-law of Basir, originally from Yaftal, received its command. Then Basir and Nazir quarrelled and Nazir joined Massud's Shura-ye Nazar affiliate Najmuddin. A group of commanders in Yaftal loyal to Rabbani formed a new brigade consisting of former fighters of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 3–4. During Rabbani's rule in Kabul from 1992–96, the six sub-districts of Badakhshan became districts so that the overall number went to 13. UNIDATA, *Afghanistan Badakhshan Province. A Socio-Economic Profile*, Kabul, UNDO/OPS & UNOCA, February 1992, 2; Pamir Reconstruction Bureau, *Study on the Nutritional Aspect of Badakhshan Province. Afghanistan*, Peshawar, May 1996, 1–2.

<sup>351</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>352</sup> Several journalists who met him before and during the Kunduz campaign stated that he was 35 years old. Andrew Maykuth, 'A War-Torn Land Braces for More', *Detroit Free Press*, 2 October 2001, 1A; Scott Johnson, Colin Soloway, and John Barry, 'Cutting Deals on the Run', *Newsweek*, 3 December 2001, 38.

Massud's MoD, however, never formally accepted it. Fazel Azim 'Zalmay Khan' Mojaddedi, a member of the famous clerical family and therefore also a relative of the short-term president of 1992, Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, commanded a third Jamiat group in Jurm district.<sup>353</sup>

Commanders in Badakhshan competed for access to the province's most precious resource, opium, and the routes to smuggle it across the border. Najmuddin became the most powerful single commander, ruling most of the eastern and southern part of the province with access to opium cultivation areas in Baharak and Jurm, cross-border smuggling routes in Ishkashim, as well as the lapis lazuli mines of Koran wa Munjan district.<sup>354</sup> He regularly fought the Ittehad forces, commanded by Khalil Rahman, who were concentrated in Shohada. After he persuaded Hezb commander and Ittehad ally Qari Abdul Wodud in 1997 to change to his side, he forced Khalil to leave Badakhshan. Najmuddin also battled Jurm's Jamiatis under Zalmay; Zalmay eventually had to flee and was replaced by commander Abbas.<sup>355</sup> Ittehad fighters supposedly killed Najmuddin in November 1999.<sup>356</sup> He was followed by Mir Mohammad Daud 'Sardar Khan', his brother-in-law.<sup>357</sup> Since he could not establish the tight hold on his followers that his predecessor had, the power structure in Najmuddin's former fiefdom

<sup>353</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>354</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 6; Fabrizio Foschini, 'Heretics or Addicts. The Ismailis of Afghan Badakhshan Caught in the Middle of Opium Trade' in *Islam. Collected Essays*, ed by Daniele Cevenini and Svevo D'Onofrio, Bologna, 'Uyun al-Akhbar. Studi sul mondo islamico, 4, I libri di Emil 2010, 115–6. Already the Soviets identified him in June 1985 as an important commander with a fighting force of 500 men and strong support among the population. S. V. Krutyakov, 'Blocking, Sweeping and Destroying the Mujahideen in the Varduj Valley' in *The Bear Went Over the Mountain. Soviet Combat Tactics in Afghanistan*, ed by Lester W. Grau, Washington, DC, 2nd ed., National Defense University Press August 1996, 33.

<sup>355</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>356</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 6.

<sup>357</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

fragmented as several sub-commanders acted increasingly independently.<sup>358</sup>

Hezb commanders dominated the mainly Uzbek-populated areas of Argo, Darayim, Ragh, Kohistan, Tashkan, and Kishem.<sup>359</sup> Their most powerful commander was Mawlawi Khairatmand of Argo, who frequently fought against Jamiat. Nazir and Rabbani's men frequently clashed around Faizabad for the control of strategic positions, which the former eventually took.<sup>360</sup> In the mid-1990s he therefore seemed to have taken control of Faizabad.<sup>361</sup> However, at this time, the fighting lacked intensity.<sup>362</sup>

As the Taliban drove Rabbani and Massud out of Kabul in 1996, Badakhshan and Panjshir became their respective places of refuge. Due to its geography, Badakhshan was never conquered by the Taliban. However, while Jamiat commanders strongly dominated the northwestern part of the later Warduj district, Najmuddin and Sardar's area of origin, the opposite was true for the southeastern part, where this *tanzim's* enemies gathered. In 1997, commanders from this part of Warduj offered the Taliban support in case of an invasion.<sup>363</sup> Also, in Shighnan, Zebak, Kesh, Argo, and Ragh, desperate parts of the populace – including Ismailis – and many Hezb commanders who prepared to join them as they had done elsewhere in the country – supported them.<sup>364</sup> In 1998 Rabbani made Khairatmand the provincial governor to prevent further Hezb commanders

from supporting the Taliban. However, Khairatmand was murdered, leading Hezb forces to attack and almost conquer Faizabad.<sup>365</sup> Mawlawi Aziz was said to have been one of the Hezb commanders who prepared to change to the Taliban's side in the late 1990s.<sup>366</sup>

Major parts of the Jamiat forces, subsumed under the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, the 338<sup>th</sup> and Rabbani's informal brigade, fought on the southern border of Badakhshan against Hezb fighters, and since 1996 against the Taliban.<sup>367</sup> With the US intervention of 2001, some or all of these forces – at least Nazir's 338<sup>th</sup> Brigade – advanced from the Takhar front to Kunduz and participated in the latter's siege. During but also immediately before the campaign, Nazir proved to be an energetic commander and showed his anti-Taliban sentiment.<sup>368</sup>

## 5.2 Power structure from 2001 to the establishment of the PRT

### 5.2.1 Bases of power and rule

Unlike other regions in Afghanistan, the power structure of Badakhshan was less affected by the fall of the Taliban – simply because they never controlled the province. Power relations remained dominated by commanders who, in preceding years, had conquered their fiefdoms, which were spatially separated by the rough mountain terrain.<sup>369</sup> After the fall of the communist government, poppy production in Badakhshan constantly increased and by the early 2000s constituted by far the most important economy in

<sup>358</sup> Interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011; Strategic Monitoring Unit, 'Badakhshan', SMU Area Reports Afghanistan, Islamabad, The Army Press May 2001, 4.

<sup>359</sup> Interview with Afghan UNODC official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>360</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>361</sup> 'Focus on Warlordism in Northeast', *Integrated Regional Information Networks Asia*, 1 June 2005.

<sup>362</sup> John Hayward, 'Background & Situation Report Badakhshan Province Autumn/Winter 1994/5', R POR Badakhshan, 356, Norwegian Afghanistan Committee Badakhshan Program April 1995, 8.

<sup>363</sup> Interview with AAN researcher Fabrizio Foschini, Kabul, December 2012; telephone interview with former German Human Intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>364</sup> Interview with Fawzia Kufi, member of parliament from Badakhshan, Kabul, March 2011; Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 6.

<sup>365</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 6.

<sup>366</sup> Interview with Afghan employees of an international NGO and political activists from Jurm, Faizabad, September 2011; interview with member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>367</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>368</sup> Maykuth, 'A War-Torn Land . . .', [see FN 352]; Geoffrey York, 'Eerie Quiet Envelops Front Line. Stalemated Afghan Foes Are Dug in Deeply and Waiting for War', *The Globe and Mail*, 3 October 2001, A1; Johnson, Soloway, and Barry, 'Cutting Deals . . .', [see FN 352]; interview with Afghan employees of international NGO and political activists, Faizabad, September 2011; interview with member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>369</sup> Gosztonyi and Koehler, 'PCA Analyse Nordafghanistan . . .', [see FN 157], 46.

this agriculturally difficult province.<sup>370</sup> Therefore, areas with the geographical conditions to grow poppy or with access to the lucrative cross-border routes to Tajikistan were decisive as power bases. This section will focus on these areas.

Cultivable land was concentrated in the former Faizabad district (later subdivided in Argo, Darayim, Faizabad, Tashkan, Yaftal-e Sufla), followed by Jurm (later subdivided in Jurm, Khash, Yamgan), Keshem, and Baharak (later subdivided into Arghanikhwa, Baharak, Shohada, and Warduj).<sup>371</sup> Since these districts were the most fertile, most poppy and cannabis were grown there.<sup>372</sup> The most-important drug-trafficking routes went from the central region of Yaftal through Yawan and Raghistan to the western border in Khwahan. Another route in the west went from Yaftal to Shahr-e Bozorg. In the east, transport took off from Faizabad and went through Baharak, Warduj, and Zebak to the border in Ishkashim.<sup>373</sup> Another significant economic asset was the lapis lazuli mine in the southern Koran wa Munjan district.<sup>374</sup>

Even years after the PRT was established in Faizabad, accounts of the degree to which commanders exerted open control through roadblocks widely differed. This indicates the geographically fragmented power situation in Badakhshan, where some power brokers – especially in the hard-to-access regions of the province – maintained their fiefdoms almost unharmed. In general, however, open control by commanders declined, at least in the central regions of Badakhshan.<sup>375</sup> The following chapters

serve to map the scene the internationals entered in 2004.

### 5.2.2 Continuing violent clashes

Even after the fall of the Taleban, internecine fighting in Badakhshan continued. However, as in Kunduz, after a permanent international base was established, the intensity decreased.<sup>376</sup> Until late 2001, among other conflicts, Sardar Khan fought Jamiat commander Abbas for the control of Jurm.<sup>377</sup> In the summer of 2002, the latter clashed with other commanders in the same district over the taxation of drug trafficking routes. Finally, government troops from Kunduz arrived and arrested the commanders.<sup>378</sup> In April 2003, a minor clash occurred between two Jamiat commanders near Faizabad, seemingly mediated by Nazir ending the clash.<sup>379</sup>

The district chief of police, Qari Ziauddin, and the district governor and major Hezb commander of Argo, Abdul Jabbar Mosadeq, fought each other fiercely in August 2003, and again towards the end of that year.<sup>380</sup> Ziauddin, a former Hezb commander, switched to Jamiat around the time of this clash.<sup>381</sup> In February 2004, heavy fighting

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Rainer Glassner, and Jan Koehler, *EZ Governance und Rule of Law Kontextanalyse Badakhshan. Im Auftrag der GTZ*, 2008, 49, 58; Kristóf Gosztönyi and Romin Fararoon, *Analysis of Peace and Conflict Potential in Afghan-Badakhshan, Afghanistan*, Analysis Research Consulting April 2004, 28, 33, 44.

<sup>376</sup> Referring to accounts from Baharak and Jurm districts: David Mansfield, *Governance, Security and Economic Growth. The Determinants of Opium Poppy Cultivation in the Districts of Jurm and Baharak in Badakhshan*, GTZ/AKDN February 2007, 26.

<sup>377</sup> James Meek, “‘War’s Our Habit. I Don’t Know Anything but War’”, *The Guardian*, 19 October 2001, 7; Arnaud de La Grange and Marie-France Calle, ‘Guerres fratricides entre chefs de l’Alliance’, *Le Figaro*, 9 November 2001, 3.

<sup>378</sup> Carolin Emcke, “‘Schlafmohn ist kein Verbrechen’”, *Der Spiegel* 38, 2002, 151.

<sup>379</sup> Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, ‘Security “Satisfactory” Despite Clashes in Afghan Northeast – Commander’, *BBC Monitoring Central Asia*, 27 April 2003.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid.; ‘Report Details Clashes between Afghan Officials in Northern Province’, *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 9 February 2004.

<sup>381</sup> Interview with Afghan UNAMA official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011; interview with Afghan security analyst, Faizabad, October 2011.

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<sup>370</sup> Jonathan Goodhand, ‘From Holy War to Opium War? A Case Study of the Opium Economy in North Eastern Afghanistan’, *Central Asian Survey* 19, no. 2, 2000, 268–76; David Mansfield, *Coping Strategies, Accumulated Wealth and Shifting Markets. The Story of Opium Poppy Cultivation in Badakhshan 2000–2003*, Agha Khan Development Network, January 2004, 1–2.

<sup>371</sup> UNIDATA, *Afghanistan Badakhshan Province . . .*, [see FN 350], 29.

<sup>372</sup> Strategic Monitoring Unit, ‘Badakhshan’, [see FN 358], 24; interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>373</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>374</sup> Strategic Monitoring Unit, ‘Badakhshan’, [see FN 358], 25.

<sup>375</sup> Jan Koehler, *Assessing Peace and Conflict Potentials in the Target Region of the GTZ Central Asia and Northern Afghanistan Programme to Foster Food Security, Regional Cooperation and Stability*, Berlin, Analysis Research Consulting, April 2004, 18; Manija Gardizi,

between them killed around 20 people.<sup>382</sup> General Daud, as commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> AMF Corps, sent a delegation to mediate. Finally, Ziauddin was arrested and lost his position.<sup>383</sup> Locals viewed the fights as a continuation of the struggles between the Hezb in Argo and the Jamiat/Shura-ye Nazar forces in Faizabad for control of the area.<sup>384</sup>

### 5.2.3 Distribution of power in the centre

Besides his significant influence on formal state positions in Badakhshan, Rabbani remained a local power broker in his region of origin, Yaftal.<sup>385</sup> The strongest military might in this area, however, remained in the hands of Nazir Mohammad who originated from the same locality.<sup>386</sup> After 2001, he retained his official position as commander of the 338<sup>th</sup> Brigade, now considered part of the AMF, and therefore his considerable clientele among those who had fought with him. As part of the 6<sup>th</sup> AMF Corps, the brigade formally entered the DDR process in 2003 that was to be completed by 2005.<sup>387</sup>

<sup>382</sup> Amir Shah, 'Afghans Move to Stop Warlord Fighting', *Associated Press*, 8 February 2004.

<sup>383</sup> Amir Shah, 'Afghans Arrest Warlord Involved in Battle over Drug Wealth, Police Say', *Associated Press*, 11 February 2004; Afghan Islamic Press News Agency, 'Afghan Commander Denies Fighting over Poppy Tax in Northeast – AIP', *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 8 February 2004. Ziauddin's attempt to receive a position as MP in the 2005 elections remained unsuccessful. Afghanistan 2005 Elections Joint Electoral Management Body, 'Badakhshan. Wolesi Jirga Certified Results', 1, accessed 1 August 2013, <http://afghanistanelectiondata.org/sites/default/files/votetotals.zip>.

<sup>384</sup> Interview with Afghan employees of NGO and political activists from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>385</sup> Fabrizio Foschini, 'Conservatism by Default. Badakhshan's Jamiat after Ustad Rabbani', *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 21 October 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/conservatism-by-default-badakhshans-jamiat-after-ustad-rabbani>; Gardizi, Glassner, and Koehler, *EZ Governance* . . ., [see FN 375], 43.

<sup>386</sup> Gosztanyi and Fararoon, *Analysis of Peace and Conflict* . . ., [see FN 375], 8. Although often alleged in Western sources, Nazir did not have a family relationship with Rabbani. This misunderstanding might have arisen because both are often described as belonging to the 'Yaftal clan', which refers to a local solidarity network but not to a family connection. Interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011.

