

The German Police Project Team (GPPT) and the “capacity to do capacity building”

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Acronyms

ALP: Afghan Local Police
ANCOP: Afghan National Civil Order Police
ANP: Afghan National Police
ANPA: Afghan National Police Academy
ANSF: Afghan National Security Forces
APPF: Afghan Public Protection Force
ARTF: Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
DPKO: Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECHO: Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission
EQUIP: Education Quality Improvement Program
EU: European Union
EUPOL Afghanistan: European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan
FDD: Focused District Development
GPPO: German Police Project Office
GPPT: German Police Project Team
GIZ: Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit
IBL: Institutionalization before Liberalization
IPCB: International Police Coordination Board
ISAF: International Security Assistance Force
LOTFA: Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan
MOI: Ministry of Interior
MOD: Ministry of Defense
NDS: National Directorate of Security
NTM-A: NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PTC: Police Training Center
RC North: Regional Command North
RPTC: Regional Police Training Center
SWAT: Special Weapons and Tactics
UK: United Kingdom
USA: United States of America
ZIF: Zentrum für internationale Friedenseinsätze

Introduction¹

This paper focuses on “capacity building” in the Afghan National Police (ANP). It begins with the paradox that despite the emphasis on police reform, a growing literature gives ample evidence that ANP, apart from a lack of equipment or effective oversight mechanisms, is mired in corruption and unlikely to be able to control events after 2014.² Therefore, the paper examines the way “capacity building” has been conducted in Afghanistan; it looks at the Security Sector Reform (SSR) as a microcosm and hopes to find some of the answers to the question why initial policy objectives differ so much from the outcomes in Afghanistan.

Importantly, the focus of this paper is not the main player in police reform, the United States. Instead, the case of Germany is used to provide a case-specific analysis of the role of a “major minor player”³ and establish what contribution can be expected from such small, but not unimportant allies in Afghanistan. In fact, it is argued that Germany’s experience reflects many of the problems other donor countries have had with capacity building in Afghanistan.

This paper draws on extensive field research between September 2011 and September 2013. Interviews were conducted with Western officials and diplomats in Kabul, Brussels, Berlin, Paris and London, as well as with Afghan officials in the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in Kabul. In addition, several focus group discussions with low-ranking and high-ranking Afghan policemen were conducted in Training Centers in Mazar-e Sharif and Kabul.

Two main questions are addressed in this paper. First, *how does Germany conceptualize capacity building and how does it actually play out in reality?* In other words, are there any definitions or formalized concepts, and what common practices are referred to as “capacity

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² See, for instance:

- Cornelius Friesendorf and Jörg Krempel, *Militarisierung statt Bürgernähe: Das Missverhältnis beim Aufbau der Afghanischen Polizei*. HSFK-Report 9, Frankfurt 2010;
- Cornelius Friesendorf, *Paramilitarization and Security Sector Reform: The Afghan National Police*. In: *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 18, n° 1, February 2011, pp. 79-95;
- International Crisis Group, *Reforming Afghanistan’s Police*. Asia Report n°138, 30 August 2007;
- Tonita Murray, *Police-Building in Afghanistan: A Case Study of Civil Security Reform*. In: *International Peacekeeping*, n° 14, vol. 1, February 2007, pp. 108-126;
- Robert Perito, *Afghanistan’s Police. The Weak Link in Security Sector Reform*. USIP Special Report 227. Washington, August 2009;
- RUSI Report, *Reforming the Afghan National Police*, 2009. Available at www.rusi.org;
- Mark Sedra, *Police Reform in Afghanistan: An Overview*. Discussion paper presented at the BICC E-Conference “Afghanistan: Assessing the Progress of SSR”, June 2003;
- Andrew Wilder, *Cops or Robbers? The struggle to reform the Afghan National Police*. AREU issue paper series, July 2007.

³ Despite its limited size, Germany is the 3rd troop-committing country and the 3rd biggest donor in civilian and development aid. See: Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan zur Unterrichtung des Deutschen Bundestages*. November 2012. Available at:

<http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2011/12/2011-12-27-fortschrittsbericht-afghanistan.html>. Accessed in November 2012.

building"? It will be argued that alliance strategies within NATO and political considerations of risk-avoidance play into the German approach to capacity building much more than the situation in Afghanistan.

Second, the paper draws attention to the understudied question of the actual "*capacity to do capacity building*". In so doing, the paper examines Germany's conceptualization of the Afghanistan *problématique*, its contextual preparedness and technical/logistical ability to carry out capacity building, through training and mentoring in "failed states".

It will be shown that Germany's activities in Afghanistan display two contradictory trends at the same time: On the one hand there has been an undeniable process of technical improvement, tactical adjustment, and conceptual adaptation to - and professionalization of - capacity building in Berlin and in Afghanistan over the years. Indeed, compared to roughly twelve years ago, German trainers and mentors are undeniably better prepared for such a mission, better taken care of, and better de-briefed. One OECD study illustrates that many Western states (including Germany) have started to work on their own capacities to provide capacity building support,⁴ and a 2009 study called Germany a "striver" among the European nations in the field of capacity building.⁵ Thus, on the technical level, it can be said that Germany has considerably improved its "capacity to do capacity building" and the fact that other donor states (for instance, France and the UK) have undergone similar processes, for instance to improve inter-ministerial structures, shows that this professionalization is a general trend.⁶

However, as a result of several factors that will be described in this paper, the entire police-building mission in Afghanistan fails to adequately engage with the political nature of the conflict. In fact, institution building and setting up a capable Afghan Ministry of Interior (MOI) has been largely abandoned by the intervening alliance as too complicated and political, which is reflected in President Obama's recurring statements that the nation he is most interested in building is his own. Following a US lead, the focus has shifted from institution building to training. This has been accompanied by a decreasing importance of institutional mentoring in MOI. Germany has not opposed this US lead, resulting in a technocratic approach, instead of one that takes into account the political nature of Afghanistan's torments.

Conducting large-scale state-building missions on the assumption that it can be done like a technical service-delivery devoid of politics is as much an illusion as the idea that Germany, or any intervening state, can stay aloof of political questions and, for that matter, avoid infringing on Afghanistan's sovereignty.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows.

A first section sketches out the evolution of the international donor community's conceptualization of institutional capacity building and "empowerment", and explains why

⁴ OECD, *Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States*. DAC Guidelines and Reference Series, 2006. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/24/37826256.pdf>. Accessed on 15 March 2012.

⁵ Daniel Korski and Richard Gowan, *Can the EU Rebuild Failing States? A Review of Europe's Civilian Capacities*. London: European Council on Foreign Relations, October 2009. ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR18_-_Can_the_EU_rebuild_failing_States_-_a_Review_of_Europes_Civilian_Capacities.pdf.

⁶ Claudia Major and Martina Bail, *Waiting for Soft Power: Why the EU Struggles with Civilian Crisis Management*. Pages 16 and 17. In: Eva Gross, Daniel Hamilton, Claudia Major, Henning Riecke (eds.): *Preventing conflict, managing crisis. European and American Perspectives*, Centre for Transatlantic Relations, Washington D.C., 2011. Pages 15-36.

and when the state was "brought back" into the development discourse. While most donor governments today engage in capacity building projects around the world, in Afghanistan this has reached particular heights because it contributes to the narrative of a viable post-2014 state structure. However, international definitions of what capacity building is actually supposed to mean are in short supply. This unspecified focus on "institutions" eschews questions of political engagement with "host states".

Section 2 describes how Germany has tried to "learn" (or at least adapt to the challenges of) capacity building in the field of policing in Afghanistan. It illustrates the way in which the German police have tried to enhance Germany's performance in Afghanistan with respect to the recruitment process of policemen and women, contextual pre-deployment preparation as well as de-briefing of German mentors. Next, some of the conceptual adaptations on the higher political level in Berlin will be presented, before turning to German activities in the field and looking at what German capacity building looks like concretely.

Section 3 presents some reflections on the Afghan governmental structure that oversees the police, the MOI, and draws attention to the way the institution uses the "product" that Western training delivers.

Section 4 concludes with the main findings of this paper.

Towards Institution Building as "Capacity Building": A new framework of intervention

In order for the reader to understand where the Afghan statebuilding project is coming from, a few remarks on the background of post-1989 liberal interventionism is in order.

The end of the Cold War made an increased role for the United Nations possible. Western countries were now free to experiment with their ideas of state building without worries about antagonistic political reaction from the old foe, the Soviet Union and its allies. Compared to today's complex interventions, early UN interventions (Namibia 1989-90, Cambodia 1991-1993, El Salvador 1991-1996, Bosnia 1992-1995) started as relatively modest enterprises, aiming to re-establish peace but not to change fundamental societal dynamics, reshape institutions or create democratic apparatuses within the host states. International aid, for instance, was tied to structural adjustments in host states to liberalize the markets and privatize services, but this did not come along with support for administrative and state structures (i.e. government *institutions*) to sustain these reforms.⁷

This approach changed with several UN peace building missions that started after 1995, most importantly in Bosnia, Kosovo and Timor-Leste during which the actual *institutionalization* of democratic legal authority became the major theoretic and practical concern of international interventions.⁸ Even with broad humanitarian and economic objectives intact, interventions of the late 1990s and early 2000s have been more concerned with propping up the very *state* structures and institutions that were formerly shunned.⁹ An important current in the state-building debate now argued, most prominently with Roland Paris, that institutions mattered and that state-building needed to focus on the building of viable state structures before it could move on to consider democratizing a war-affected country. This approach is neatly labeled "Institutionalization before Liberalization" (IBL).¹⁰ Societies that emerged from long-lasting social conflict were thought to be too conflict-laden for internationals to allow for the immediate opening of the markets and the political arena. Hence, based on a Huntingtonian argument that stability is a value in itself, state-building now needed to build "modern" institutions able to manage the new agenda and impose peace from above.¹¹ These

⁷ See Roland Paris, *At War's End*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

⁸ To illustrate the significance of this "growth industry" of UN state-building, see, for instance, Richard Ponzio: "By December 31 2006, the UN alone had deployed 80,368 troops, military observers, and police, and 4,976 civilians in its peace operations in the field; and in 2005, the DPKO [Department of Peacekeeping Operations] oversaw or assisted in referendums and elections in countries with populations totaling over 100 million people. By 2008, the demand had further increased – with 18 operations and over 112,000 uniformed and civilian personnel presently in the field. Together, these activities constitute the largest number of concurrent, sizeable peace building operations ever." In: Richard Ponzio, *Democratic Peacebuilding. Aiding Afghanistan and other Fragile States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 76.

⁹ See Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (eds.), *Understanding the contradictions of postwar statebuilding*. London: Routledge, 2008. Introduction, p. 1.

¹⁰ See Roland Paris, *At War's End*. Op. cit. For the debate on prior neglect of state institutions in state-building, see also: Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004; Simon Chesterman, *You, the People: The United Nations, Transitional Administration, and Statebuilding*. New York: Oxford University Press 2004; James Fearon and David Laitin, Neotrusteeship and the Problem of Weak States. In: *International Security* n° 28, vol. 4, 2004, pp. 5-43. Stephen Krasner, *Sharing Sovereignty. New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States*. In: *International Security* n° 29, vol. 2, 2004, pp. 85-120.

¹¹ See Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1968.

institutions should help weak states provide services to their citizens and act as conduits for ready-made "democratization" packages.¹²

It is important to distinguish between the *scope* of state activities, which refers to the different functions and goals taken on by governments, and the *strength* of state power, which refers to the ability of states to plan and execute policies and to enforce laws efficiently and transparently – what is now commonly referred to as state or institutional *capacity*.¹³ This second category (strength of state power) has been at the center of interventionist attention in Afghanistan and is part of a wider Western trend to empower weak states.¹⁴ It is also very much reflected in donor documents and policy statements of the World Bank, United Kingdom, United States, European Union, and other national governments.¹⁵

Capacity Building in the Afghan Context

As of 2013, virtually all donor governments engaged in Afghanistan are, in some way or another, financing and supporting projects that revolve around capacity building. Following a period of relative neglect during the early years of the intervention, "capacity" has now become a major aspect of donor aid programming in all major Afghan ministries in attempts to provide the state with the necessary skills and resources to survive beyond 2014.¹⁶

¹² See, for instance, Astri Suhrke, *When More is Less. The international project in Afghanistan*. London: Hurst and Company, 2011.

¹³ Francis Fukuyama, *State Building. Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century*. Croydon: CPI Bookmarque, 2005. Emphasis added. p. 9.

¹⁴ For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the UN had a very intrusive mandate, and acted as the guarantor of peace and prosperity through a High Representative who was given the so-called "Bonn powers". The High Representative could take authoritative decisions affecting the local government actors including the removal from office of public servants who violated the Dayton Peace Agreement. Several police, justice and other administrative missions were also started in the country to help building the capacity of state institutions to cope with post-war reconstruction needs.

¹⁵ See:

- The UN Millennium Project expert panel wrote in 2005 that the "lack [of] resources and capacity to manage an efficient public administration" is the main problem facing weak and poor states. See: UN Millennium Project, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, 2005, p. 113. Available at: http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/index_overview.htm. Accessed on 15 March 2012.

- The UK government argued in a 2005 report that failure in state's capacity has been the major impediment to positive development in Africa. See: Commission for Africa. *Our Common Interest*, 11 March 2005. p. 14. Available at: <http://www.commissionforafrica.info/2010-report>. Accessed on 15 March 2012.

- In 2005 the UN world summit agreed to create a Peace-Building Commission to coordinate international capacity building and state building. "2005 World Summit Outcome", United Nations General Assembly, A/60/L.1, 15 September. Paragraphs 97-105. Available at: <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/5464596.74835205.html>. Accessed on 15 March 2012.

- The Ministers of Development of OECD countries decided in 2005 on a variety of 'Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States', with a "focus on state-building as the central objective". For instance: "We propose to define state building as purposeful action to develop the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state in relation to an effective political process for negotiating the mutual demands between state and societal groups." See: OECD, *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States*. OECD document DCD (2005) 11/ REV 2. p. 14. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/4/25/35238282.pdf>. "Accessed on 12 March 2012.

- On 27 October 2009, the European Union adopted an Action Plan for Afghanistan and Pakistan that foresees strengthening institutional and administrative capacities in these two states.