<sup>387</sup> 'Light Weapons Still Threat to Afghan Security, Paper Says', *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 8 April 2005.

Two interviewees for this report said that Nazir got part of his income from 'taxing' villagers growing opium in areas under his control and from drug trafficking to the northwest of the province (powerful rivals blocked other routes). This account was supported by a report on Badakhshan power structures.<sup>388</sup> In the second half of 2003 and first half of 2004, he supposedly attempted to aggressively extend his influence to neighbouring Argo district to secure drug routes and poppy-growing areas.<sup>389</sup> The clashes between Mosadeq and Ziauddin, who moved to Faizabad after his defeat,<sup>390</sup> may be related to this conflict.<sup>391</sup> Infighting on this scale did not occur afterwards, indicating that they reached an agreement to concentrate on business.

Due to his military strength and local supporters, Nazir in effect ruled Faizabad and was said to own bazaar spaces there. On the one hand, he used force against opponents to his rule, but on the other hand he included a large part of the population in his patronage network.<sup>392</sup> Many credited him for enforcing price ceilings for daily goods and creating some order.<sup>393</sup>

### 5.2.4 Argo district and the Hezb-e Islami forces

Southwest of the city of Faizabad was the Uzbek-dominated Argo district. The commanders in Argo had a history of conflict with their Jamiati neighbours. After the death of Khairatmand, Abdul Jabbar Mosadeq was the most powerful Hezb commander and remained an arch enemy of Nazir.

<sup>388</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012; interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011; Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 8, 9.

<sup>389</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 9.

<sup>390</sup> Interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011.

<sup>391</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 9.

<sup>392</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>393</sup> Interview with German GIZ official, Faizabad, September 2001; Fabrizio Foschini, 'A Thin Line between Insurgency and Local Politics in Badakhshan', *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 1 November 2012, accessed 1 August 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/a-thin-line-between-insurgency-and-local-politics-in-badakhshan>.



Since the 1980s until the time of writing, he served as the district governor of Argo,<sup>394</sup> evidence of his stable relationship with Karzai who used him to outbalance the Jamiatis. In November 2002 in Kabul, President Karzai greeted him, together with Mohammad Sharif Arzesh, as 'representing the people of Badakhshan'.<sup>395</sup> As a strong representative of the Uzbek minority of Badakhshan, he also enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy in his district.<sup>396</sup>

Earlier research and interviews for this report suggested that Mosadeq was said heavily involved in the drug trade and controlled poppy-growing areas of Argo, some of the biggest in Badakhshan.<sup>397</sup> The bazaar in Argo's district centre became one of the largest for poppy trade in Afghanistan.<sup>398</sup> However, to keep Karzai as an ally, he publicly spoke out for poppy eradication and at the same time argued that it would be economically necessary for the populace to grow poppy.<sup>399</sup>

### 5.2.5 The centre eastern region and the 29<sup>th</sup> division

Sardar Khan retained his position as Badakhshan's formally highest military commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, part of the AMF.<sup>400</sup> As already mentioned, he was unable to control his sub-commanders as tightly as Najmuddin had done. Therefore, it made

sense that he hardly resisted the DDR process that started in 2003.<sup>401</sup> Apparently he also did not interfere much in government appointments;<sup>402</sup> coming from a wealthy landowner family, he may have preferred to rest his power on his large possessions.<sup>403</sup>

In Warduj valley, originally under Sardar's influence, anti-Taleban commander Ashur Beg was said to have demobilised most of his fighters after the fall of the Taleban.<sup>404</sup> This may be why this area, especially Tirgaran, became a hotbed of the insurgency in the following years. Other reasons were that the area was ecologically degraded, saw many returning refugees and received few state resources – as visible in the low number of students.<sup>405</sup> According to one study, during the drought of 2001 up to 95 per cent of the farmers had to sell or mortgage parts of their land, making them more dependent on landlords.<sup>406</sup> This was fertile ground for Arab salafists and politically active mullahs to call for resistance against the government, as they had done in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>407</sup>

The former Hezb commander, Qari Abdul Wodud, remained in control of Shohada district and small adjacent parts of Ishkashim district, and could thus control the drug trafficking routes. In 2003 he competed with the Ishkashim district governor for

<sup>394</sup> Interview with ethnic Uzbek and GIZ employee from Argo, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>395</sup> Afghanistan Television, 'Afghan Leader Briefs People of Northern Provinces on Development Plans', *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 30 November 2002.

<sup>396</sup> Interview with ethnic Uzbek and GIZ employee from Argo, Faizabad, September 2011; interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011; interview with Afghan UNAMA official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>397</sup> Interview with Afghan UNODC official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011; interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011; Gardizi, Glassner, and Koehler, *EZ Governance* . . ., [see FN 375], 46.

<sup>398</sup> Gardizi, Glassner, and Koehler, *EZ Governance* . . ., [see FN 375], 46; Jürgen Dahlkamp, Susanne Koelbl, and Georg Mascolo, 'Mohn, Steine, Scherben', *Der Spiegel* 46, 2003, 44.

<sup>399</sup> Interview with ethnic Uzbek and GIZ employee from Argo, Faizabad, September 2011; Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 9; Emcke, "'Schlafmohn ist kein Verbrechen'", [see FN 378], 154.

<sup>400</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 7.

<sup>401</sup> Interview with Afghan UNAMA official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>402</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 9.

<sup>403</sup> Interviews with Afghan UNAMA official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011; interview with Afghan UNODC official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011; interview with Afghan employees of NGO and political activists from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011; Foschini, 'A Thin Line . . .', [see FN 393].

<sup>404</sup> Gosztönyi and Fararoon, *Analysis of Peace and Conflict* . . ., [see FN 375], 23.

<sup>405</sup> Interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011; interview with Afghan employees of NGO and political activists from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011; 'A Guide to Government in Afghanistan. Case Study: Badakhshan Province', *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit & The World Bank*, March 2004, 9; Gosztönyi and Fararoon, *Analysis of Peace and Conflict* . . ., [see FN 375], 33.

<sup>406</sup> Mansfield, *Coping Strategies* . . ., [see FN 370], 16.

<sup>407</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.



control of his area.<sup>408</sup> He re-established good relations with the former Ittehad commanders of Shohada and with former commander Khalil who lived in Kabul. The other commander who occupied a strategic position on this side of the border was former Jamiat sub-commander of Najmuddin, Abdul Wahid, who controlled the border strip to Tajikistan in Ishkashim. He formalised his position by taking command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Afghan Border Police (ABP) Battalion, in 2004 or earlier, which was stationed in this area.<sup>409</sup> In Jurm district Abdul Ahmad followed commander Assad as the leading power broker.<sup>410</sup> The area seems to have remained contested, however,<sup>411</sup> evident in how often a new district chief of police was appointed.<sup>412</sup>

### 5.2.6 Struggles around central state positions

Still considered the legal president of Afghanistan by most governments, Rabbani was pressured to give up the presidency in favour of Karzai by internationals at the Bonn conference of 2001. Led by Fahim, the major Shura-ye Nazar members, who had been in the forefront of the fight against the Taliban and who were therefore well represented at the conference, were appointed at the top of the decisive Ministries of Interior, Defence, and Foreign Affairs, as well as the NDS.<sup>413</sup> It seems that Rabbani tried to form a coalition to repel the Shura-ye Nazar's attempts to widen their influence in Badakhshan from their new favourable positions.<sup>414</sup> In this province, affiliates of Rabbani therefore competed most heavily with those of Shura-ye Nazar.

To contain his main competitor – the Shura-ye Nazar faction – Rabbani seems to have agreed with Karzai's strategy of giving posts to Hezb affiliates in the north. This is how Hamidullah Danishi, a former Hezb commander of Argo district, became the provincial police chief in January 2002. Said Amin Tariq, being in office since 2000 and a close affiliate of Rabbani, remained the provincial governor.<sup>415</sup> The leftist Shah Abdul Ahad Afzali received the post of deputy governor in late 2002.<sup>416</sup> It seems, however, that Badakhshan did not receive much financial support from the centre since, almost a year after the fall of the Taliban in the north and the capture of Kabul, salaries were paid only occasionally.<sup>417</sup>

Representatives of the Shura-ye Nazar did not give up and installed their follower Amanullah Amini to replace Governor Tariq in July 2003. As a counterweight, in late 2003 Rabbani's nephew and Jamiat affiliate Shamsul Rahman received the post of deputy governor and has kept it until the time of writing. He led the 760<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of Faizabad and later served as deputy commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>418</sup> After 2001, he kept a large cache of weapons and handed in some in May 2006.<sup>419</sup> In July 2003, the Badakhshi Said Akbar from Darwaz became provincial police chief. Though a Badakhshi and Jamiat member, he was considered to be nonpartisan and a professional police officer who tried to establish an effective police force.<sup>420</sup>

## 5.3 International military efforts in Badakhshan

### 5.3.1 Forces and patterns of operations of PRT Faizabad

During the first years after the fall of the Taliban, Badakhshan remained peripheral not only to the Afghan central government, but also to the

<sup>408</sup> Gosztanyi and Fararoon, *Analysis of Peace and Conflict* . . ., [see FN 375], 63–5.

<sup>409</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>410</sup> Interview with Afghan employees of an international NGO and political activists from Jurm, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>411</sup> See, on the conflict between commander Qutbuddin and the district governor: Gosztanyi and Fararoon, *Analysis of Peace and Conflict* . . ., [see FN 375], 40–4; Mansfield, *Governance, Security and Economic Growth* . . ., [see FN 376], 27.

<sup>412</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>413</sup> Ruttig, 'Islamists, Leftists . . .', [see FN 135], 19, FN 107.

<sup>414</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 7.

<sup>415</sup> 'A Guide to Government . . .', [see FN 405], 1.

<sup>416</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 7.

<sup>417</sup> Emcke, "'Schlafmohn ist kein Verbrechen'", [see FN 378], 154.

<sup>418</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>419</sup> Bundesministerium der Verteidigung FÜ S V 3, 'Unterrichtung des Parlamentes 19/06 . . .', [see FN 94], 3.

<sup>420</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 7.

international forces. They rarely entered the province before 2004.<sup>421</sup> Formally, the province was in the area of responsibility of the predominantly German contingent of PRT Kunduz, which became operational in December 2003.<sup>422</sup> Due to the distance and insufficient infrastructure, however, they seem to have rarely entered Badakhshan. This changed when the Germans established a PRT there as lead-nation in July 2004.<sup>423</sup>

As in Kunduz, the Germans at first put the PRT in a compound within the city of Faizabad. In July 2005, they moved to a position slightly outside the city close to the local airport, which facilitated defence, logistics, and evacuation. However, as it was located in a valley and surrounded by mountains, it remained vulnerable.<sup>424</sup> At the beginning, soldiers numbered only 85, increased to 200 in 2005, and 330 in late 2006.<sup>425</sup> The number of soldiers increased to 400 in 2008 and 506 in 2009, but severely decreased to 282 in favour of the embattled PRT Kunduz.<sup>426</sup> Until December 2007 the Czech Republic and until August 2008 Denmark

provided 80 to 120 soldiers for the PRT.<sup>427</sup> The 'tooth to tail ratio' was, however, as unfavourable for combat troops as it was in Kunduz.<sup>428</sup> Since December 2009, around 40 Mongolian soldiers guarded the inner ring of the PRT. Their number increased to 160 and after late 2011 they took over the patrols as the Germans prepared to leave.<sup>429</sup>

As the mission of PRT Faizabad was identical to that already encountered at PRT Kunduz, the same deficit in strategy haunted it. Since rules for command and control were also identical, its decisions and actions had similar patterns. The difficult mountainous terrain of Badakhshan severely hampered PRT activities. At Faizabad airport, planes often could not land due to limited sight. By the end of the 2000s, international organisations had much improved the provincial infrastructure. However, by 2006 and 2007 a patrol still required three days to reach the northern border of the province, five days to reach the southern border, and eight to ten to reach the eastern border.<sup>430</sup> The more-heavily armoured vehicles, increasingly used since 2006 due to the security situation, could only drive to half the districts. The heaviest armoured vehicles could only reach five districts.<sup>431</sup>

Since the Czechs and Danes provided combat forces, even fewer patrols in Badakhshan could be done after their withdrawal in 2007 and 2008.<sup>432</sup> In mid-2010, many infantry troops were transferred to Baghlan and Kunduz so that the PRT could

<sup>421</sup> A USAID official who from May to November 2002 served at the American-run PRT Kunduz, which was also responsible for Badakhshan, stated in an anonymous interview that nobody knew anything about this province during his rotation. Therefore, he encouraged a team to start a surveillance mission. United States Institute of Peace and Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 'Interview #24', [see FN 89].

<sup>422</sup> Auswärtiges Amt et al., *Das Afghanistan-Konzept der Bundesregierung*, 1 September 2003, 5.

<sup>423</sup> Pressestelle Mazar-e Sharif and PIZ EinsFüKdoBw, 'Übergabe des ISAF Feldlagers Faisabad in afghanische Hände', *einsatz.bundeswehr.de*, 9 October 2012.

<sup>424</sup> See the account of the former PRT commander Artur Schwitalla, *Afghanistan, jetzt weiß ich erst... Gedanken aus meiner Zeit als Kommandeur des Provincial Reconstruction Team FEYZABAD*, Miles 2010, 165–6.

<sup>425</sup> Nachtwei, 'Zur ISAF-Verlängerung . . .', [see FN 91], 4; Schmunk, 'Die deutschen Provincial Reconstruction Teams . . .', [see FN 91], 16; Markus Gauster, *Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan. Ein innovatives Instrument des internationalen Krisenmanagements auf dem Prüfstand*, Schriftenreihe der Landesverteidigungsakademie 11/2006, Vienna, Landesverteidigungsakademie, October 2006.

<sup>426</sup> Nachtwei, 'Besuch in West-, Süd-, Zentral-, Nord-Afghanistan . . .', [see FN 92], 26; Winfried Nachtwei, 'Jenseits der Wagenburgen – Endlich voll die Chancen nutzen! Bericht von meiner letzten Abgeordnetenreise nach Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif und Feyzabad', October 2009, 13; PRT Faizabad and ISAF, 'Willkommen im PRT Faizabad', 2011, 16.

<sup>427</sup> Schmunk, 'Die deutschen Provincial Reconstruction Teams . . .', [see FN 91], 16; Winfried Nachtwei, 'Besuch in Nord-Afghanistan. Hoch kritische [sic] Monate', 24 July 2006, accessed 2 October 2013, <http://www.gfw-re.de/printable/plaintext/berichteausderbundespolitik/besuchinnordafghanistanhochkritischemonate.html>; PRT Faizabad and ISAF, *Willkommen im PRT Faizabad*, [see FN 426], 6.

<sup>428</sup> Lange, 'Die Bundeswehr in Afghanistan . . .', [see FN 93], 12.

<sup>429</sup> Jens W., 'Aktuelle Einsätze. Das zweite mongolische Kontingent nimmt seine Arbeit auf', *einsatz.bundeswehr.de*, 7 June 2010; 'Mongolische Schutzkompanie in Faizabad – "Der Respekt wächst"', *einsatz.bundeswehr.de*, 28 October 2011.