¹⁶ Some 10,000 US troops are expected to remain in the country. See Kristina Wong, *Some U.S. troops to stay in Afghanistan after 2014*. Washington Times, 8 September 2013. Available at:

Mentors, advisers, and trainers embedded in Afghan ministerial structures and institutions are tasked with "transferring" the necessary skills to their Afghan counterparts. This is in contrast to the early years of the Afghan intervention when the focus was on classic humanitarian aid and relief-oriented programs. Both the EU and USAID started pouring in massive amounts of money to reconstruct the country after 20 years of war.¹⁷ The initial "relief and reconstruction" nature of aid left central government structures and services widely untouched. According to a former Deputy Minister of Finance in the Afghanistan Transitional Authority: "Capacity building was virtually ignored by most of the government and international community during the early stages of Bonn implementation."¹⁸

However, faced with a growing insurgency and rampant aggravation of insecurity, the Afghanistan Compact (London 2006) and later the Obama administration's "civilian surge" (2009) enacted a conceptual shift towards more generalized and systematic capacity building. This was based on the premise that, despite having a constitution, a new presidency, parliamentary mechanisms, regular election cycles, and an elaborate system of sub-national governance, the Afghan government lacked "capacity" to sustain its formal structures with adequate democratic architecture, qualified civil servants and the necessary bureaucratic skills.¹⁹

The Taliban, unlike other reformers in the history of Afghanistan,²⁰ had not cared much about building Western-style institutions.²¹ In the Afghanistan Compact, the Afghan Government agreed to recruit competent and credible "professionals to public service" on the basis of merit and establish a more effective, accountable and transparent administration at all levels of Government. The government committed to "give priority to the coordinated establishment in each province of functional institutions – including civil administration, police, prisons and judiciary. These institutions would have appropriate legal frameworks and appointment procedures, trained staff, and adequate remuneration, infrastructure and auditing capacity."²²

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/sep/8/some-us-troops-to-stay-in-afghanistan-after-2014/?page=all>. Accessed on 8 September 2013.

¹⁷ At the Tokyo Conference in January 2002, the cumulative amount of pledged donor money, for instance, was 4,5 Billion Dollars. The European Community alone pledged about €1 Billion over five years. The 2004 Berlin Conference on Afghanistan resulted in pledges of over 8 billion dollars, which were later surpassed by pledges from the 2006 London Conference of over US\$10.5 billion.

¹⁸ Richard Ponzio, op. cit. Pages 174-175. See also: United States Government Accountability Office. *Afghanistan Reconstruction*. GAO-05-742, July 2005. Available at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05742.pdf>. In the fall of 2004, the Afghan Ministry of Finance employed 224 foreign advisers, paid by a 95,8 million \$ USAID contract. For a recent survey of the problems of capacity building in Afghanistan, see also the recent World Bank study "Afghanistan in Transition: Looking Beyond 2014", vol. 2. Main Report. May 2012. See Chapter 4, Building Government Capacity: Key Issues and Emerging Challenges, p. 63.

¹⁹ See most notably Ashraf Ghani for this position. See for instance: Ashraf Ghani, Clare Lockhart, and Michael Carnahan, *Closing the Sovereignty Gap: an Approach to State-Building*. Overseas Development Institute, Working Paper 253, September 2005.

²⁰ See Astri Suhrke, *The Limits of Statebuilding: The Role of International Assistance in Afghanistan*. Paper presented at the International Studies Association annual meeting San Diego 21-24 March 2006.

²¹ See Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban. Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, Yale: Yale University Press, 2000.

²² See: The London Conference on Afghanistan, *The Afghanistan Compact*. London 2006. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/afghanistan_compact.pdf. Accessed on 22 March 2012.

The Afghanistan Compact thus displayed a two-fold approach to capacity building: Training of individuals through a transfer of skills, on the one hand, and actual *institution building* (through the restructuring of ministerial procedures), on the other.

However, the Afghanistan Compact did not give a clear definition of what capacity building was supposed to mean. As a consequence, every donor country, including Germany, brought its own ready-made capacity building tools with a focus on the *technical transfer of skills*. This led to an overall neglect of meaningful *institution building*, in the sense that when technical skill provision becomes the focus, the wider issues of oversight or institutional anchoring are often neglected. (The chapter on MOI offers some explanations why it has been so difficult to foster organizational-institutional change.)

This technical skill transfer has been criticized as unhistorical and apolitical.²³ Critics see the shift towards capacity building as a mere conceptual self-renewal of a humanitarian aid and state-building business, focusing on the technical problems where no political solution is offered. This paper argues that capacity building in Afghanistan has indeed been very technical. We can see that in the fact that the main organization overseeing transition today, NATO, has completely dissociated its training efforts from the wider political process of negotiations with the Taliban and other insurgent groups, who – like it or not - are part of the political landscape.

As will be shown below, German capacity building programming in Afghanistan is no more part of a wider scheme to redefine Afghanistan's politics as completely as initially intended in the 2001 Bonn agreements; it has retreated into narrow service provision.

To sum up this part, the international "state-building project" in Afghanistan focuses nominally on state institutions. However, firstly, the absence of a clear definition increases the donor-driven nature of capacity building programs, resulting in a situation where donor countries like Germany essentially frame their contribution according to what they have on offer, not what may be needed.²⁴ Secondly, the fact that capacity building deals with institutions can't conceal the fact that the very nature of such programs is in fact, apolitical, focusing on political structure where political *processes* are necessary.

Germany and capacity building in ANP

According to the pillar approach of the Bonn Conference in 2001, the US took over the lead role in the rebuilding of the Afghan Army, Italy took over the justice sector, Japan assumed responsibility for de-mining, the UK led counter narcotics, and Germany took over the police. As the official lead nation, Germany contributed twelve personnel, based on the fallacious premise that their mere role would be to use the existing police academy and act as a

²³ For this view, see for instance: Aidan Hehir and Neil Robinson (ed.), *State-building. Theory and practice*. London: Routledge, 2007. For David Chandler, for instance, "capacity building" is but the last result of this thinking, producing "generic nostrums of preparedness, early intervention, strategic planning, international coordination, the importance of the rule of law, the integration of military and civic agencies, the problems of relying overly on elections, the need to develop strategies to deal with 'spoilers' and to integrate and encourage more moderate political forces, to support civil society initiatives, establish early gains to win the confidence of people in international assistance, deal with health, education, HIV/AIDS awareness, post-conflict demobilization, etc." See: David Chandler, *Empire in Denial: The Politics of State-building*. London: Pluto, 2006. Introduction, p. 5.

²⁴ For this point, see also Cornelius Friesendorf, *Insurgency and Civilian Policing: Organizational Culture and German Police Assistance in Afghanistan*. Contemporary Security Policy, vol 34, n° 2, 2013, pp. 324-349.

“multiplier in a snowball system”.²⁵ The decision was made in December 2001 and the mission started in March 2002. The name for the project was German Police Project Office (GPPO).

In the words of a German EUPOL officer involved in the early years of GPPO, the Germans were “very bold to raise their hands at this point”.²⁶ There were also serious doubts in the Ministry of Interior about Germany taking on such a role and questions on whether Germany had the capacity to do capacity building in Afghanistan.²⁷ With the exception of its experience in Bosnia, Germany was virtually starting its mission on policing in Afghanistan from scratch. German police had worked in Bosnia, but the situation in Afghanistan was entirely different.

GPPO started out mainly as a consulting organization for the police academy, placing mentors in the Afghan structures and supporting the training organized mostly by the US. In the ensuing period much was made of a supposed philosophical difference between an American militarized approach and a German “human rights-focused” approach to police training. The real fault line, however, was between quantity and quality. Germany did not concentrate on producing numbers, but on long-term training. It proposed both 9-month and 3-year courses with the intention of creating the dorsal spine of the police.

Over the years GPPO has had to adapt to the new US policy of churning out numbers: Today the *patrolman*²⁸ courses being offered are between 6 and 8 weeks long, pointing to a major change in approach. In all fairness, GPPT continues to participate in longer-term training courses for higher ranks (between 4 months and up to 4 years), but these courses concern comparatively few officers and are negligible next to the hundreds of thousands trained by the US.

There have been three implications as a result of this change in approach for German capacity building in Afghanistan. First, much of the actual *institution* building (trying to reshape MOI directly) was downscaled and effectively left to the US. This is significant, given the fact that European-style “state-building” was once promoted as a European trademark during the intervention in the Balkans. Second, the focus on long term *mentoring* was increasingly replaced by a focus on short-term *training* (even though it needs to be said that EUPOL and later NTM-A have taken on some of the mentoring tasks).

Third, the approach grew more technical/technocratic and less political in the sense that it is focused on providing practical skills, detached from the initial political project to democratize Afghanistan and its police.

The backdrop of this evolution was provided by the US starting to react to a growing insurgency by flooding the field of policing with additional money and new programs. The police target number was then raised to 85,000 and later to 135,000, settling in 2012 at around 157,000 (which does not count the additional 30,000 Afghan Local Police (ALP) and 30,000 Afghan Public Protection Force, APPF). US investment started dwarfing the German financial and personnel input with multi-billion dollar contracts. In 2009, for instance, the US

²⁵ Interview with member of GPPT, Kabul, November 2012.

²⁶ Interview with member of GPPT, Kabul, November 2012.

²⁷ Interview with German Ministry of Defense official, March 2009; Interview with German Ministry of Interior official, June 2010.

²⁸ Patrolman refers to the basic Afghan police officer.

spent 700 million Euros for policing alone,²⁹ infinitely more than Germany's meager 12 million. In reaction to this, the German team was allowed to grow from 12 to 50 personnel in 2007, albeit still operating on the same 12 million dollar budget. In 2012, GPPT (GPPO has become the German Police Project *Team* in the meantime) employed 200 police and its budget was 77 million euros.³⁰

This uncomfortable situation led the German government to push for the creation of a European Police force, EUPOL Afghanistan, in 2007. Also, the German government's GIZ (*Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit*) set up a Police Implementation Unit in 2008, initially intended to support EUPOL. Progressively, however, when EUPOL was showing its fundamental weaknesses,³¹ GPPT's personnel, budget and collaboration with GIZ actually went *up* again.³² Today, a fundamental reality of German capacity building is the strong focus on its *bilateral* GPPT endeavor. For the capacity building mission to become efficient and effective Germany now focuses most of its resources on a national contribution that is much less difficult to handle than the EUPOL mission. This reflects the tendency of all European niche missions in Afghanistan to favor national over European missions, because of a better visibility vis-à-vis the US.³³ The coordination problems that arise from this situation are obvious, but are only addressed in an unsatisfactory way. (According to several participants, the International Police Coordination Board (IPCB), an international body that is supposed to facilitate donor coordination, was long hampered by ineffectiveness, and has picked up speed only relatively recently. This, however, is mainly due to personal leadership qualities).³⁴ The more fundamental point, however is that German capacity building is not conducted as an end in itself, but as a strategy vis-à-vis the US. This means that the imperative of visibility can take precedence over concerns of sustainability.

To sum up this part, today, GIZ and GPPT oversee approximately 400 German employees in Afghanistan. Roughly 148 police officers and experts work for GPPT.³⁵ In 2013 Germany is estimated to oversee around 10 percent of all training,³⁶ especially via the "Train The Trainers"-program.

²⁹ See Nicolas Fescharek, *Ce que l'Afghanistan a changé pour l'Union Européenne*. *Le Monde*, 19 April 2011. http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2011/04/19/ce-que-l-afghanistan-a-change-pour-l-union-europeenne_1509746_3232.html.

³⁰ See: *Germany's support for rebuilding the Afghan police force*. http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/RegionaleSchwerpunkte/AfghanistanZentralasien/Polizeiaufbau-dt-Engagement_node.html.

³¹ See, among others, Maxime Larivé, *From speeches to actions: EU involvement in the war in Afghanistan through the EUPOL Afghanistan Mission*. In : *European Security*, vol 21, n°2, 2012. Pages 185-201 ; Heiduk, F. *Policing Mars or Venus? Comparing European and US approaches to police assistance*. In: *European Security*, vol 20, n° 3, 2011. Pages 363-383.

³² Interview with insider, Kabul 2011.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Interviews with several insiders, July 2013.

³⁵ The website of the Federal Ministry of the Interior mentioned the number of 120 in April 2013, but according to an interview in September 2013, this number has increased to 148.

³⁶ Interviews with GPPT officer and German official, Kabul and Berlin, September 2011 and August 2013.

Professionalization of GPPT

A comparatively rigorous selection process has been put into place for German police officers wanting to serve in Afghanistan. Before becoming a police-trainer, there now is a mandatory aptitude test, during which one has to prove to be fit physically and psychologically. Also, it has been agreed that German trainers need a minimum of eight years of service in the German police before they are allowed to volunteer.³⁷ German pre-deployment training has improved as well. Potential GPPT leadership personnel need to do a two-week long basic course on “missions abroad”. There is also a four weeklong mandatory seminar on the history, culture and politics of Afghanistan. A substantial part of this seminar, however, covers the background of the GPPT mission and is designed to understand the donor landscape in Afghanistan.³⁸

Concerning deployment to Afghanistan, it has now been convened that GPPT leaders need to have a long period of transition (preferably about five weeks), in order to make sure that they can glean a maximum amount of information from their predecessors before taking office. This contrasts positively with what the French and the British, for instance, do, as it decreases the loss of important information.

Generally, the rule for German GPPT personnel is to serve one year in Afghanistan. Sometimes this can be extended up to 18 months. While everybody acknowledges that such short time spans are detrimental to the mission, GPPT officials are always quick to emphasize the difficult security and the resulting emotional stress that would result due to longer periods of deployment in a difficult context such as Afghanistan. According to one official, “as a general rule of thumb, one shouldn’t stay here longer than 3 months in a row.” But, as another GPPT interviewee observed, “everything in Afghanistan relies on constructing personal relations. You *really* start being effective about one year into the mission – which is when you leave”.³⁹ Relations developed with much effort are often lost because of this high turnover rate, a concern shared also by the Afghans counterparts.