<sup>430</sup> Interview with staff officer and former member of the PRT Faizabad leadership in 2008, Berlin, September 2010; Schwitalla, *Afghanistan . . .*, [see FN 424], 257.

<sup>431</sup> Nachtwei, 'Besuch in Nord-Afghanistan . . .', [see FN 427].

<sup>432</sup> Interview with staff officer and former member of the PRT Faizabad leadership in 2008, Berlin, September 2010.

hardly conduct any significant patrols outside central Badakhshan.<sup>433</sup> Most of the time, the international forces limited their range of operations to areas around the PRT and were rarely seen in the more peripheral parts of the province. By the end of the 2000s, international forces were only rarely attacked in Badakhshan. In October 2012, Faizabad was the first German PRT to be dissolved as part of the 'transition' from ISAF to Afghan government control.<sup>434</sup>

### 5.3.2 Early key leader engagement

Decision makers at the PRT Faizabad started operations just like they had in Kunduz, with limited information on local power structures.<sup>435</sup> They followed the formal hierarchy of power brokers. The Germans first perceived Sardar Khan in his function as commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division as the main actor in Badakhshan. Soon, however, they apparently recognised his rather-limited influence. They also perceived Nazir Mohammad as a decisive actor, since he still had a formal position as 338<sup>th</sup> Brigade commander as well and, in effect, controlling Faizabad, the PRTs location.<sup>436</sup> Until the end of the time under review, the Germans mainly focused their key leader engagement on Nazir. They concentrated so heavily on him that they even used an acronym to facilitate communication, calling him 'NM'.<sup>437</sup>

Nazir did his part to strengthen the perception that he was the most important player in central Badakhshan. Right from the beginning, he threatened the PRT soldiers in interviews with

German journalists to not interfere with his issues and ridiculed them as 'nice' but 'frightened'.<sup>438</sup> He supposedly also presented himself as the most powerful actor of Badakhshan towards a German diplomat who wanted to meet the provincial governor shortly after the PRT was established.<sup>439</sup> According to the PRT's information, Nazir was behind a violent demonstration against international NGOs in Faizabad on 7 September 2004.<sup>440</sup> Eyewitnesses also told journalists that he appeared during the demonstration and fired in the air causing the demonstrators to leave.<sup>441</sup> This was a well-balanced show of force, which PRT decision makers clearly understood.

Stationed in the middle of the city, with only around 85 soldiers with no heavy weapons<sup>442</sup> and no guarantee of air support due to the weather conditions, the Germans did not feel strong enough to risk a major violent confrontation. They were also unsure about how many men Nazir could mobilise; estimates ran from some hundred to a few thousand.<sup>443</sup> In addition, Nazir's men in their

<sup>438</sup> Peter Böhm, 'Afghanischer General verspricht: Deutsche Soldaten werden bei Mission in Faisabad sicher sein', *Welt am Sonntag*, 25 July 2004, 10; Annette Blettner, 'In heikler Mission', *Focus* 39, 2004, 244–5; "'Wir dulden keine Einmischung'", *Focus* 39, 2004, 246; Friedrich Kuhn, 'Aktion Eichhörnchen: Winter steht in Faisabad vor der Tür', *ddp Basisdienst*, 13 October 2004; Susanne Koelbl, 'Zahnlos in Faizabad', *Der Spiegel* 43, 2004, 155.

<sup>439</sup> Christoph Ehrhardt, 'Nicht ohne meine Mudschahedin', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1 December 2011, 3.

<sup>440</sup> Blettner, 'In heikler Mission', [see FN 438], 244–5.

<sup>441</sup> Willi Germund, 'In Faisabad ist die Vergangenheit noch nicht vorbei', *Berliner Zeitung*, 25 September 2004, 7. See also, on Nazir's actions against anti-Western demonstrations: Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 13.

<sup>442</sup> Nachtwei, 'Zur ISAF-Verlängerung . . .', [see FN 91], 4. Later, the PRT received four lightly armoured 'Wiesel' weapon carriers, two with 20-mm cannons and two with Tube Launched Optically Tracked Wire (TOW) anti-tank rockets. The decisive former version, however, had only 350 shots each, not enough to sustain longer battles. Telephone interview with former German officer and member of the leadership of PRT Faizabad who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2006, November 2011.

<sup>443</sup> Winni Nachtwei, 'Beobachtungen beim Besuch der PRTs in Feyzabad und Kunduz am 26.9.2004', 27./30.9.2004, 4, accessed 21 October 2012, [http://www.nachtwei.de/downloads/bericht/feyzabad\\_bericht\\_30092004.pdf](http://www.nachtwei.de/downloads/bericht/feyzabad_bericht_30092004.pdf); Feldmeyer, 'Ruhig, aber nicht stabil . . .', [see FN 436]; Blettner, 'In heikler Mission', [see FN 438], 244–5; Koelbl, 'Zahnlos in Faizabad', [see FN 438], 154–6.

<sup>433</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 50; Stephan Löwenstein, 'Soldaten warnen vor Truppenreduzierung. Königshaus berichtet über Personalmangel in Afghanistan', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 November 2010, 1.

<sup>434</sup> Pressestelle Mazar-e Sharif and PIZ EinsFüKdoBw, 'Übergabe des ISAF Feldlagers Faisabad . . .', [see FN 423].

<sup>435</sup> Decision makers lacked basic knowledge on this region and had to send a fact finding team in January 2004 to gather information on the province's geography. Wohlgethan, *Operation Kunduz* . . ., [see FN 89], 243, 247.

<sup>436</sup> Karl Feldmeyer, 'Ruhig, aber nicht stabil. Beim "Wiederaufbauteam" der Bundeswehr im afghanischen Faizabad', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 September 2004, 3.

<sup>437</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012. See the book of the former PRT commander Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 101, who uses an easy-to-decipher synonym for Nazir and once mistakenly refers to him by the acronym 'NM'.

function as 338<sup>th</sup> AMF Brigade soldiers guarded the PRT.<sup>444</sup> Therefore, the Germans remained passive during the violent demonstration.<sup>445</sup>

### 5.3.3 Focus on Nazir Mohammad

Though the PRT's troop numbers significantly increased during the following years, the German decision makers tried to maintain positive relations with Nazir to avoid conflict and keep peace in central Badakhshan. As discussed in detail below, they used their influence to prevent violence when central state authorities tried to remove Nazir in late 2004. In the same sense, the German PRT commander in charge from 2006 to 2007 stated that Nazir was on an ISAF target list and could have been killed any time by Special Forces. However, he avoided recommending this option to prevent a power vacuum and keep events predictable.<sup>446</sup>

After Nazir's 338<sup>th</sup> AMF Brigade was formally disbanded in early 2005, the Germans decided to employ 30 of his fighters as guards for the PRT to prevent them from causing unrest during the parliamentary elections.<sup>447</sup> Just as with Mir Alam in Kunduz, the PRT's medics provided free medical treatment to Nazir and sometimes his family members to force him to maintain good relations with the internationals. Over the years, his arm, crippled during the civil war, was nearly restored by German medical doctors.<sup>448</sup> PRT officials also invited Nazir for a lavish dinner and gave him and his men presents, such as alcohol and volleyball equipment.<sup>449</sup> When German troops accidentally set a privately owned farm field on fire during live-firing exercises in 2006, Nazir appeared and demanded several thousand US dollars as compensation, which they paid.<sup>450</sup>

Even though Nazir did not have an official position from 2005 to 2010, the PRT officials treated him almost as if he did. In 2005, they regularly invited him to meetings with formal office holders, which usually caused Governor Munshi Abdul Majid to protest. In cases like this they followed up with an additional meeting with Nazir to keep from upsetting him.<sup>451</sup> He was also among those whom the new PRT commanders visited after their arrival in Faizabad.<sup>452</sup> People in the city widely recognised the close connection between the PRT and Nazir.<sup>453</sup> After he had become mayor of Faizabad – the circumstances leading to this appointment will be discussed in more detail below – cooperation between him and the PRT became even easier as the decision makers now could officially liaise and without any concern meet with him in public.<sup>454</sup>

Relations between the PRT and Nazir were not always harmonious, though. From around April 2005 until the end of 2007 the PRT was regularly shelled with rockets or rocket-propelled grenades.<sup>455</sup> As he tried to make the Germans employ more guards from among his followers during the same time, the Germans – and many Afghans – assumed that he had ordered the attacks.<sup>456</sup> It seems, however, this could have been only partly the case since some shots were fired from areas not under his control.<sup>457</sup> In any case, the Germans seem to have reacted to these

<sup>444</sup> Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 99.

<sup>445</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 15. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 15/3908, 12 October 2004, 5–6.

<sup>446</sup> Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 101.

<sup>447</sup> 'Focus on Warlordism . . .', [see FN 361]; telephone interview with former German officer and member of the leadership PRT Faizabad who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2006, November 2011.

<sup>448</sup> Interview with former German-Afghan military translator who served in Badakhshan, December 2012.

<sup>449</sup> Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 101; interview with former German-Afghan military translator who served in Badakhshan, December 2012.

<sup>450</sup> Interview with former German-Afghan military translator who served in Badakhshan, December 2012.

<sup>451</sup> Telephone interview with former German officer and member of the leadership PRT Faizabad who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2006, November 2011.

<sup>452</sup> Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 100.

<sup>453</sup> 'Focus on Warlordism . . .', [see FN 361]; interview with member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, March 2011; interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>454</sup> For instance at the celebrations for the German national holiday on 3 October 2011, as observed by the author.

<sup>455</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 17. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 17/1729, 14 May 2010, 6; 'Afghan Paper Reports Rocket Attack on Northern Airport, No Damage', *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 4 April 2005.

<sup>456</sup> Telephone interview with former German officer and member of the leadership PRT Faizabad who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2006, November 2011; interview with former provincial official of and member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, April 2011; interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011.

<sup>457</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.



attacks by employing more of his men as guards as shown below.<sup>458</sup> In addition, other attacks – partly in Faizabad – conducted so that no international soldier was hit, seem to have been merely a warning and show of force.<sup>459</sup>

From 2008 to 2012, only three attacks against the PRT camp were recorded.<sup>460</sup> During this time, the tensions between the PRT and Nazir seem to have almost completely eased. The internationals, including development agencies, highly appreciated the order and security of central Badakhshan, which stood in sharp contrast to the deteriorated situation in Kunduz.<sup>461</sup> Even though the ISAF forces obtained information that Nazir supported some Taliban – like his cousin Maulawi Abdul Reshad – from time to time and for different purposes, he seemed to generally work against them as he had done prior to 2002.<sup>462</sup> Most internationals therefore saw his rule as the main reason for stability of central Badakhshan.

### 5.3.4 Cooperation with provincial officials

The most important local official for the PRT was Governor Munshi Abdul Majid, who served in this position for most of the PRT's existence. Though earlier research and interviews for this report indicated that he was slightly involved in the drug business, compared to other power brokers, he usually conformed to legal norms. However, as he often did not follow the formal structure – he tried

to strengthen Hezb affiliates in Badakhshan as well as contain the PRT – the Germans also saw him as a problem.<sup>463</sup> Coming from Baghlan, he did not enjoy strong local backing and therefore faced difficulties getting his decisions implemented. Many German representatives thought he was too weak for his position.<sup>464</sup> Deputy Governor Shamsul Rahman, in office the whole time the PRT was in Badakhshan, appeared more disdainful. German officials thought he followed his own agenda outside the formal structure and assumed that he was stockpiling weapons for Rabbani.<sup>465</sup>

Since most police officers in Badakhshan did not follow the official rules and even participated in (illicit) business, the Germans perceived them as corrupt and unreliable.<sup>466</sup> Like Yaqubi in Kunduz, the one major exception was the Soviet-trained professional chief of police, Agha Nur Kentuz, who many internationals saw as a 'shining star'. The Germans praised his police reform and fight against corruption.<sup>467</sup> Coming from Herat, he could not count on strong local backing. Targeted by opponent power brokers, Kentuz survived several assassination attempts, although he was severely wounded. German ISAF forces brought him to the field hospital in Mazar-e Sharif and later also treated him in Faizabad.<sup>468</sup> Once again, an Afghan

<sup>458</sup> See also the anonymous interview with a German soldier by Moritz Schwarz, "Bis zum demokratischen Endsieg", *Junge Freiheit*, 8 June 2007, 3.

<sup>459</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>460</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, 17. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 17/1729, [see FN 455], 6; Presse- und Informationsstab BMVg, 'Afghanistan: Raketenbeschuss in Feyzabad', *bundeswehr.de*, 11 September 2010; 'Genauer hinsehen: (1) Sicherheitsvorfälle AFG-Nord Aug. 2010 – Anfang Mai 2011. Zusammenge stellt von Winfried Nachtwei, MdB a.D.', 2011, 8, accessed 21 October 2012, <http://www.nachtwei.de/downloads/bericht/SicherhVorf-NORD-4-11.pdf>.

<sup>461</sup> Interview with German GIZ official, Faizabad, 27 September 2011.

<sup>462</sup> Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 110, 115; telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012; PRT, '(Threat Report) Other RPT Faizabad', *WikiLeaks. Afghanistan War Logs*, 28 September 2005, accessed 2 October 2013, <http://wardiaries.wikileaks.org/id/77A4CB65-2219-0B3F-9F8968113DAEA857/>.

<sup>463</sup> Interview with staff officer and former member of the PRT Faizabad leadership in 2008, Berlin, September 2010; telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012; Gardizi, Glassner, and Koehler, *EZ Governance* . . ., [see FN 375], 24.

<sup>464</sup> Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 94–5, 173–4.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid., 96; Bundesministerium der Verteidigung Fü S V 3, 'Unterrichtung des Parlamentes 15/06 über die Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr', Bonn, 2006, 2–3, accessed 2 August 2013, <http://afghanistan.derwesten-recherche.org/#!/2006-15-01>; telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>466</sup> Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 97–9; Nachtwei, 'Jenseits der Wagenburgen' . . ., [see FN 426], 13; interview with staff officer and former member of the PRT Faizabad leadership in 2008, Berlin, September 2010.

<sup>467</sup> Interview with staff officer and former member of the PRT Faizabad leadership in 2008, Berlin, September 2010; interview with UN official, January 2013; telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>468</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012; 'Focus on Warlordism' . . ., [see FN

official whom the internationals highly credited could not endure among local power brokers.