Closely related to the inability to sustain strong institutional relations between GPPT and the Afghan counterparts is the question of how the mission personnel are debriefed once they return to Germany. The GPPT personnel who serve at least one year in Afghanistan are now debriefed in Bavaria, not for utilizing their operational experiences but to assess them psychologically to ensure that no traumas were caused as a result of serving in Afghanistan. The debriefing seminars are also intended to mentally prepare policemen and policewomen for reintegration into a normal life at home.⁴⁰ Since ministry officials sometimes participate in

³⁷ Compared to Obama’s “civilian surge”, which still brought in essentially ex-military personnel seeking post-career commitment, this is much more professional, and it also makes sure that civilian skills are passed on, not military-style policing or group management tactics.

³⁸ The French Gendarmerie (who, however, have military status) even prepare during 6 months. Afghans familiar with policing are flown to France to teach real-life police training situations on special camps.

³⁹ See also Jake Cusack and Erik Malmstrom, *Bactrian Gold: Challenges and Hope for Private-Sector Development in Afghanistan*. Kauffman Foundation Research Series, February 2011. “Rapid turnover of international personnel hinders the institutional memory of donor agencies, particularly regarding development spending and business contracting.” p. 8.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, things like personal health insurance for “state builders” are still not being systematically covered. According to one participant, it is being ‘suggested’ during the preparation seminars that one should take care of it individually. What happens to “capacity-builders” who suffer from inability after return, for

these seminars, there is an opportunity to collect and share information but this is not the main objective of the seminars and it is not institutionalized. There is no topic-based discussion of the experiences, nor follow-up or post processing during these seminars with the net result that much of the context-specific knowledge gets lost.⁴¹

Conceptual and institutional adaptations in Berlin

Germany has been quite consistent with producing conceptual responses to challenges connected with capacity building in failed states mired in wars. As with many other Western countries, Germany has seen debates about "joined up" or "cross-departmental" collaboration between different branches of government to face the multiple challenges in "areas with limited statehood."⁴² These efforts are apparent in a White Paper on "networked security" (*Vernetzte Sicherheit*, the German version of the Comprehensive Approach) and an "Action Plan" (*Aktionsplan Zivile Krisenprävention, Konfliktlösung und Friedenskonsolidierung*), which was agreed upon in 2004. The German Parliament now has a new subcommittee dealing with "Civilian Crisis Prevention and Networked Security". A "Civilian Council for Crisis Prevention" (*Beirat zivile Krisenprävention*), consisting of representatives of German civil society and several political foundations is supposed to enhance the links between civil society and crisis management officials. The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Frieden und Entwicklung* (FriEnt) helps to link up church-based organizations, civil society and government departments to organize roundtables on development policy. Most importantly, *Zentrum für internationale Friedenseinsätze* (ZIF) has been set up as a broker between German citizens, the EU, OSCE and the UN and, similar to the UK's Stabilisation Unit, its main role is to provide personnel for state-building, stabilization and other similar missions. Its "Analysis Unit" follows and studies international conflicts and political developments while the "Training Unit" trains potential personnel for deployment with courses on intercultural competence, the Rule of Law and living in difficult security conditions. A third Human Resources Department manages a database and decides on the suitability of personnel for various types of mission. Together with the German Foreign Office, ZIF selects candidates for deployment.⁴³ A 2009 law (*Sekundierungsgesetz*) has considerably improved social protection for civil servants abroad.

All of this shows that Germany is reacting to new challenges in the encounter with "failed states", but it also illustrates the point that much bureaucratic energy is spent on the modification of cumbersome institutional processes in the aim of working towards a more

instance, is not entirely clear and open to improvement. This is related to a similar problem, which is the issue of re-integration into the German job market after mission deployment. Many police tell me that participating in GPPT might actually decrease their job perspectives back in Germany.

⁴¹ Most of the police personnel interviewed stated that they were 'supposed' to write a report about their experience, but that some, i.e. those who were on their second or third tour in Afghanistan, had always found it difficult to find the time and had sometimes not done it, without any consequences.

⁴² A term used by the Sonderforschungsbereich 700 at the Berliner Humboldt Universität.

⁴³ See Daniel Korski and Richard Gowan, *Can the EU Rebuild Failing States?* Op.cit. p. 47.

Incidentally, other states are developing similar ideas. In 2008, for instance, Prime Minister Gordon Brown told the British parliament that "in the same way that we have military forces ready to respond to conflict, we must have civilian experts and professionals ready to deploy quickly to assist failing states and to help rebuild countries emerging from conflict". See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7304999.stm.

“comprehensive approach” between different branches of government or even between several governments.⁴⁴

This cross-departmental collaboration essentially remains wishful thinking: In 2011, for instance, there was only one example where all interviewed Germans agreed that the comprehensive approach had worked rather well: At one point, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development was running a Rule of Law Program in several Northern districts, organizing “town hall meetings” to talk about community grievances. Importantly, the Afghan police was invited to these meetings. Via GIZ, the Federal Foreign Office brought legal texts into the districts through its literacy campaign.

During Germany’s participation in the so-called Focused District Development program (FDD), the German Ministry of Defense was protecting the camps, police trainers were from the German Ministry of Interior, salaries paid by the Federal Foreign Office and infrastructure constructed by GIZ (on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office), for instance.

According to most observers, the “comprehensive approach”, which is supposed to underpin German capacity building, worked better in the field than in Berlin.

According to one official, “there is a sense that our “comprehensive approach” has reached systemic limits of what it can deliver.”⁴⁵ According to Timo Nötzel, the “concept of ‘networked security’ [as said above, the German version of the comprehensive approach] has repeatedly been presented as the key to successful conduct of the Afghanistan operation. However, it never resulted in large-scale problem-oriented policymaking, for example decisive enhancement of interagency cooperation on the ground”.⁴⁶ Furthermore, as Sten Rynning has pointed out, “comprehensive approach” is a *means*, not an end, and it does not replace sound strategy.⁴⁷

Lastly, the numbers are still small – between 2002 and 2010, for instance, ZIF trained 1,600 participants in its courses.⁴⁸ Training civilians to assist successive administrations in “failed states” is (and given the constraints, has to be) very general. Hence, context-specific country knowledge does not play a major role in the training.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ For a definition of the “comprehensive approach”, see: Cécile Wendling. *The comprehensive approach to civil-military crisis management. A critical analysis and perspective*. IRSEM paper, 2010. Available online: www.defense.gouv.fr/content/.../UK_Cahier6_Approche_globale-3.pdf. Accessed in June 2013. She cites an EU official concerned with the comprehensive approach as follows: The civilian approach “implies the pursuit of a methodology aimed at commonly understood principles and collaborative processes that enhance the likelihood of favorable and enduring outcomes in the political, diplomatic, security, economic, development, rule of law and human rights dimensions of international engagements in pursuit of a common goal both within and beyond the EU.”

⁴⁵ Interview with German civil servant, June 2011.

⁴⁶ Timo Nötzel, *The German politics of war: Kunduz and the war in Afghanistan*. In: *International Affairs* vol. 87, n° 2, 2011, pp. 397-417.

⁴⁷ Sten Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan: The Liberal Disconnect*. Stanford: Stanford Security Studies, 2012.

⁴⁸ Jens Behrendt, *Zivilpersonal in Friedenseinsätzen: Von der Improvisation zur Systematik?* Policy Briefing. ZIF, 2011. Available at: http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/veroeffentlichungen/ZIF_Policy_Briefing_Jens_Behrendt_Apr_2011_ENG.pdf

⁴⁹ In all fairness, however, ZIF employees working for EUPOL are put through a EU-wide selection process, where in-country experience is indeed valued.

German Capacity Building in Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz, Kabul and Feyzabad

Today, GPPT still delivers training in the Police Training Center (PTC) in Mazar-e Sharif. The PTCs Kunduz and Feyzabad have been handed over to the ANSF, but used to be an important center of gravity for German training activities. PTC Feyzabad was handed over in July 2012 and the handovers for the training centers in Mazar-e Sharif and Kabul are slated for the end of 2014.⁵⁰ Taken together, the PTCs Mazar-e Sharif, Kunduz, Feyzabad and Kabul had a capacity of 2,000 people.

In Kabul, GPPT focuses on leadership training, while training in the regions aims at more basic levels.

During the first years Germany trained policemen directly. However, the training role of GPPT changed over time and training now focuses on training Afghan *trainers*, which is a more indirect approach. During the training sessions, German trainers now mostly stand in the back and intervene only in exceptional cases.

Training is very practical. For instance, German mentors and Afghan trainers might wake up the recruits at night and tell them to go search a vehicle. Recruits can be asked to plan the setting up of an entire checkpoint, to separate individuals or to make an arrest in which women are involved. Videos from Taliban attacks can be played to the audience, in order to analyze and improve the reaction. The following example provides some insight into the daily work of "capacity building" in the field of policing. A Taliban attack on a UN guesthouse was filmed in 2009. According to a German EUPOL mentor who showed the video to ANP personnel and worked on evaluating it,

"First, you see the Taliban arrive. They start their attack and kill a couple of guards. Eventually, the police react and then you see Afghan National Police arriving, followed by the Secret Service and Kabul City Police. In other examples, we see generals from the Border Police, and sometimes even a Minister who turns up at the crime scene. They fight over their responsibility instead of fighting the Taliban. For [the Afghans] a leader cannot afford to be away from "the action" (...) At the end, three corpses are found, and each unit takes one, but information about what/who killed them is not shared between them. In another video, one sees a policeman from the *Border Police* at the crime scene. He is putting a severed hand in a plastic bag and walks away with the evidence. Again, information is not shared. (...) In fact, the attack on the British Council which lasted close to 24 hours could have been much shorter had Kabul City Police not spent four hours quarreling with a MOI Quick Reaction Force over who was in charge."⁵¹

These struggles over competencies are addressed by German leadership training in Kabul (see below).

Concerning the theoretical component (teaching human rights courses or basic knowledge about the Afghan constitution, rights of prisoners etc), there is debate about whether or not it stands in an appropriate relation to the practical training, but the curriculum does include these elements.⁵²

⁵⁰ See: *Germany's support for rebuilding the Afghan police force* http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/RegionaleSchwerpunkte/AfghanistanZentralasien/Polizeiaufbau-dt-Engagement_node.html

⁵¹ Interview with EUPOL officer. Kabul, November 2011.

⁵² See: Cornelius Friesendorf and Jörg Krempel, *Militarisierung statt Bürgernähe*. op. cit.

Infrastructure

Besides operational training, a second important aspect of capacity building in the PTCs concerns running the camp itself, i.e. at a tactical and administrative level. For the camps, GIZ provides technical training in general installation maintenance so that Afghan personnel can run the installations themselves. The German trainers also provide training in record keeping, filing reports and following administrative procedures. Over the years, the PTCs have become sophisticated structures that require extensive and knowledgeable maintenance. Many members of GPPT acknowledge that much of the infrastructure built by GIZ is not likely to survive beyond 2014. There are far from enough Afghans who could take care of supply, logistics, maintenance and so forth, and trained staff is lacking to devise schedules or assignment plans. GPPT trainers often complain about the lack of adequate administrators for the finance or logistics departments. Thus, in many instances, the Germans do these things themselves. High-ranking German policemen can be seen doing janitor work, helping with waste disposal for empty bottles, for instance.

Apart from the danger that Westerners end up doing much of the work themselves for reasons of expediency, there is also a deeper problem in the ambition to "bureaucratize" the PTC infrastructure. An example from the French shall illustrate this point. Their *Pôle de Stabilité* in Kapisa encourages infrastructure programs in an effort to support the capacity of the local government. The money is managed by a national program called EQUIP (Education Quality Improvement Program), but the financing comes from ARTF (Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund). However, according to an insider, what matters is to have a good contact to the World Bank, as this particular disbursement procedure follows the World Bank's internal protocols. Afghan collaborators first have to understand how these various international structures work. Thus, in many cases there is a danger that the imported "capacity" is essentially Afghan capacity to understand and reproduce a bureaucratic Western system – instead of the capacity to run an Afghan structure. Much of this will become irrelevant once the foreigners leave. This is a worrisome point: Even if Germany, or in fact Europe, managed to turn capacity building or, in fact, its "civilian approach" to state-building into a cohesive model, the lack of knowledge about local structures still largely precludes any lasting impact.

Training in Kabul

A slightly different picture presents itself at the Afghan National Police Academy (ANPA) in Kabul. The focus here is much more on conceptual reflections about leadership in terms of how to lead a team, mediate in conflicts or when to delegate authority. For instance, mentors discuss who should be admitted to a crime scene, who is competent to deal with victims, collect evidence or deal with the press.

There is a 5-week course for police trainers, focusing on the themes of police methodology, didactics and tactics. The courses also include elements of psychology, communications and stress management. Afghan trainers are then sent to the PTCs to train new recruits. Ideally, the trainers come back after one year to continue their training and move on to higher ranks (*satanman* level 3). According to one German trainer involved in this program, "we all put our hopes in this project because when Afghans have enough trainers, we will be able to leave". The program started in March 2011 and by the end of the year about 500 trainers had been trained, around 700 in 2012 while another 700 are planned for 2013.

Apart from the fact that training leaders is easier than training beginners, there is another reason why Germany has increasingly sought to position itself in the "Train the Trainers" program. According to a EUPOL official, "those high-ranking officers are not the ones who shoot you in the back", referring to the "green on blue" attacks, which have become a political

liability for donor nations. This points to another fundamental fact about German/Western capacity building: It is seen by most US allies as a strategy to avoid risk, and more importantly, combat. If capacity building, however, is seen as a convenient way of escaping entrapment in a US-led war, it might be said that it becomes an indirect strategy of avoidance, not a direct strategy to shape outcomes.

Moreover, and be it in Kabul or in the provinces, police training remains heavily offer-driven. Because the political imperatives of withdrawal force the training mission to churn out policemen by the thousands, German trainers often point out that there is no time for lengthy assessments, let alone for withholding aid if it is not properly used.

For example, a German trainer said that "during the shooting lessons they take only *one* of the dozens of donated ear protections for the general, then they buy two cheap ones on the market, but the recruits don't get any. Also, we are sitting on hundred of police manuals and books. This is because they prefer not to hand them out to their recruits, because they fear that they will come back in bad shape, and because they know that donations will stop soon."