### 5.3.5 Dealing with 'warlords'

Because PRT forces mainly operated in the centre of the province, they gathered little information on power brokers in more peripheral regions.<sup>469</sup> Clear perceptions of these actors probably did not exist. One of the major power brokers in the vicinity of the PRT was Mosadeq. Though he had a formal position, the Germans saw him in a less positive light than Nazir due to his heavy involvement in the drug business of the poppy-rich Argo district.<sup>470</sup> The PRT received several reports that Mosadeq, in contrast to Nazir, would cooperate on a regular basis with the Taliban and even support suicide attacks against the international forces.<sup>471</sup> For the PRT, this seemed even more plausible since he belonged to the Hezb. However, they regularly met with him and acknowledged that he usually cooperated with the internationals.<sup>472</sup>

PRT actors perceived Sardar as a relatively positive person since he seemed to interfere only rarely in government politics; as one of the very few commanders he had mostly disarmed during the DDR process and was not known for atrocities.<sup>473</sup> Also Western NGO workers saw him as a 'good

guy'.<sup>474</sup> Sardar, however, remained reluctant and did not want to be seen too often with international forces.<sup>475</sup>

Unintentionally, the Germans took a local power broker out of the game. Khairuddin had a reputation as a very brutal commander and was called 'man eater' since he was said to have bitten the ear of a captive during the jihad. Being one of Najmuddin's former sub-commanders in Warduj, he became independent after Sardar took over command.<sup>476</sup> In early 2007, he attacked a German patrol, which called for air support in self-defence, killing him.<sup>477</sup> The reasons for his behaviour are unknown. Probably he thought that international troops were coming after him. It is hard to assess the impact of his death, but afterward the security situation deteriorated further in Warduj, as elaborated below.

### 5.3.6 Counternarcotic operations in Badakhshan

As mentioned above, aware of the conflicts that could result in a country where a significant part of the population relied on the drug economy, German forces in Afghanistan did not receive a political mandate for counternarcotic operations. Instead, they logistically supported their allies. The Germans ignored the poppy and cannabis fields they encountered in Badakhshan.<sup>478</sup> For the whole

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361]; Bundesministerium der Verteidigung Fü S V 3, 'Unterrichtung des Parlamentes 21/07 über die Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr', Bonn, 2007, 4, accessed 2 August 2013, <http://afghanistan.derwesten-recherche.org/#/2007-21-01>.

<sup>469</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>470</sup> Koelbl, 'Zahnlos in Faizabad', [see FN 438], 156; telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>471</sup> See the threat warning coming from a relatively high-ranked source (C3), which reported good relations between Mosadeq and the Taliban. PRT, '(Threat Report) Attack Threat RPT Faizabad', *WikiLeaks*. *Afghanistan War Logs*, 7 February 2007, accessed 31 July 2013, <http://wikileaks.org/afg/event/2007/02/AFG20070207n604.html>.

<sup>472</sup> Interview with former German-Afghan military translator who served in Badakhshan, 12 December 2012; telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>473</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

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<sup>474</sup> See for instance Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin, *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace – One School at a Time*, New York, Penguin Books 2007, 326–30.

<sup>475</sup> Interview with AAN researcher Fabrizio Foschini, Kabul, December 2012; telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>476</sup> Interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011; interview with AAN researcher Fabrizio Foschini, Kabul, 12 December 2012.

<sup>477</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011; interview with Afghan employees of an international NGO and political activists from Jurm, Faizabad, 29 September 2011; 'PRT Accused of Illegal Excavations in Badakhshan', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 4 March 2007, accessed 18 July 2011, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2007/03/04/prt-accused-illegal-excavations-badakhshan>.

<sup>478</sup> Florian P. Kühn, 'Deutschlands (Nicht-)Drogenpolitik in Afghanistan', *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* 4, 2011, 121–2.

time under review, German decision makers stayed the course in this respect.<sup>479</sup>

Counternarcotic efforts as implemented by the different British, American and Afghan agencies took different forms: eradicating crops, targeting drug traders and producers, or following a comprehensive approach involving economic alternatives for farmers. However, confrontational approaches delegitimised international and Afghan state actors because they destroyed the property of ordinary Afghans. At the same time, the more-consultative measures could not prevent farmers from growing poppies and cannabis, because they were often the most-profitable agricultural products.<sup>480</sup>

In terms of political power relations, counternarcotic efforts had the unintended side-effect of strengthening those actors who were well-connected to state officials in the concerned agencies or who had enough resources to bribe them. They could therefore neutralise competitors, which led to a monopolisation and professionalization of the drug sector.<sup>481</sup> As mentioned above, a prominent actor in this field in the northeast seems to have been General Daud, who, as deputy MoI in charge of counternarcotic operations, protected associates who were trading drugs. In addition, the numerous international actors in this field did not cooperate closely and did not follow a common coherent strategy. In general, the international counternarcotic policy was not able to significantly reduce drug production and trade in the time under review.<sup>482</sup>

<sup>479</sup> In January 2009, the German commander of the NATO Allied Joint Forces Command Brunssum, General Egon Ramms, protested against his superior Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) US General Bantz John Craddock's direction, which ordered for ISAF that all Afghans involved in drug production and trafficking would be legitimate targets. Matthias Gebauer and Susanne Koelbl, 'Drogenbekämpfung in Afghanistan. Tötungsbefehl entsetzt deutsche Politiker', *Spiegel Online*, 29 January 2009, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/drogenbekaempfung-in-afghanistan-toetungsbefehl-entsetzt-deutsche-politiker-a-604369.html>.

<sup>480</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, 'Peacekeepers among Poppies. Afghanistan, Illicit Economies and Intervention', *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 1, 2009, 106–9.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*, 106; Kühn, 'Deutschlands (Nicht-) Drogenpolitik', [see FN 478], 121.

<sup>482</sup> Jonathan Goodhand and David Mansfield, 'Drugs and (Dis)order. A Study of the Opium Economy, Political Settlements and State-Building in Afghanistan', Crisis States Research Centre Working Papers no. 83, *LSE*

The specific effects counternarcotic operations had on Badakhshan are hard to measure. Poppy production greatly decreased from the early 2000s until 2009 but then increased again.<sup>483</sup> Counternarcotic efforts were not necessarily behind these shifts. Fluctuations occurred as a result of market and environmental conditions. When prices were too low, producers often stopped growing, stockpiled their products and waited until demand and therefore prices increased again.<sup>484</sup> Also, in the parts of Badakhshan where poppy cultivation re-emerged after 2009, political actors with connections to the government were powerful.<sup>485</sup>

## 5.4 Power structure since the first presidential elections

### 5.4.1 Distribution of senior state positions before 2006

Rabbani promised to support Karzai prior to the presidential elections of 2004.<sup>486</sup> Rabbani's support seems to have been behind Karzai's appointment of the Rabbani affiliate Sayed Ekramuddin Masumi as provincial governor in March that year.<sup>487</sup> Masumi suspended his post during the elections period to campaign for Karzai.<sup>488</sup> Karzai, however,

*Destin Development Studies Institute*, November 2010, 8–9; Ekaterina Stepanova, 'Illicit Drugs and Insurgency in Afghanistan', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 6, no. 2, 2012, 12.

<sup>483</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Opium Risk Assessment for All Regions (Phase 1&2)*, April 2012, 30; Paul Fishstein, 'A Little Bit Poppy-Free and a Little Bit Eradicated. Opium Poppy Cultivation in Balkh and Badakhshan Provinces in 2011–2012', *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, May 2013, 9–10.

<sup>484</sup> David Mansfield and Adam Pain, 'Evidence from the Field. Understanding Changing Levels of Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan', AREU Briefing Paper Series, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, November 2007, 10–1; Fishstein, 'A Little Bit Poppy-Free . . .', [see FN 483], 9–10.

<sup>485</sup> Adam Pain, 'Opium Poppy Strikes Back. The 2011 Return of Opium in Balkh and Badakhshan Provinces', AREU Case Study Series, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, July 2011, 17.

<sup>486</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 7.

<sup>487</sup> Interview with UN official, January 2013.

<sup>488</sup> '4th Update: Afghan Pres Karzai Running Mate Escapes Attack', *Jones International News*, 6 October 2004.

only came second in Badakhshan with 30.1 per cent of the votes. First was Shura-ye Nazar affiliate Yunos Qanuni with almost 40 per cent, showing his faction's still-strong position in Badakhshan. Third was the leftist Abdul Latif Pedram, who came from this province and received 14.1 per cent of the votes.<sup>489</sup> Right after the elections, Rabbani and Karzai seem to have ended their coalition. Karzai may have been disappointed with election results and Rabbani may have been upset that while his son-in-law Ahmad Zia Massud became vice president, he himself did not receive a special gratification.<sup>490</sup>

Later, Karzai emphasised his strategy to distribute key government positions to (former) Hezb affiliates in Badakhshan to weaken Jamiat. He appointed Munshi Abdul Majid in February 2005. Until the early 1990s, Majid had been a member of Hezb's central committee but left after quarrelling with Hekmatyar, though he maintained his party networks. Later, Majid fought against the Taliban on Massud's side. He originated from Baghlan and either one or both of his parents were Pashtun.<sup>491</sup> His slight connection to Jamiat made him acceptable for those affiliates. Almost like Eng. Omar in Kunduz, he stayed exceptionally long in office, until 2009. Subsequently, Majid was said to have distributed numerous state positions to Hezb followers.<sup>492</sup> Karzai obviously took Shura-ye Nazar's strength into account when he named Shah Jahan Nuri, who had a background in this faction, as provincial chief of police in late 2004.<sup>493</sup> Nazir and Shamsul Rahman became bitter enemies of Majid and worked together to reduce his influence.<sup>494</sup>

<sup>489</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, 'Afghanistan Presidential Election Results – 2004', [see FN 140].

<sup>490</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 10.

<sup>491</sup> Gardizi, Glassner, and Koehler, *EZ Governance . . .*, [see FN 375], 24; telephone interview with former German officer and member of the leadership PRT Faizabad who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2006, November 2011; interview with Ahmadullah Archiwal, researcher and journalist, Kabul, November 2012.

<sup>492</sup> Interview with UN official, January 2013. He was said to have attended a meeting of former senior Hezb power brokers, among them Juma Khan Hamdard, on 5 July 2007 in Ensaf Hotel, Kabul. 'Afghan Paper Reports Meeting of Hezb-e Eslami Members in Kabul', *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 9 July 2007.

<sup>493</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 11.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.

In the 2005 parliamentary elections, Rabbani received most votes in Badakhshan, demonstrating his still-significant influence there. He was followed by Fawzia Kufi, who came from a traditionally influential family from northern Badakhshan and whose relatives occupied important positions in the province. Fluent in English, she successfully positioned herself to Westerners in the coming years as a women's activist.<sup>495</sup> Next were the Karzai supporters Maulawi Aziz, a former Hezb commander,<sup>496</sup> and Zalmay Khan. After his flight to Kabul, the latter had become head of Department 10 of the NDS with Rabbani's support. As this branch was responsible for protecting the president, his post brought him in close contact to Karzai.<sup>497</sup> Before the elections, Karzai chose him as a personal proxy whose power should rest mainly on the support of the president to outbalance Zalmay's former patron Rabbani and the Shura-ye Nazar.<sup>498</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Politics surrounding Nazir Mohammad

In contrast to Rabbani, Nazir openly supported Yunos Qanuni in the 2004 presidential election campaign. He was said to have put the biggest poster of this candidate on Faizabad's main marketplace.<sup>499</sup> During Qanuni's opponent Ahmad Zia Massud's campaign trip to Badakhshan in

<sup>495</sup> Jerome Starkey, 'The Woman Who Wants to Rule Afghanistan', *The Times Magazine*, 21 January 2012, accessed 1 August 2013, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/magazine/article3288331.ece>; Hasnain Kazim, 'Fausia Kufi will 2014 Präsidentin von Afghanistan werden', *Spiegel Online*, 30 May 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/fausia-kufi-will-2014-praesidentin-von-afghanistan-werden-a-834639.html>.

<sup>496</sup> Fabrizio Foschini, 'Campaign Trail 2010 (1): Badakhshan – Drugs, Border Crossings and Parliamentary Seats', *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 19 June 2010, accessed 1 August 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/campaign-trail-2010-1-badakhshan-drugs-border-crossings-and-parliamentary-seats>.

<sup>497</sup> Another connection between them was the Nejat *tanzim*, founded by Sebghatullah Mojaddedi in the 1970s; Karzai was a member. Interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011; Ruttig, 'Islamists, Leftists . . .', [see FN 135], 18.

<sup>498</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 10–1.

<sup>499</sup> Britta Petersen, 'Auf dem Stimmzettel hat jeder ein Symbol', *Financial Times Deutschland*, 23 September 2004, 14.



October 2004, an IED hit the latter's convoy in Faizabad, killing one person and wounding five others, among them governor and Rabbani affiliate Masumi.<sup>500</sup> Since Nazir controlled the provincial capital, he was blamed for this attack, an allegation that, according to some, was confirmed by an official investigation.<sup>501</sup>

In line with Karzai's attempts of that time to sack 'warlords', successful in the case of Ismail Khan in August 2004,<sup>502</sup> he decided together with reformist Minister of Interior Ahmad Ali Jalali to also prosecute Nazir. Jalali sent an ANP unit to Faizabad and ordered Nazir to follow them to Kabul for interrogation. The latter, fearing he might be imprisoned, refused and took defensive measures. Therefore, possibly to prosecute Nazir, the ANP forces, supported by Shamsul Rahman, accused him of having ordered his soldiers to go into position, thereby endangering the security situation. Nazir turned to the PRT representatives who stated that they had not observed any troop movements. The Germans tried to cool the situation and avoid loss of life through violent clashes and a power vacuum in Faizabad that could have been filled by worse actors. In December 2004, the tense situation slowly ended when the ANP ceased attempts to prosecute Nazir.<sup>503</sup> Fahim's support for his client Nazir seems to have been decisive in creating this outcome.<sup>504</sup>

By April 2005, Nazir formally completed the DDR process but it was widely believed that he retained many arms and even traded in weapons.<sup>505</sup> He maintained contacts with his former fighters and helped several to enter the security forces of

Faizabad.<sup>506</sup> Since 2005, he has also distributed positions to his men as guards for the PRT or UN agencies.<sup>507</sup> The number of guards paid by the PRT fluctuated and was given as between 40 and more than 80.<sup>508</sup> According to one guard, each received 420 US dollars per month in 2010.<sup>509</sup> Nazir was said to have received a share of the salaries.<sup>510</sup> As numerous commanders did, he also owned several construction companies that worked for international development organisations. He also redistributed government land in the Faizabad area, using a self-made government stamp to legitimise it.<sup>511</sup>

Nazir tried to formalise his position to gain further influence, though he rejected several posts, which he thought were not high enough for him. He seemed to favour a position as provincial chief of police.<sup>512</sup> In 2005, however, he attempted to run for a seat in the provincial council or in parliament. His candidacy was rejected either by Governor Majid or by the electoral commission. The official reason was that he still commanded a militia and was involved in the drug business but clearly Karzai, and most likely Rabbani, tried to keep him at bay.<sup>513</sup> Since 2006, he has attempted to become mayor of Faizabad but faced Rabbani's

<sup>500</sup> '4th Update. . .', [see FN 488]; 'Pakistan Meddling in Polls: Dostum', *The Nation*, 6 October 2004.

<sup>501</sup> Interview with former provincial official of and member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, 1 April 2011.

<sup>502</sup> Giustozzi, *Empires of Mud* . . ., [see FN 12], 259, 262.

<sup>503</sup> Telephone interview with soldier formerly serving in the intelligence centre of the German Armed Forces, October 2012. In response to accusations that his government might have a problem with corruption during an interview with German journalists, Karzai stated that a nation 'closely befriended to Afghanistan' would have prevented the prosecution of a 'really bad warlord'. Asked if he meant Nazir Mohammad, he did not decline. "'Das ist jenseits meiner Macht'", *Der Spiegel* 23, 2008, 127.

<sup>504</sup> Interview with former provincial official of and member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, April 2011.

<sup>505</sup> 'Light Weapons Still Threat', [see FN 387]; Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 100.

<sup>506</sup> Gardizi, Glassner, and Koehler, *EZ Governance* . . ., [see FN 375], 44; telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>507</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 13.

<sup>508</sup> 'Focus on Warlordism . . .', [see FN 361]; Jochen Stahnke, 'Gut und Böse in vielen Schattierungen', *FAZ.NET*, 21 May 2010; Deutscher Bundestag, 17. Wahlperiode, Drucksache 17/492, 20 January 2010, 7; Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 100.

<sup>509</sup> The guard stated, however, that he would keep his salary. Stahnke, 'Gut und Böse . . .', [see FN 508].

<sup>510</sup> Interview with former provincial official of and member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, 1 April 2011. The latter interviewee stated that Nazir received 50 per cent.

<sup>511</sup> Gardizi, Glassner, and Koehler, *EZ Governance* . . ., [see FN 375], 44; interview with former provincial official of and member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, 1 April 2011; interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011.

<sup>512</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>513</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 12; interview with member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, March 2011; telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

resistance.<sup>514</sup> To compensate for his lack of formal position, he formed a 'people's shura' mainly composed of his followers, to gain further legitimacy especially among the internationals.<sup>515</sup> His fights with Majid culminated in large-scale and partly violent demonstrations with hundreds of participants who in April 2009 gathered in front of the governor's office and demanded the former's removal.<sup>516</sup> As before, the demonstrations were organised by Nazir, lasted for weeks and finally ousted Majid.<sup>517</sup>

### 5.4.3 The rise of Zalmay Mojaddedi

With Karzai's backing, a formal position as member of parliament (MP), his local connections, and the traditional legitimacy of his family, Zalmay greatly extended his power after the 2005 elections. Through his connections to Kabul he influenced the distribution of district positions and concentrated on the southeastern districts, especially his power base, Jurm.<sup>518</sup> He was said to have named the district chiefs of police of Baharak, Jurm, Koran wa Munjan, and Yamgan in May 2007.<sup>519</sup> He also influenced appointments in Khash, Shohada, Wakhan, Zebak, and those of the district governors and chiefs of police in Ishkashim and Warduj.<sup>520</sup> He allegedly appointed the heads of all 27 provincial administration departments, who were in position by early 2008.<sup>521</sup>

According to some researchers, Zalmay's economic base reportedly partly rested on controlling drug

production and trafficking.<sup>522</sup> He was said to have influenced the appointment of the commanders of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> ABP Battalions, Rahmanuddin and Abdul Wahid Khan, stationed at the important border crossing points in Khwakhsh and Ishkashim.<sup>523</sup> Zalmay allegedly also had a business relationship with former Hezb commander Qari Abdul Wodud.<sup>524</sup> The latter was chief of police of Baharak district for a few years until at least 2008 and later took the same position for Shohada district, where his main power base was.<sup>525</sup> From his position, he was able to control the trafficking to the Tajik border in Ishkashim.<sup>526</sup> Zalmay also gained control of the lapis lazuli mine in the Sar-e Sang area of Kuran wa Munjan through his brother Assadullah, who commanded the local mine police force.<sup>527</sup> The latter, however, faced resistance from the local chief of police and Shura-ye Nazar affiliate Abdul Malik and their forces frequently clashed.<sup>528</sup> By 2007, Assadullah seems to have gotten the upper hand, but the mine remained contested.<sup>529</sup>

Though Karzai intended to use him as a proxy in Badakhshan, most observers judge that Zalmay did

<sup>514</sup> Schwitalla, *Afghanistan* . . ., [see FN 424], 102.

<sup>515</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>516</sup> Jafar Tayar, 'Anti-Governor Protest Held in Badakhshan', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 6 April 2009, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Anti-governor+protest+held+in+Badakhshan.-a0197391193>.

<sup>517</sup> Interview with Afghan UNAMA official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011; interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011.

<sup>518</sup> Interview with former provincial official of and member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, April 2011.

<sup>519</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 13.

<sup>520</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011; email communication with former UN official, May 2013.

<sup>521</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 11, 13.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid., 12; Thomas Ruttig, 'Afghan Politicking after the Rebellion in Tajik Badakhshan' (amended), *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 16 August 2012, accessed 25 October 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/afghan-politicking-after-the-rebellion-in-tajik-badakhshan-amended>.

<sup>523</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>524</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>525</sup> Cole Hansen, Christian Denny, and Idrees Zaman, *Conflict Analysis: Baharak District, Badakhshan Province, Cooperation for Peace and Unity*, February 2009, 9; Avaz Yuldoshev, 'Afghan Regional Security Force Commander Detained in Connection with the Khorog Events', *Asia-Plus*, 1 August 2012. Qari Wodud was said to have caused several security incidents after his dismissal. Pain, 'Opium Poppy Strikes Back . . .', [see FN 485], 20.

<sup>526</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012.

<sup>527</sup> Interviews with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011; with UN official, January 2013; interview with member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>528</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>529</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 12; interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011; Jafar Tayar, '16 Armed Men Detained in Badakhshan', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 3 March 2011, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/03/03/16-armed-men-detained-badakhshan>.

not effectively fulfil this function and mainly worked for his own benefit.<sup>530</sup> The result of the 2009 elections, as discussed below, also demonstrated that Zalmay, who ran Karzai's campaign in Badakhshan, could not deliver as promised. This may also be because his local power base was not that strong and was largely derived from Karzai's support.<sup>531</sup>

Sardar Khan was widely recognised as the only major commander of Badakhshan who to a large degree complied with the disarmament process and government appointments.<sup>532</sup> However, he certainly kept some weapons and relations to his former fighters. His political aspirations were obviously not high. Zalmay, who actively worked for his interests, therefore reduced Sardar's influence in the southeastern and central eastern parts of Badakhshan.<sup>533</sup> Sardar's decline in power should be seen as starting earlier since he never actually filled the position as 29<sup>th</sup> Division commander. He was not without political ambitions as his candidature for the 2010 elections demonstrated, though.

#### 5.4.4 Distribution of senior state positions before 2011

After the 2005 elections, the political distance between Rabbani and Karzai increased so much that the former came to an agreement with Qanuni in December that year. The following year, Rabbani participated in founding the opposition coalition National United Front (NUF).<sup>534</sup> Karzai's appointments of provincial chiefs of police seem to reflect this further shift, since he did not acknowledge Rabbani affiliates that much. In June 2006, Imamudin, a former follower of Massud, received this position. About half a year later, in January 2007, Karzai replaced him with the

professional police officer Agha Nur Kentuz.<sup>535</sup> However, key officials loyal to Rabbani, as the deputy governor, remained in place.<sup>536</sup> From summer 2006 to March 2007 Karzai was said to have replaced numerous Jamiat affiliates of both factions with those of Hezb and Zalmay.<sup>537</sup>

Karzai chose Fahim as one of his running mates for the 2009 election instead of Rabbani's son-in-law Ahmad Zia Massud. Rabbani obviously played a marginal role. This also became evident in Karzai's decision on the successor for Provincial Governor Majid. As a concession to Fahim, Karzai appointed Shura-ye Nazar commander of Kishim district, Baz Mohammad Ahmadi, said to be close to Nazir and an opponent of Rabbani, as the new governor. But Ahmadi left Badakhshan the next year to become deputy minister of counternarcotics.<sup>538</sup>

Rabbani and his affiliate Basir Khaled – now an elder in Faizabad<sup>539</sup> – therefore supported Abdullah during the presidential elections.<sup>540</sup> The main supporter of Karzai's campaign in Badakhshan seems to have been Zalmay, whom Abdullah accused of giving false promises to the people in Badakhshan and using government

<sup>535</sup> Interview with UN official, January 2013.

<sup>536</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 11. Before the Karzai government, authorities had already decided to subdivide the 13 districts of Badakhshan into 27 to again create new positions on this level. Strategic Monitoring Unit, 'Badakhshan', [see FN 358], map. At latest, between 2004 and 2007 this was put into practice, making it possible to distribute more positions to clients. See 'A Guide to Government . . .', [see FN 405], 9, FN 1–2. The Liaison Office (The Liaison Office, 'Sub-National Governance . . .', [see FN 151], 50) claims that the districts were divided in 2005. Accounts on the exact time that the new districts were officially acknowledged vary greatly. Also, some count Faizabad as a district and others just as a municipality. There is evidence that in 2009 the district reform was not yet acknowledged. Gardizi, Glassner, and Koehler, *EZ Governance* . . ., [see FN 375], 30–1; Hansen, Denny, and Zaman, *Conflict Analysis: Baharak* . . ., [see FN 525], 5, FN 1.

<sup>537</sup> Foschini, 'Campaign Trail 2010 (1) . . .', [see FN 496].

<sup>538</sup> Interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011; interview with Afghan UNAMA official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011; interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>539</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>540</sup> Humayoon, 'Re-election of Hamid Karzai', [see FN 26], 17–8, 21.

<sup>530</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 12; interview with former provincial official of and member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, April 2011.

<sup>531</sup> Interview with member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>532</sup> Hansen, Denny, and Zaman, *Conflict Analysis: Baharak* . . ., [see FN 525], 17; interview with Afghan UNAMA official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011, and interviews with Afghan employees of an international NGO and political activists from Jurm, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>533</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 9, 12.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*, 10; Ruttig, 'Islamists, Leftists . . .', [see FN 135], 21.

helicopters.<sup>541</sup> In addition, Fawzia Kufi supported Karzai. Abdullah focussed on his connection to Massud during his campaign trip to Badakhshan<sup>542</sup> and finally achieved the best result in the province with 50 per cent of the votes, while Karzai received 34 per cent.<sup>543</sup>

In the 2010 parliamentary election, Badakhshan was one province where serious fraud was revealed during the elections.<sup>544</sup> That Zalmay received most votes in Badakhshan reflects his powerful position. He was followed by Fawzia Kufi, al-Haj Safiullah Moslem, and Pedram. Despite his recognition among the local population, Sardar Khan was not elected.<sup>545</sup> He may have lost the support of the people or not had the means to defend his ballot box – both indicating a decline in power.

#### 5.4.5 Appointments following the 2010 elections

After the 2010 parliamentary election, Karzai moved away from Shura-ye Nazar and again turned to Rabbani. As mentioned above, he appointed him as head of the High Peace Council (HPC). This helped Karzai legitimise the HPC, dominated by Pashtuns and non-Jamiat affiliates, and prevented Rabbani from opposing it.<sup>546</sup> Another reason may have been the aggressive Shura-ye Nazar appointment policy of Bismillah and Daud in their functions as minister of interior and Northern Zone police chief, described above. However, since late 2010, the power balance in Badakhshan slightly turned in favour of the Shura-ye Nazar faction.

In this sense, Bismillah successfully pushed Karzai to appoint Panjshiri and former Shura-ye Nazar commander Abdul Sabur Nasrati as chief of police

in late 2010. Bismillah and Daud also replaced most district chiefs of police, often with loyalists of their home provinces Panjshir and Takhar.<sup>547</sup> In June 2011, former Badakhshan governor and Shura-ye Nazar affiliate, Ahmadi, now deputy minister for counternarcotics, together with Provincial Chief of Police Sabur, announced that his men had caught the brother of Rabbani affiliate Fawzia Kufi, Hedayatullah, trafficking opium.<sup>548</sup> Since Hedayatullah was a counternarcotic police officer in Badakhshan and therefore could easily exterminate rivals in the drug business, this was a severe blow to this faction.

By January 2011, 19 of 27 district chiefs of police were thought to be affiliated with Shura-ye Nazar and only 3 to Rabbani. More district governors, however, were said to follow the latter, numbering 13 in contrast to two for Shura-ye Nazar. The next biggest faction was Hezb, with five district governors and just two chiefs of police. Zalmay's followers were said to count only three district governors and one district chief of police.<sup>549</sup> The latter appeared to strike back in late 2010 or early 2011 by attempting to have Shura-ye Nazar affiliate Malik replaced as chief of police of Koran wa Munjan, but Fahim reportedly saved him and tried to remove Zalmay's brother Assadullah.<sup>550</sup> In March 2011, several of Malik's fighters were prosecuted due to their fights with rival commander Abdul Nasir.<sup>551</sup>

To contain the Shura-ye Nazar in Badakhshan, Karzai appointed Dr Shah Waliullah Adib, who seems to have been a follower of Rabbani, as provincial governor in October 2010. Being an academic rather than a commander, he is, however, weak and largely passive.<sup>552</sup> In late 2010, Fahim helped Nazir Mohammad to become mayor of Faizabad, thereby fulfilling his goal of receiving a

<sup>541</sup> Tolo TV, 'Karzai Accused of Giving "False Promises" to Afghan Electorate', *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, 19 June 2009.

<sup>542</sup> Pamela Constable, 'Votes in Afghan Province Could Turn on Loss of Poppies', *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 21 July 2009, A1.

<sup>543</sup> Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, 'Presidential & Provincial Council Elections Afghanistan 2009 Elections. Badakhshan Final Certified Presidential Results', 21 October 2009, accessed 9 October 2013, [http://www.iec.org.af/results\\_2009/P14.html](http://www.iec.org.af/results_2009/P14.html).

<sup>544</sup> Van Bijlert, 'Untangling Afghanistan's 2010 Vote', [see FN 178], 19.

<sup>545</sup> Foschini, 'A Thin Line . . .', [see FN 393].

<sup>546</sup> Ruttig, 'The Ex-Taliban . . .', [see FN 332], 1, 4, FN 4; International Crisis Group, 'Talking about Talks . . .', [see FN 320], 26.

<sup>547</sup> Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh, *Policing Afghanistan . . .*, [see FN 132], 105.

<sup>548</sup> Farid Tanha, 'MPs' Brother, Friends Held with Drugs', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 7 June 2011, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2011/06/07/mps-brother-friends-held-drugs>.

<sup>549</sup> Interview with TLO researcher, Kabul, March 2011.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid.

<sup>551</sup> Tayar, '16 Armed Men Detained . . .', [see FN 529].

<sup>552</sup> Interview with Afghan security analyst from Badakhshan, Faizabad, October 2011; interview with German GIZ official, Faizabad, September 2011; The Liaison Office, 'Sub-National Governance . . .', [see FN 151], 48.



formal position.<sup>553</sup> Officially legitimised and facing a weak governor, Nazir demonstrated that he was still the most powerful actor in central Badakhshan. In August 2012, his followers got into a fire fight with the bodyguards of Provincial Chief of Police Sabur, which injured several people.<sup>554</sup> Sabur left the province in December 2012 or January 2013, which may also show Nazir's strength.