In the absence of donor conditionality, donations continue to flow.

Having illustrated how German capacity building is carried out in practice, the paper now turns to the Ministry of Interior (MOI), which is the structure that supposedly oversees the national police. We will see in this section that, in the words of an insider, it is almost as if there were two parallel realities: "what the foreigners think they are doing, and the political games the Afghans play."⁵³

The MOI

When Western mentors talk about a "ministry", they often imply a model of ideal-type, rationalized, accountable, problem-solving, transparent, and merit-based institution. Institution-building, and capacity building as its corollary, are supposed to result in an aggregation of civil servants who plan and devise national policy, correct its course if necessary and help distribute resources. They should ultimately learn to do policy-relevant research, run programs and evaluate them. Civil servants are supposed to take instructions from a cabinet or a president, be responsive to the population's needs and take public opinion into account, support the minister's policy and impartially execute his/her authority in line with the government's priorities. This presupposes an administrative mindset and culture in which neutrally minded civil servants accept to carry out policies even when policies do not necessarily coincide with personal convictions.

However, Western university-educated Afghans who could serve as "civil servants" tend to work in the parallel economy of donor organizations, where they can get "top-ups" – that is, more money. The innumerable "Gender", "IT", "HR", "Policy Planning" and other units in MOI tend to be staffed by the personnel that are left. Hence, high officials are in general appointed based not on merit or skill but on whom they know and how much they are willing to pay to purchase their jobs.

The following example illustrates this point. One insider talked about a current deputy minister, saying "he used to be working under me, and he didn't know how to write. Then he took a few weeks of police courses with the foreigners, and he was given a police rank because someone up in the hierarchy needed a loyal ally. But he has no actual police

⁵³ Interview with MOI insider, November 2011.

background, and most importantly, he is a trained *bodyguard*, not somebody who should work on strategic policy in our MOI!"⁵⁴

A German trainer was very candid on this: "We know that many of those who are coming to our Academy in Kabul are aspiring to prestigious positions in the MOI. But we also know that in order to get one of these positions, they need to pay very high bribes, which they will later retrieve by extorting money from Afghan citizens, or by working with drug lords and the like."

Power Struggle in MOI

The very history of post-2001 MOI is dominated by a struggle for power between different power groups. According to one MOI official, "it is very easy to pinpoint who in this ministry represents Karzai's, Fahim's, or even Hekmatyar's interests". MOI has always been seen as a preserve of the Tadjiks. After 2001, the Ministry of Defense (MOD), the National Directorate of Security (NDS) and the MOI were all Tadjik-owned, just like many other ministries belonged to other factions. Ever since, it has been a back and forth between the Tadjiks and Pashtuns for the Ministry of Interior (current MOI Minister General Patang is a Logar Pashtun), while the MOD has been Pashtun for almost all the time since 2001.⁵⁵ In fact, Afghan Ministries have a long history of being used as factional assets to control the distribution of resources and direct them to solidarity groups. As one former high-ranking MOI official relates: "Everybody here thinks of his party and benefits. That is why we cannot create capacity here: For example, I am experienced in counter terrorism. Because I do not belong to the right group, the minister evinced me. The new person is from his province. This is bad. Because the system I created is professional. The new guy cannot continue this system; he lacks very basic skills. So there is a real lack of professionalism. You cannot build capacity here, because expertise gets lost so easily."

In connection to this, in the current situation of transition, powerful figures in MOI have no incentive to reform. The Afghan power struggle for posts and resources is only exacerbated by withdrawal, and there seems to be a silent agreement that no major reform will be passed until then.⁵⁶ In the words of a German mentor, "we have entered a system of mutual alimentation", very much like what Barnett and Zürcher describe as the 'Peacebuilder's contract'.⁵⁷ Donors do not follow up on their donations because this would threaten their efforts in a time where Western politicians try to reassure the public that Afghanistan will remain stable.

⁵⁴ Interview with MOI insider, November 2011.

⁵⁵ There have a couple of major efforts to reshape MoI. First efforts under Minister Jalali (2003-2005) intended to create a more rationalized structure, to improve the appointment process and to improve communication and collaboration of different departments. A much publicized "Pay and Rank" reform was initiated under Minister Zarar. This led to the creation of LOTFA, the international trust fund that still pays about 93% of ANP's salaries. The number of senior ranks was reduced and a board was set up to oversee appointment, now supposedly based on "merit".

⁵⁶ One recent initiative concerns a law on violence against women (*Law on Elimination of Violence against Women* (EVAW)), but despite affirmations to the contrary, there is no credible reform effort to fundamentally restructure MoI before 2014.

⁵⁷ Michael Barnett and Christoph Zürcher, *The peacebuilder's contract. How external statebuilding reinforces weak statehood*. Pages 23–52. In: Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk (ed.), *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding*. Op. Cit.

On the other side, the Afghan recipients are scrambling for the last donations pledged in Tokyo, before the funds inevitably become less.⁵⁸

Poor usage of personnel by MOI and lack of mentoring

Western donors have little leverage over the actual use of the trained personnel. In addition, the way the MOI itself uses its own personnel is far from professional. For instance, when asked about the training, Afghan officers from the French Company Commanders class said "this class is useless, because after the teaching, we return to the same positions as before. After graduation it will all have been for nothing, and instead of becoming Company Commanders, we will remain unit commanders. This is because we have no 'special connection' in Kabul." Other recruits from a French SWAT [Special Weapons and Tactics] course said, "SWAT-type work only makes sense in a group of around 40 men [which is how they are trained]. We need to be many in order to clear a building, to free a hostage or to kill insurgents who have locked themselves up in a building. But after training, for reasons we ignore, MOI often sends us to police stations by groups of three or four men. There, we are supposed to do the work of 40 men, except that we are only three or four. It cannot work." In addition, MOI often sends ethnically homogeneous groups to areas where other ethnic groups dominate and where there will be no possibility to forge a link with the locals.

Another example is very telling for the way training is being done for the sake of training: One Afghan company commander said "I have been a logistics officer for thirty years. In the old system [under Zahir Shah], we used to be much more specialized. Training for logistics was separate from training for telecommunication or operational command, for instance. Today, we are trained to do everything at once and the MOI doesn't respect our competencies. It is not likely at all that I will be asked to serve in the field of logistics. In the worst case, I might even be asked to go to the South and fight." These examples point to two dimensions: One is lack of an efficient management system. The other is the fact that policemen are often used as political tokens in very complex and quickly changing dynamics. But because there is not enough Western analysis, and lack of efficient institutional follow-up in MOI, the internationals are distanced even further from the usage of their "product".

⁵⁸ The recent Tokyo conference has earmarked 16 billions of aid Dollars for the four years after transition. See, for instance, "Donors Pledge \$16 bn in Afghan Aid." BBC, 8 July, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18758148>. Accessed on 27.01.2012.