A Taleban suicide attacker killed Rabbani in September 2011 in his Kabul house. His son Salahuddin received the post of HPC head afterwards, and the resources stemming from the HPC budget remained in the family and could continue to fuel the existing clientele networks. The constellation with Karzai using somebody from the Rabbani family as a northern ally remained the same, too.<sup>555</sup> After all, Rabbani's death does not seem to have changed much, since his position had already been declining and his legitimacy damaged through his decision to join Karzai again.<sup>556</sup>

After security forces held an operation in Tajikistan against smugglers at the border to Badakhshan, the NDS prosecuted Qari Wodud in August 2012, stating that he was involved in illicit actions connected with Tajik-Afghan border smuggling.<sup>557</sup> He was released, however, a few months afterwards.<sup>558</sup> In September 2013, he became chief of police of Baharak district again.<sup>559</sup> Shortly before Wodud's replacement, Abdul Wahid, who, along with Wodud, allegedly dominated the drug trade

on the eastern Badakhshan border, was shifted to Takhar. Since both were connected to Zalmay, these moves could be interpreted as strikes against him. In line with this, Zalmay most likely supported the impeachment of Bismillah, which took place two weeks later.<sup>560</sup> However, it was evident that Shura-ye Nazar had become the strongest faction of Badakhshan in late 2012.

## 5.5 The Badakhshan insurgency

### 5.5.1 Characteristics of the insurgency

Though Taleban coming from Pakistan infiltrated Badakhshan, the movement was much less active in this province than elsewhere. More often, it seems that power brokers blamed insurgents for attacks against competitors, especially when the latter held government offices. However, as already pointed out, Badakhshan had a history of Taleban involvement and some armed groups definitely received support or were even integrated into the Taleban command structure.<sup>561</sup>

Insurgent activities grew in 2006, though on a low level, and increased in 2010 until the end of the time under review.<sup>562</sup> Geographically, they were strongest in the districts of Argo, Darayim, Kishem, and Warduj. Since these districts, except for Warduj, were Hezb strongholds<sup>563</sup> – reasons for insurgent support in the latter district have been discussed above – armed groups affiliated with the Taleban seem to have acted in response to traditional conflicts for power in Badakhshan rather than wider Taleban aims.<sup>564</sup> The violence in Warduj can also be related to the actions of Chief of Police Assadullah, who received his position with the help of Zalmay in 2006. Just after he started to pursue his rivals, the security situation deteriorated.<sup>565</sup> Another example is the deadly

<sup>553</sup> Reuter, 'Rezept für den Bürgerkrieg . . .', [see FN 194], 94–8; interview with Afghan UNAMA official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>554</sup> Foschini, 'A Thin Line . . .', [see FN 393].

<sup>555</sup> Gran Hewad, 'A Second Rabbani Takes the Helm at the High Peace Council', *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 17 April 2012, accessed 1 August 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/a-second-rabbani-takes-the-helm-at-the-high-peace-council>.

<sup>556</sup> Pain, 'Opium Poppy Strikes Back . . .', [see FN 485], 19; interview with Afghan UNODC official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011; interviews with Afghan employees of an international NGO and political activists from Jurm, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>557</sup> Yuldoshev, 'Afghan Regional Security Force . . .', [see FN 525].

<sup>558</sup> Fishstein (Fishstein, 'A Little Bit Poppy-Free . . .', [see FN 483], 23) claims that he became the chief of police of Jurm district.

<sup>559</sup> Email communication with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, October 2013.

<sup>560</sup> Foschini, 'A Thin Line . . .', [see FN 393]; Fabrizio Foschini, 'Parliament Sacks Key Ministers. Two Birds with One Stone?', *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 6 August 2012, accessed 1 August 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/parliament-sacks-key-ministers-two-birds-with-one-stone>.

<sup>561</sup> Giustozzi and Reuter, 'Insurgents of the Afghan North . . .', [see FN 157], 49–51.

<sup>562</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 13.

<sup>563</sup> Interview with Afghan UNODC official from Badakhshan, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>564</sup> Foschini, 'A Thin Line . . .', [see FN 393]. See also Pain, 'Opium Poppy Strikes Back . . .', [see FN 485], 18, FN 54.

<sup>565</sup> Foschini, 'A Thin Line . . .', [see FN 393].

attacks against the drug eradication police in Darayim in spring 2010. These appeared to be a conflict over poppy rather than an ideological struggle.<sup>566</sup>

The specific character of the Badakhshan insurgency becomes evident in the nature of insurgent operations. In several cases, insurgents captured ANP officers but released them after negotiations. This demonstrates, in contrast to Kunduz, the high degree of interdependence between insurgents and powerbrokers in Badakhshan. Because of this, policemen obviously did not expect to be killed and surrendered even to Taliban.<sup>567</sup> In one case in Warduj, the Taliban even executed several ANSF members hailing from southern provinces since nobody interceded for them; at the same time they released the local ones.<sup>568</sup>

### 5.5.2 International operations and escalation

On their patrols to the accessible parts of Badakhshan, the PRT forces were attacked many times.<sup>569</sup> However, the attackers usually remained anonymous. Usually, the Germans thought that they had interfered with 'drug lords' or that people were trying to pressure for further developmental

aid.<sup>570</sup> As in Kunduz, locals generally seem to welcome German attempts to prevent 'collateral damage'.<sup>571</sup> However, since the PRT forces cooperated with district officials, the opponents of the latter saw the internationals as accomplices and attacked them. After 2007, the Germans became more proactive in Badakhshan. Their strategic aims, however, were often unclear and their means were limited on to the difficult terrain.<sup>572</sup>

As attacks on PRT forces intensified, German Special Forces captured the most-active Taliban commander of Warduj's Tirgaran area, Mullah Abdul Razeq, in May 2009 and handed him over to the central government.<sup>573</sup> He managed, however, to be set free in late 2010 and returned to reactivate his networks.<sup>574</sup> After summer 2011, US Special Forces intensified their hunt for Taliban and IMU commanders. Sometimes they did not inform German field commanders in advance,<sup>575</sup> of their operations in Argo, Keshem, and Warduj. According to media reports and press releases, dozens of insurgents were killed, including one of

<sup>566</sup> Pain, 'Opium Poppy Strikes Back . . .', [see FN 485], 18.

<sup>567</sup> Mohammad N. Saheed, '30 ANP Taken Hostage, Their Ammunition and Weapons Seized by Taliban: Badakhshan', *Larawbar*, 14 July 2011; BMVg Presse- und Informationsstab, 'Aktuelle Lage in den Einsatzgebieten der Bundeswehr 44/11', 14 December 2011, 3; '3 Killed, 11 Missing in Check Post Attack in NE. Afghanistan', *Xinhua*, 26 April 2012, 22 October 2013, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/xinhua/2012-04-26/content\\_5774722.html](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/xinhua/2012-04-26/content_5774722.html). Local Taliban leaders condemned the widely recognised killing of ten Western aid workers in Koran wa Munjan district in August 2010 and stated that it was perpetrated by foreigners. Kate Clark, 'Ten Dead in Badakhshan 5: Condemnation from a Taleb: Silence from the Palace', *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 17 August 2010, accessed 1 August 2013, <http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/ten-dead-in-badakhshan-5-condemnation-from-a-taleb-silence-from-the-palace>.

<sup>568</sup> Interview with AAN researcher Fabrizio Foschini, Kabul, December 2012.

<sup>569</sup> For 2009, evidence for ten attacks against German forces in Badakhshan can be found in open-source material. Since no attacks against the PRT were recorded, they must have been directed against patrols. Wätzel and Krause, 'Das deutsche Engagement . . .', [see FN 269], 322.

<sup>570</sup> Telephone interview with former German human intelligence officer who served in Badakhshan from 2005 to 2008, August 2012; interview with staff officer and former member of the PRT Faizabad leadership in 2008, Berlin, September 2010.

<sup>571</sup> Interviews with Afghan employees of an international NGO and political activists from Jurm, Faizabad, September 2011.

<sup>572</sup> The first big operation in Badakhshan was called 'Naiad Kuistani III' – parts I and II did not take place due to unfavourable weather conditions – and took place in August 2007 in the south and southeast and mainly served the purpose of cooperating with the ANA. Since all district governors and police chiefs were informed in advance it could not be expected that the insurgents were caught by surprise. See, for a description of the operation: Sascha Brinkmann, 'Corporate Mission – Operation Naiad Kuistani III. Gelebte Multinationalität im Einsatz: Das FschJgBtl 313 in Afghanistan', *Der deutsche Fallschirmjäger* 2, 2008, 20–3.

<sup>573</sup> Matthias Gebauer and Alexander Szandar, 'Schlag gegen Taliban: Deutsche Elitesoldaten fassen mutmaßlichen Terror-Drahtzieher in Afghanistan', *Spiegel Online*, 7 May 2009, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/schlag-gegen-taliban-deutsche-elitesoldaten-fassen-mutmasslichen-terror-drahtzieher-in-afghanistan-a-623448.html>.

<sup>574</sup> Interview with former provincial official of and member of parliament for Badakhshan, Kabul, April 2011.

<sup>575</sup> Interview with German officer at PRT Faizabad, Faizabad, September 2011.

the senior Taliban commanders of Badakhshan, Qari Shamsuddin, and 17 insurgents were captured, including six commanders and four facilitators.<sup>576</sup> The targeting campaign seems to have convinced a large insurgent group of about 110 fighters in Darayim to switch sides shortly after US operations intensified in August 2011. Similarly, it apparently convinced one of 20 Taliban in Shahr-e Bozorg to switch sides in April 2012 after Shamsuddin was killed.<sup>577</sup> In December 2011, a large German force accompanied Afghan security forces during negotiations over captured policemen in Warduj; their support seems to have persuaded the insurgents to release their hostages.<sup>578</sup>

However, the Taliban strengthened their efforts and increasingly used suicide attackers – rarely

encountered in Badakhshan before – killing a police commander in Keshem in April 2012.<sup>579</sup> Insurgents in the Taliban strongholds did not give up but started to massively attack the security forces' checkpoints.<sup>580</sup> In September 2012 they even temporarily captured the district centre of Warduj.<sup>581</sup> In their most violent attack so far, the Taliban killed 16 of the 22 ANA soldiers they had taken as hostages in Warduj in March 2013, though they released the other six.<sup>582</sup> The following joint Afghan-ISAF operation, supported by German forces, reportedly killed 43 Taliban.<sup>583</sup> American targeting operations therefore seem to have escalated power struggles since they relentlessly hunted down one party of the conflict and thereby ended a way of resolving conflicts that was usually violent, but mostly ended with compromise.

In contrast to Kunduz, due to the low level of insurgent activity in Badakhshan, official militia programmes did not play a significant role. In two of the districts with substantial insurgent presence, Keshem and Warduj, local authorities applied for 100 and 150 ALP positions, respectively. They also applied for 100 positions in Shahr-e Bozorg district,

<sup>576</sup> 'Two Uzbekistan Citizens Detained in Badakhshon', *Suboot News Agency*, 22 August 2011, accessed 22 October 2013, [http://eng.suboot.org.af/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=540:two-uzbekistan-citizens-detained-in-badakhshon&catid=1:afghanistan&Itemid=4](http://eng.suboot.org.af/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=540:two-uzbekistan-citizens-detained-in-badakhshon&catid=1:afghanistan&Itemid=4); Bill Roggio, 'Special Operations Forces Hunt IMU's Top Commander in Afghan Northeast', *The Long War Journal*, 14 September 2011, accessed 22 October 2013, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/09/special\\_operations\\_f\\_8.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/09/special_operations_f_8.php); ISAF Joint Command, 'Morning Operational Update, Nov. 7, 2011', accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/isaf-joint-command-morning-operational-update-nov.-7-2011.html>; ISAF Joint Command, 'Evening Operational Update, December 31, 2011', accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/article/isaf-releases/isaf-joint-command-evening-operational-update-december-31-2011.html>; Marif Shafi, 'Explosives, Suicide Vests Recovered from Faizabad House', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 8 March 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2012/03/08/explosives-suicide-vests-recovered-faizabad-house>. One operation was reported in August 2010. ISAF Joint Command, 'News Release. Afghan Commandos, US forces Destroy Weapons Cache in Badakhshan', 27 August 2010, accessed 22 October 2013, [http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/stories/File/Aug2010/2010-08-CA-290\\_-\\_Afghan\\_Commandos\\_US\\_forces\\_destroy\\_weapons\\_cache\\_in\\_Badakhshan.pdf](http://www.isaf.nato.int/images/stories/File/Aug2010/2010-08-CA-290_-_Afghan_Commandos_US_forces_destroy_weapons_cache_in_Badakhshan.pdf).

<sup>577</sup> '110 Insurgents Surrender to Afghan Gov't', *Xinhua*, 25 August 2011, accessed 22 October 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-08/25/c\\_131074270.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-08/25/c_131074270.htm); '20 Taliban Militants Lay Down Arms in Afghanistan', *Xinhua*, 18 April 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-04/18/c\\_131535545.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-04/18/c_131535545.htm).

<sup>578</sup> BMVg Presse- und Informationsstab, 'Aktuelle Lage . . .', [see FN 567], 3; BMVg Presse- und Informationsstab, 'Aktuelle Lage in den Einsatzgebieten der Bundeswehr 45/11', 21 December 2011, 3.

<sup>579</sup> 'Suspected Suicide Bomber Reported Arrested in Afghan North', *Afghan Islamic Press*, 27 August 2011; 'Suicide Bomber Kills Two in Northern Afghan Town', *Xinhua*, 5 April 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-04/05/c\\_131509218.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-04/05/c_131509218.htm).

<sup>580</sup> '3 Killed, 11 Missing . . .', [see FN 567]; Tanha, 'ANA Soldier, 5 Militants killed in Badakhshan Clash', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 16 May 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2012/05/16/ana-soldier-5-militants-killed-badakhshan-clash>; Farid Tanha, '8 Policemen, 6 Rebels Dead in Badakhshan Clash', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 30 May 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2012/05/30/8-policemen-6-rebels-dead-badakhshan-clash>.

<sup>581</sup> Zahin, 'Taliban Claim Capturing Wardoj District', *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 29 September 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.pajhwok.com/en/2012/09/29/taliban-claim-capturing-wardoj-district>.

<sup>582</sup> Rod Nordland, 'Taliban Kill 17 Afghan Soldiers in Once-Quiet Region', *New York Times*, 7 March 2013, A6.

<sup>583</sup> Ghanizada, 'Heavy Clashes in Wardoj District Leaves 43 Taliban Dead', *Khaama Press*, 22 March 2013, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.khaama.com/heavy-clashes-in-wardoj-district-leaves-43-taliban-dead-2301>; Matthias Gebauer and Shoib Najafizada, 'Gefechte in Afghanistan. Bundeswehr kehrt nach Badakhshan zurück', *Der Spiegel*, 29 March 2013; Department of Defense, *Report on Progress toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan*, July 2013, 28.

where a Taliban group surrendered in April 2012 – see above – and the following month an armed group said to have Taliban ties, kidnapped four Afghan and international aid workers.<sup>584</sup> Zalmay was said to have encouraged the establishment of the ALP unit in Warduj, probably to strengthen his client, the District Chief of Police Assadullah. As of late 2012, however, no decision had been made about this.<sup>585</sup>

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the post-2001 international military intervention did not significantly change the power structure of Kunduz and Badakhshan provinces. Rather, it affected the mode in which the actors dealt with each other, and it strengthened some pre-2002 trends. Mostly, local power brokers, who were by majority (former) commanders, determined the result of the power struggles. German decision makers avoided interfering in political conflicts and usually followed a legalistic ideal, which determined that they should cooperate with the Afghan officials in charge. In contrast to other nations, with few exceptions they mostly also did not actively influence the power structure. The Americans, in contrast, were more active on this field but focused on fighting the insurgency at first, partly relying on local power brokers to achieve their ends. Due to the Americans limited time in the northeast, besides fighting the insurgents, they did not develop a strategy to comprehensively influence the local power structure even though they were more active in this regard in southern and eastern Afghanistan. As a result, though some slight changes occurred, the international forces actually cemented the local power structure as of late 2001, tending to strengthen those in major positions.

### 6.1 Failed centralisation of rule

Karzai did not bring Badakhshan and Kunduz completely under his control during the time under review. However, in Badakhshan where the Jamiat

*tanzim* enjoyed its strongest support, he succeeded in preventing his Jamiat opponents from monopolising political power by playing Jamiatis against each other and by appointing Hezb affiliates for key positions. In the same way, Karzai also prevented Jamiat from dominating Kunduz. Mainly American but also other international funds allowed the Afghan president to run the central state apparatus and to win the allegiance of opposing political actors. However, the international forces did not actively support his monopolisation of power in the cases of Kunduz and Badakhshan. They more-frequently cooperated with factions that usually competed with him than with his local clients. The major reason was that Karzai's opponents – to differing degrees – dominated the northeast and therefore occupied most official positions, allowing them to exert the most power. The internationals generally preferred to cooperate with these types of officials. In addition, Karzai's local clients in the northeast often belonged to Hezb, a party that also had connections to the insurgency. The internationals therefore tended to avoid its members.

In Kunduz, the power structure remained as fragmented as before the Taliban period, with former commanders and other affiliates of Jamiat, Hezb, and few of Ittehad/Dawat in the strongest positions and with no single actor powerful enough to rule the largest part of the province. The situation after the conquest of Kunduz through the United Islamic Front changed significantly: the senior military Taliban leadership was eliminated and many – though by far not all – of their mainly Pashtun supporters lost their positions in the state apparatus. However, the major economic and political supporters of the Taliban remained in place. The basic distribution of power and its interdependencies – on which the rule of the Taliban rested – remained intact.

Looking at how the major district positions were distributed, it becomes clear that the Jamiat networks generally remained the strongest in Kunduz – except for in Imam Sahib. Facilitated by international counterinsurgency efforts, Jamiat's Shura-ye Nazar faction received a boost shortly before the end of the time under review. All in all, however, Karzai's policy of appointing affiliates of competing factions prevented the Jamiatis from establishing an overwhelming dominance. In some parts, such as Imam Sahib district, they were even weak. His attempt to align with the next bigger group, Hezb, was in this regard successful. However, since the major Hezb power brokers, the Ibrahimis, acted relatively independently and were limited to their district, they did not enable Karzai

<sup>584</sup> Department of Defense, *Report on Progress* . . . December 2012, [see FN 317], 81; Sean Rayment, 'How the British Hostages Were Rescued in Afghanistan', *The Telegraph*, 3 June 2012, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/9307833/How-the-British-hostages-were-rescued-in-Afghanistan.html>.

<sup>585</sup> Foschini, 'A Thin Line . . .', [see FN 393].



to rule the province. Rather, in light of the election results of 2009, he lost grip of Kunduz. The internationals cooperated very well with some of his political opponents such as Daud in the early phase of the intervention and with the, mostly Jamiat, security officials in general. As the insurgency became stronger, this relationship improved. In contrast, the Germans were at odds with long-term Governor Eng. Omar who was appointed by Karzai, but they did not manage to replace him.

Jamiat affiliates dominated Badakhshan province, but were split into Shura-ye Nazar and Rabbani followers. Early coalitions between Karzai and Rabbani did not help either to significantly extend their rule. One could therefore observe a long-term decline of the power of Rabbani and his followers. Even though Karzai's strategy to completely outbalance power brokers of the Shura-ye Nazar faction in Badakhshan with those close to Hezb did not pay off, they kept significant fiefdoms in their hands. As already pointed out by Antonio Giustozzi and Dominique Orsini, the president's Jamiat proxy, Zalmay, did not help him control Badakhshan since the latter worked for his own benefit in the first place. At least he served as an obstacle to Karzai's competitors.<sup>586</sup>

Karzai's measures initially considerably weakened Shura-ye Nazar affiliates in Badakhshan. However, in the centre region of the province, Nazir Mohammad, who occupied the provincial capital, a place decisive for interaction with internationals, remained in the strongest position despite all efforts to oust him. In fact, the Shura-ye Nazar faction as a whole in Badakhshan decisively recovered after it received important government positions from Bismillah Khan and Daud from 2010 to 2011. Even Zalmay was severely weakened. In the end, facilitated by Rabbani's death, the Shura-ye Nazar became the strongest faction again, contributing to a clear Jamiat dominance of the province. The most-recent line of contest seems to run between Shura-ye Nazar affiliates from Badakhshan and those from other provinces.<sup>587</sup>

The German-led PRT's soft approach regarding Nazir Mohammad, meant to keep the situation in the provincial capital calm, clearly helped him sustain his power and eventually oust the Hezb governor as well as formalise his own position. The PRT also unintentionally strengthened his faction in

Badakhshan, the Shura-ye Nazar. In effect, large parts of the populace perceived the internationals as being partial. The PRT's negative stance towards the Hezb enemies of Nazir strengthened this impression. In addition, the fight against 'insurgents' in Badakhshan, supported by US forces, was at the same time a fight against the opponents of Jamiat rule and therefore benefitted this group. As affiliates of this *tanzim* clearly dominated Badakhshan, however, supporting another group would have alienated an even bigger part of the population.

## 6.2 Changes in the nature of power struggles

Through their mere presence, international military forces successfully prevented large-scale clashes between rivalling commanders. In a wider sense, the funds channelled in different forms by Western civil and military actors to Kunduz and Badakhshan also helped to establish this stability among non-insurgent actors. Since many former commanders and other power brokers financially profited significantly from the international presence, they had an interest in sustaining it. Therefore, they prevented their sub-commanders from establishing too many road blocks to 'tax' the population.<sup>588</sup> Though to a lesser degree in mountainous Badakhshan, the international forces most likely reduced the number of illegal checkpoints through their mere presence, too. This, however, did not mean that the population was no longer illegally 'taxed'. Instead, 'taxation' became limited to fewer official checkpoints where ANP-turned-militias took money from the people. The largest share of these funds usually went to the chiefs of police, often former commanders, who were therefore able to monopolise road 'taxes' to a certain extent.<sup>589</sup> As in the case of counternarcotics, the international intervention benefitted those power brokers who were able to formalise their positions. However, for ordinary people often little changed, as the old rulers in many cases remained the same or just started wearing uniforms.

<sup>588</sup> See, in general: Giustozzi, 'War and Peace Economies . . .', [see FN 83], 83.

<sup>589</sup> When a new chief of police took office, he usually put his loyalists at the main checkpoints to secure the 'taxes'. Interview with international security analyst, Kunduz City, November 2012. See also CPAU 'Human Security Project: Quarterly Report: Kunduz Province, April-June 2010', *Cooperation for Peace and Unity*, June 2010, 6, 8.

<sup>586</sup> Giustozzi and Orsini, 'Centre-Periphery Relations . . .', [see FN 8], 9, 12.

<sup>587</sup> Foschini, 'A Thin Line . . .', [see FN 393].

Since Afghan power brokers still applied violence clandestinely or threatened to do so, access to weapons and fighters remained decisive in power games. However, because they could not use them openly and wanted the international rents, the rules of the game changed slightly. As a result, the most successful actors were those who established connections to powerbrokers in the central government as well as to the internationals and who managed to transform their mostly military power into one accepted in the changed circumstances of the Karzai era. The most successful actors in Kunduz in this regard were the Ibrahimis who increasingly monopolised and formalised their rule over Imam Sahib district. Thereby, they ruled the single biggest area in the most sophisticated way in Kunduz. Another successful power broker in this regard was Daud, who quickly adapted to the post-2001 situation. In contrast, Nazir Mohammad of Badakhshan only slowly managed to receive civilian legitimacy.

On the other side, actors like Mir Alam were not as successful in transforming their power though they usually established networks in the provincial security apparatus via their former followers. Except for Nazir, the Germans did not strongly support these actors. However, the re-emergence of the Taliban and especially the militia initiative since the late 2000s allowed power brokers like Mir Alam to revive his charisma as a military leader, which gave him certain legitimacy in the eyes of the internationals – particularly the Americans. At least equally important were the means of patronage he and other commanders received from the nationally and internationally funded militia programmes.

Not only Karzai but local actors as well were dedicated to balancing the power structures of the two provinces through their networks and clients to prevent any losses in influence. In contrast to the civil war period, they usually did not apply large-scale violence, but sometimes clandestinely intimidated or killed rival power brokers. The actors primarily used party affiliation as a common identity around which to form groups, while ethnicity was less important. In Kunduz, Jamiat affiliates, who in contrast to the national level sometimes allied with Ittehad/Dawat affiliates, regularly competed with Hezb affiliates. In Badakhshan, Jamiat factions competed against each other and against Hezb and Ittehad/Dawat. In Kunduz, Governor Omar invested effort in balancing the interests of the different groups to prevent conflicts and remain in office. The militia programme also became a way of balancing power since the main political actors did not want it to remain solely in Mir Alam's and the Shura-ye

Nazar's hands and pushed to be included. The weakened position of Jamiat district officials in Khanabad seems to have helped the provincial administration keep Mir Alam and his clients at bay.

After 2001, Pashtuns in Kunduz were not at the disadvantage that is sometimes depicted, especially since some Pashtun non-military Taliban leaders remained powerful. However, they did significantly lose influence in the state apparatus. Non-Pashtun office holders were overrepresented in districts with Pashtun majorities, thus creating an imbalance. Not surprisingly, many in these parts turned to the Taliban and cheered their attacks on government officials, who appeared as an occupational force. However, most turned to political representatives such as the Dawat, led by the Kunduzi Pashtun Assadullah Omarkhel in the northeast, and to the Abdullah faction of Jamiat. The international forces unintentionally strengthened the perception of many Pashtuns that they were put at a disadvantage, since the former mainly cooperated with the official power holders and tried to display positive relations with them in public.

### 6.3 Limited efforts to influence the power structure

In the time under review, internationals had no observable coherent strategy to influence power structures in Kunduz and Badakhshan. They also lacked the required information, funds, and forces. Thus, the Germans, who constituted the majority of the forces in this region, remained reluctant to change local structures. In contrast, the Dutch in Uruzgan, their area of responsibility in southern Afghanistan, tried to actively balance competing local unofficial actors, to create a more stable situation.<sup>590</sup> The Germans did not see this as part of their mandate and preferred to cooperate with the official power brokers. As the example of Nazir Mohammad showed, however, in some cases they also cooperated with actors who had not been officially legitimised if they judged them as decisive to prevent attacks on German forces. Since the Germans tried to prevent being pulled into conflict and violence, they were in a weaker position than these actors, who always could wield their potential to create unrest as a means to demand concessions. This is most clearly shown by the conflict with Nazir over the number of PRT guards.

<sup>590</sup> The Liaison Office, *Dutch Engagement* . . . , [see FN 8], 50 ; Schmeidl, 'Man Who Would Be King', [see FN 8], 34 .

Representatives of Anglo-Saxon ISAF nations in several cases cooperated with unofficial power brokers with dubious human rights accounts in order to fight insurgents. This type of cooperation especially happened during Special Forces operations.<sup>591</sup> In contrast, the Germans shied away from this form of active cooperation. Even their agreement with Nazir had a rather passive 'let live' character. Certainly, the much-calmer security situation in the north allowed the Germans to largely abstain from active collaboration with unofficial power brokers. But even after insurgent attacks became a daily occurrence in Kunduz, they at least initially resisted similar attempts and never cooperated as closely as their American allies did, demonstrating their strong legalistic ideal as well as fear of political scandals at home.

The Americans, British, and even the Dutch, credited for their 'softer' and more diplomatic approach, at the beginnings of their engagements forced Karzai to replace governors of the provinces they deployed to.<sup>592</sup> As demonstrated, the Germans in contrast only started similar efforts at the local level as they encountered difficulties with the Kunduz governor Eng. Omar. They also tried to dismiss provincial chiefs of police and other senior

ANP officers who lacked the required qualifications and had a negative human rights account as part of the PRR process. By doing so, however, they did not select and target them to achieve a specific political goal. Rather, they attempted to exclude those who did not fulfil the formal requirements,<sup>593</sup> again demonstrating their strong legalistic ideal.

The German attempts to replace the Kunduz governor showed, however, that they were only successful as long as their efforts were part of local dynamics – in this case, other Afghan power brokers were also trying to replace Eng. Omar. As the latter was able to mobilise strong support in Kabul and Kunduz, the Germans failed. The same applied to German attempts to strengthen government officials who acted according to formal law, as in the cases of chiefs of police Yaqubi and Kentuz and generally in the power broker related component of the PRR. In both provinces, these actors were not very powerful since an important precondition for not being 'corrupt' was to lack local clientele in need of resources. On the national level, Afghan central government actors sidelined the procedures that internal actors instituted for selecting police officers. In many cases, non-German ISAF allies witnessed how technocrats they had imposed from outside to replace local strongmen subsequently failed as well because of their lack of social backing.<sup>594</sup>

The specific German approach to Afghan key leaders and their way of rule can therefore be

<sup>591</sup> In Kandahar, American forces cooperated mainly with Ahmad Wali Karzai, one of the president's brothers who also controlled the drug trade in the region. Astri Suhrke, *When More Is Less. The International Project in Afghanistan*, New York, Columbia University Press 2011, 135. As the Americans prepared to take over Uruzgan province from the Dutch, they established contact with the local commanders, Jan Mohammed and Matiullah Khan, to fight the insurgency as they had done before 2006. Bette Dam, 'Afghanistan: Obama's Men Scorn Dutch Tactics', *Radio Netherlands Worldwide*, 8 January 2010, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.rnw.nl/english/article/afghanistan-obama%E2%80%99s-men-scorn-dutch-tactics>. Also the Australian forces closely cooperated with the latter. Rafael Epstein and Jeremy Kelly, 'All Afghan Roads Lead to Khan', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 June 2011, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.smh.com.au/world/all-afghan-roads-lead-to-khan-20110617-1g7xt.html>. The Dutch even indirectly paid local commanders to secure transports. 'Dutch Army Says Afghan Warlord Is Being Paid to Let Them Pass', *Afghanistan Sun*, 8 January 2010.