Conclusion: An uninformed donor

Despite the current state-building fatigue of the wider Western public, virtually all Western states are adapting to the challenge of state-building in “states without a state”. The UK’s Stabilization Unit, the project to create a “European Institute for Peace”,⁵⁹ recent institutional developments in France, Finland, Denmark and Sweden, or the US’ Quadrennial Diplomacy Review, for instance, are testimony to a growing consensus that more context-specific knowledge is needed for state-building.⁶⁰

GPPT, the object of this study, has undeniably undergone substantial improvements and professionalization with respect to its “capacity to do capacity building”. GPPT now emphasizes pre-deployment preparation for its civil servants much more than it used to. For instance, Germany has created several new institutions and committees and passed a law that ensures social security for its civil servants on foreign missions. In Afghanistan itself, Germany oversees a huge civilian infrastructure and provides for about ten percent of the overall training of police forces. Its training is one of very high quality and according to focus group discussions with about fifty Afghan trainees, the Germans enjoy a reputation for being professional and respectful. One could even say that from a transatlantic viewpoint, GPPT contributes to a significant improvement of the NATO Training mission,⁶¹ given that many US police trainers have a military, not a civilian background.

Thus, if one accepts the argument that Germany is learning from its encounter with a “failed state”, one could be tempted to find this enough.

However, a variety of factors greatly affect this verdict.

First, this kind of institutional professionalization often concerns *internal* improvement like institutional developments in the home capital, the creation of new (national and international) coordination mechanisms or the professionalization of personnel. This internal optimization stands in contrast to the fact that courses are very short - Afghan recruits are called “policemen” after only some weeks of training.

Moreover, despite Germany’s development of a more professional civilian “capacity to do capacity building”, these civilian tools are still very far from rivaling the military in terms of efficiency, coherence and speed. Most importantly, Germany has no stand-by army of police like the French gendarmerie; most civilian advisers or “state-builders” in the field of police

⁵⁹ Franziska Brantner, Carl Bildt and Alain Mamassoure, *Für ein europäisches Friedensinstitut*. Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 10 December 2012.
<http://www.nzz.ch/meinung/kommentare/fuer-ein-europaeisches-friedensinstitut-1.17880505>.

⁶⁰ On the increasing demand for civilian experts, see: Jens Behrendt, *Zivilpersonal in Friedenseinsätzen: von der Improvisation zur Systematik?*, Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze, Berlin, January 2011 (Policy Briefing) and Claudia Major and Martina Bail, *Waiting for Soft Power: Why the EU Struggles with Civilian Crisis Management*.

⁶¹ See also Sarah Chayes on this point. *NATO didn’t lose Afghanistan*. New York Times, July 20, 2007. Available at : <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/10/opinion/10chayes.html>. Retrieved in September 2010.

reform are recruited on a voluntary basis, which makes it difficult to obtain the necessary numbers.

There is insufficient analysis and understanding of Afghanistan, and new information on the shifting ground factors does not make it quickly enough into the mission. Generally speaking, most capacity building is determined by "big picture"-type international conferences, mainly concerned with withdrawal, and not based on in-depth contextual information and knowledge about the country. Western diplomats regularly defend this approach with the argument that it would be too time-consuming to create all the required knowledge for every new major intervention. They point to the fact that most international interventions are ad-hoc in nature and unpredictable. However, the role of research is to point to wider contradictions, and the lack of knowledge about context is possibly the biggest such contradiction in Afghanistan. In the words of Antonio Giustozzi, "(e)very age has its follies; perhaps the folly of our age could be identified as an unmatched ambition to change the world, without even bothering to study it in detail and understand it first." This ambition, he notes provocatively, is reminiscent of colonial times, "but at least at that time it was accompanied by a determined effort to improve knowledge and understanding of the objects of conquest."⁶² This study agrees with this point of view, because new context-specific knowledge (in other words: research) is not integrated into the training mission, as this would further complicate the process of devising curricula in an international alliance. This situation leaves very little room for open and productive discourse on policy choices, design, implementation and learning from what actually happens on the ground. In fact, section 3 has shown that many insiders privately acknowledge that political games are happening inside MOI that run in parallel to (or even against) Western efforts.

What's more, local need-assessments are seldom conducted with the necessary seriousness. For instance, a senior GPPT member with about 5 years of experience in Afghanistan pointed out, that "when the Operational Plan for EUPOL was devised in 2007, a fact-finding mission was deployed, but spent only a few weeks in Afghanistan. The document still had 'Pristina' [the capital of Kosovo, where a European Police mission has been deployed as well] written all over it. The Germans had insisted that the mission be set up so quickly that they hadn't even had the time to replace 'Pristina' by 'Kabul'!"⁶³

Thus, GPPT and most Western donors in Afghanistan fail to act as *informed* donors, i.e. donors who know the context in which they operate or the exact usage that is made of their contribution.

Next, because there is no official, precise definition of what capacity building is supposed to mean, German capacity building essentially remains an offer-driven activity. In an interview at ANPA in December 2011, the later Minister of Interior General Patang acknowledged improvement in coordination, but still complained, "everybody essentially brings his own system." This often results in an Afghan "download" of a Western bureaucratic system, but not in a transfer of capacity to run an Afghan one.

Importantly, the Germans have conducted capacity building as part of a wider strategy vis-à-vis their alliance leader, the US. In Afghanistan, police training was mainly "discovered" when President Obama asked Europeans for more troops in 2009. Ever since European nations have vied with one another for important training roles in NTM-A. Despite attacks,

⁶² Antonio Giustozzi. *Decoding the New Taliban. Insights from the Afghan Field*. London : Hurst and Company, 2009. Page 1.

⁶³ Interview with insider, Kabul, October 2011.

which have led to some casualties among the foreign trainers, this is seen as a relatively low-risk contribution. Thus, capacity building is not conducted as an end in itself, as the overriding goal is to maintain good relations with the US. This has obvious implications: while US capacity building has become obsessed with churning out a high number of policemen before withdrawal, GPPT is unwilling to contribute the necessary resources to make the US change course. Despite many examples where European philosophies have been at odds with American police-building practice (notably concerning the preference for quality over quantity), Germany and other European states have preferred quietly going along with US approaches.

In essence, the most fundamental point of this paper is that no matter how professional the training mission becomes, the social engineering approach of GPPT and NTM-A eschews politics and fails to engage with the political nature of the conflict. Coming back to how Germany has conceptualized and carried out its capacity building contribution in Afghanistan, it must be said that it has mostly avoided connecting technical skill transfer to the wider political questions of reconciliation. In Afghanistan, capacity building has too often been carried out like technical service delivery devoid of politics. However, the question of post-2014 sustainability is not only a question of adequate “skill donations” or capacity, it is ultimately a question of a social order negotiated (or fought over) between political forces. Importantly, engagement with Afghan politics would necessitate making choices that are hard to sell in Germany, like, for instance, bringing the enemy into a negotiated agreement. The result is a hybrid form of state-building that retreats into technicalities, carrying out “template” development where the recipient country’s needs are made to fit a model that is designed for Western security imperatives. This type of “engineering is a problem, not a solution”, as Sten Rynning points out, because the really hard questions in Afghanistan concern reconciliation, the treatment of prisoners or the warlords.⁶⁴ Conducting a training mission that pretends that these questions don’t exist is, in fact, a form of surrender to complexity, because a solution can come only from politics, not capacity.

⁶⁴ Sten Rynning, *NATO in Afghanistan: The Liberal Disconnect*. op. cit.

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