<sup>592</sup> Ahmed Rashid, 'Chief Ousted as British Troops Head for Afghan Drug Region', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 December 2005, accessed 22 October 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/1506188/Chief-ousted-as-British-troops-head-for-Afghan-drug-region.html>; David Charter, Anthony Loyd, and Richard Beeston, 'The British Have Made Matters Worse, Says Afghan President', *The Times*, 25 January 2008; The Liaison Office, *Dutch Engagement* . . ., [see FN 8], 29.

<sup>593</sup> The Germans, however, were said to have heavily pushed Karzai to keep a position in the national government for former Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta, who lived for decades in Germany before he returned to Afghanistan. Embassy Kabul, 'Cabinet Rumors – Ten Days before Inauguration', *WikiLeaks. Secret US Embassy Cables*, 10 November 2009, accessed 3 August 2013, [http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09KABUL3625\\_a.html](http://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09KABUL3625_a.html).

<sup>594</sup> In 2005, the British replaced local power broker and governor of Helmand province Sher Mohammad Akhundzada with the academic Eng. Mohammad Daud, who had to leave only a year later. Mohammad Ilyas Dayee, Jean MacKenzie, and Hafizullah Gardesh, 'Helmand Ex-Governor Joins Karzai Blame Game', ARR no. 284, *Institute for War & Peace Reporting*, 26 February 2008. The same happened to Uruzgan Governor Hakim Munib, who had long experience in government administration and had been installed with Dutch pressure. The Liaison Office, *Dutch Engagement* . . ., [see FN 8], 29. As part of operation 'Mushtarak', the Americans in 2010 replaced most officials of Marja with a whole 'government in a box'. Its members subsequently fled or were killed. Suhrke, *When More Is Less* . . ., [see FN 591], 63–5.

characterised as generally passive and heavily focussed on official legitimacy – as long as the actors obtaining it were able to provide protection. As already discussed, most Afghans seem to have welcomed German attempts to prevent ‘collateral damage’ during military operations. Over time, however, the underprivileged parts of the populace in both provinces considered them as accomplices of the ruling class because of their cooperation with government officials. In addition, attempts to reach agreements between the PRT in Kunduz and local Taleban failed. The insurgents therefore also targeted them. But the Germans, at least until the late 2000s, did not actively counterattack the insurgents, thereby allowing them to grow stronger. They remained in an undecided in-between position regarding the Taleban neither relentlessly fighting nor negotiating with them – which did not help to contain them.

After 2003, the Americans focussed on fighting the insurgency and did so with much more rigour than the Germans. While the Germans’ late, rather conventional approaches to fighting the Taleban were not successful, the US targeting campaign – combined with the militia offensive starting in 2009 – succeeded in pushing the insurgents in Kunduz back. Decisive preconditions for this were, however – besides US military intelligence on the insurgency, which was better than the Germans had – the internationally funded ‘reintegration’ programmes, which bought out Taleban commanders. Obviously many commanders who switched sides did so only to evade the targeting campaign and to receive the ‘reintegration’ funds as well as pro-government militia positions. It should therefore be expected that they will switch sides again when it is to their advantage and the threat to be killed or captured is gone.<sup>595</sup> Also, especially since the cycle of violence and the

grievances created by the militias prevailed at the time of writing and only those who were integrated in the ALP received funds, the sources of the insurgency were not exterminated. In addition, the American-driven counterinsurgency campaign strengthened Shura-ye Nazar power brokers in Kunduz and finally also in Badakhshan.

The American and British counternarcotic operations directly targeted the economic base of power brokers in order to eradicate drugs. This can hardly be judged as successful, not only because the main factor, drug consumption in the West, was not tackled. An unbiased, complete eradication would have sustainably reduced the crops, of course, but was not realistic due to the few forces at hand. Also, uprisings by people who lived of poppy cultivation – as witnessed in many parts of Badakhshan – would have been the most likely consequence. The incomplete eradication in cooperation with local authorities, however, only served the well-connected power brokers who could evade it and direct it against their competitors in the drug business. Eventually, the counternarcotic efforts also strengthened the positions of the most powerful actors.

#### 6.4 Changing power structures through intervention

This study contributes to the debate among scholars and practitioners about the possibilities and results of externally led state-building. Summing up, two scholarly approaches can be distinguished. The first sees state-building as a technical enterprise, primarily focussing on ‘building institutions’. Advocates of this approach aim to equip those who are to run the state with knowledge on procedures and formal structures required for modern statehood; this is paramount to them. To gain a monopoly of violence, they establish formal security forces. Advocates of this view usually conceptualise ‘the state’ as a reified entity – just as in common day-to-day language – and not as a network of social relations.<sup>596</sup>

One reason for this perspective is that scholars of this school of thought are mostly short-term policy-oriented, attempting to give advice to policy-makers that can immediately be turned into practice. By doing so, they often (unconsciously) use the same terminology and assumptions as practitioners do. According to this perspective, failures in state-building usually either result from

<sup>595</sup> An American camera team managed to talk to a commander in Kunduz who had changed sides and with him met a former Taliban companion who was still active on the other side. Standing out of hearing range from the journalists and not knowing that the microphone was still turned on, the former insurgent commander told the active one that he just temporarily had changed sides and tried to convince him to join. When the situation allows at a later point of time, he said, he and his fighters would rejoin the Taliban. ‘Kill/Capture. Beyond bin Laden, Inside the Military’s Extraordinary, Secret Campaign to Take Out Thousands of Taliban and Al Qaeda Fighters’, [video documentary], *Public Broadcasting Services. Frontline*, 10 May 2011, min. 43, accessed 27 August 2011, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kill-capture/>.

<sup>596</sup> Migdal and Schlichte, ‘Rethinking the State’, [see FN 24], 10–22.



state-builders who do not correctly apply the concepts or are caused by uncooperative representatives of the local population (e.g. 'spoilers'), who obstruct the process.<sup>597</sup> Policy-makers prefer this rather apolitical view on state-building since it reduces complex reality to an extent that it fits into the bureaucratic decision-making procedures of their own national or international institutions. It also helps the responsible persons, usually appointed for a relatively short period of time, to ignore inherent long-term political contradictions and instead focus on short-term technicalities. In general, the technocratic perspective is attractive since they prefer to be seen as actors without self-interest who give neutral advice – especially in the case of international organisations.<sup>598</sup>

In contrast, another school of thought – often termed 'critical' – largely acknowledges the social reality of state formation. According to this perspective, state-building is a rather conflictive, highly political process that (unintentionally) attempts to change the distribution of power within a society. Interveners would therefore be confronted with complex social relations that they, at least initially, do not fully comprehend due to a lack of local knowledge. Focussing on technicalities often creates unintended side-effects. Advocates of this school of thought therefore have a more critical view of interveners, stressing their own interests and wrong assumptions. They are also mostly not interested in producing knowledge that can be immediately put into practice. Accordingly, policy-makers usually do not pay much attention to these studies as they also often appear to undermine their legitimacy.<sup>599</sup>

This report demonstrates that in Afghanistan, too, international state-builders tried to solve

fundamental questions of power and rule by simply creating formal processes, such as DDR and DIAG, as well as institutions, such as ministries and the ANSF. They mostly avoided making a direct challenge to actual power holders. This was due to the initial 'light footprint', which even after the 'surge' did not become very 'heavy' – at least, when compared to the ratio of forces and resources to population as applied in other areas such as the Balkans. However, as already demonstrated in many 'critical' case studies, the existing power structures transcended or withstood the various formal arrangements of the interveners: power brokers became provincial chiefs of police and district governors; their forces were integrated in the ANP and ANA; former commanders appropriated means of development aid by starting construction or 'security' firms; rules for selecting officials remained unobserved. Since power brokers constantly tried to balance each other, assets – be they district official positions or militia funds – were distributed along the existing power structures. All this means that most local power brokers successfully resisted outside attempts to challenge their position and found ways to adapt to the situation.

Policy-makers should therefore stop conceptualising 'the state' as an apolitical entity and 'state-building' as a technical process. What makes more sense is to see 'the state' as a field of social relations constituted by political actors who fight for power and more specifically try to apply their own rules to the society as a whole.<sup>600</sup> For external interveners to take a neutral stance in these fights seems hardly possible since 'the state' as a neutral legal entity does not exist, but is rather constituted by actors with specific interests. Even in state-building missions with a much 'heavier footprint' than the Afghanistan project, interveners have rarely changed the power positions of the most influential groups.<sup>601</sup> So far, it is easier to change the way in which these groups compete against each other. As shown in Afghanistan, it was possible to buy and enforce some peace – understood as the absence of large-scale factional violence. However, in assessing their achievements, policy-makers should focus on the deeper lying social realities.

<sup>597</sup> Klaus Schlichte and Alex Veit, 'Coupled Arenas. Why State-Building Is so Difficult', Working Papers Micropolitics no. 3, 2007; Junior Research Group 'Micropolitics of Armed Groups' Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, 2007, 8, 21.

<sup>598</sup> See for example, Roland Paris, *At War's End. Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2004; Robert I. Rotberg, 'The Failure and Collapse of Nation-States. Breakdown, Prevention, and Repair', in *When States Fail* ed by Robert I. Rotberg, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press 2003; the literature review of Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, 'Introduction. The Limits of Statebuilding and the Analysis of State-Formation', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 4, no. 2 2010, 114.

<sup>599</sup> See summing up of Bliesemann de Guevara's, 'Introduction . . .', [see FN 598], 114–6.

<sup>600</sup> Migdal and Schlichte, 'Rethinking the State', [see FN 24], 14–9.

<sup>601</sup> See, on the results of a project on Kosovo and Liberia: Stephan Hensell and Felix Gerdes, 'Elites and International Actors in Post-War Societies. The Limits of Intervention', *International Peacekeeping* 19, no. 2, 2012, 165–6.

## ANNEX

District governors (DG), chiefs of police (CoP), and chiefs of NDS (CoNDS) appointed in Kunduz and their number of months (Mon) in office, 2002–05<sup>602</sup>

	Aliabad	Chahar Dara	Dasht-e Archi	Imam Sahib	Khanabad	Qala-ye Zal
Jamiat	7 (2 DG, 1 CoP, 4 CoNDS = 58 Mon)	3 (1 DG, 2 CoP = 36 Mon)	2 (CoP, CoNDS = 73 Mon)	2 (DG, CoP = 18 Mon)	4 (2 DG, CoP, CoNDS = 57 Mon)	3 (DG, CoP, CoNDS = 45 Mon)
Hezb	3 (DG, CoP, CoNDS = 19 Mon)	2 (DG = 36 Mon)	4 (3 DG, CoP = 54 Mon)	4 (2 DG, CoP, CoNDS = 87 Mon)	1 (CoP = 43 Mon)	1 (DG = 30 Mon)
Ittehad/Dawat					1 (DG = 27 Mon)	
Former communist *						2 (CoP, CoNDS = 18 Mon)
Nejat		1 (CoNDS = 24 Mon)				
No affiliation	1 (DG = 15 Mon)					

\* For the definition of 'former communist' in this study see FN 75.

District governors (DG), chiefs of police (CoP), and chiefs of NDS (CoNDS) appointed in Kunduz and their number of months (Mon) in office, 2006–12

	Aliabad	Chahar Dara	Dasht-e Archi	Imam Sahib	Khanabad	Qala-ye Zal
Jamiat	9 (2 DG, 3 CoP, 4 CoNDS = 124 Mon)	2 (DG, CoP = 31 Mon)	4 (DG, CoP, 2 CoNDS = 126 Mon)	7 (5 DG, 2 CoP = 74 Mon)	7 (3 DG, 4 CoP = 90 Mon)	5 (3 DG, CoP, CoNDS = 85 Mon)
Hezb	2 (DG, CoP = 34 Mon)	5 (DG = 78 Mon)	5 (DG = 91 Mon)	4 (DG, CoP, 2 CoNDS = 130 Mon)		4 (3 DG, CoP = 65 Mon)
Ittehad/Dawat			1 (CoP = 29 Mon)		2 (CoP = 30 Mon)	
Former communist	2 (CoNDS = 24 Mon)	2 (CoNDS, CoP = 46 Mon)	1 (CoNDS = 6 Mon)	1 (CoNDS = 12 Mon)	3 (CoNDS = 78 Mon)	2 (CoP, CoNDS = 95 Mon)
No affiliation		3 (CoNDS = 50 Mon)			4 (2 DG, CoP, CoNDS = 52 Mon)	2 (DG = 16 Mon)

<sup>602</sup> Data collection on district official positions is difficult since written sources are lacking and the data therefore had to be compiled through interviews. As a result, the data might be incomplete and in some cases false. The overall time in office does not sum up because long vacancies for official positions were common. Also, the time in office of chiefs of police in Chahar Dara and the chiefs of NDS in Dasht-e Archi is lacking. Though positions occasionally remained vacant for significant periods, the period of two years thus had to be distributed evenly in the latter two cases on the officials. Generally, however, the data collected here matches the overall impressions gained through other sources.

Ethnicity of district governors (DG), chiefs of police (CoP), and chiefs of NDS (CoNDS) appointed in Kunduz and their number of months (Mon) in office, 2002–05

	Aliabad	Chahar Dara	Dasht-e Archi	Imam Sahib	Khanabad	Qala-ye Zal
Pashtun	0	3 (DG, CoP, CoNDS = 61 Mon)	0	1 (DG = 12 Mon)	2 (CoNDS = 46 Mon)	1 (CoNDS = 36 Mon)
Non-Pashtun	12	5 (2 DG, 2 CoP, 1 CoNDS = 75 Mon)	6	5 (2 DG, 2 CoP, CoNDS = 120 Mon)	5 (3 DG, 2 CoP = 82 Mon)	5 (2 DG, 2 CoP, CoNDS = 30 Mon)

Ethnicity of district governors (DG), chiefs of police (CoP), and chiefs of NDS (CoNDS) appointed in Kunduz and their number of months (Mon) in office, 2006–12

	Aliabad	Chahar Dara	Dasht-e Archi	Imam Sahib	Khanabad	Qala-ye Zal
Pashtun	0	8 (5 DG, 1 CoP, 2 CoNDS = 55 Mon)	6 (4 DG, 1 CoP, 1 CoNDS = 115 Mon)	5 (4 DG, 1 CoNDS = 70 Mon)	7 (2 DG, 3 CoP, 2 CoNDS = 109 Mon)	1 (DG = 19 Mon)
Non-Pashtun	12	5 (DG, 2 CoP, 2 CoNDS = 91 Mon)	6 (2 DG, 3 CoP, CoNDS = 118 Mon)	7 (2 DG, 3 CoP, 2 CoNDS = 109 Mon)	8 (2 DG, 4 CoP, 2 CoNDS = 136 Mon)	12 (7 DG, 3 CoP, 2 CoNDS = 213)





Map of Northeastern Afghanistan (source: University of Texas Libraries, February 2012)



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