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Limits of Force-based Strategies and Institution-Building: a Focus on Border Spaces in the Security Puzzle

Simbal Khan and Helena Rytövuori-Apunen

In response to the events of 9/11, the U.S. and its international coalition used military force almost reflexively to dismantle al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban government and its associated networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. As the Taliban resurged in 2004–2006[1] from their sanctuaries in the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan, it was widely believed that it was the lack of regional governments' capacity to launch effective counterterrorism operations and to police their borders which fueled transborder militancy.[2] Afghanistan, along with its Central Asian neighbors, as well as Pakistan, received high levels of support to undertake large-scale security sector upgrades.

This chapter argues that force-based strategies have achieved certain results during the last fourteen years: counterterror strategies such as kill-capture campaigns have been successful in decimating foreign al-Qaeda-related actors from South-Central Asia.[3] However, the success of such operations is limited and short-term in their effect when applied against transborder militants due to a failure to account for the dynamic nature of these actors. Unlike foreign al-Qaeda elements, these forces are linked to the ever-changing socio-political and economic dynamics within the border spaces in which they operate. Use of excessive military force against them within their larger communities has accelerated societal change and concomitantly changed the very nature of these groups. The Pakistani military's initial deployment to the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) region in

1 Thomas H. Johnson, "On the Edge of the Big Muddy: The Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (2007): 94, 98.

2 Sergey Golunov, "Border Security in Central Asia: Before and After September 11," *Austrian Federal Ministry of Defense*, April 2005, http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?lang=en&id=91419.

3 "Obama: Taliban, al-Qaeda Diminished in Afghanistan," *Jerusalem Post*, December 16, 2010, http://www.jpost.com/International/Obama-Taliban-al-Qaida-diminished-in-Afghanistan; also see Dave Boyer, "Obama: Al Qaeda 'On the Way to Defeat'," *Washington Times*, August 7, 2013, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/aug/7/obama-al-qaeda-way-defeat/.

2004, and the continuous military operations of the past ten years, has given birth to the Pakistani Taliban, an umbrella group of more than thirty smaller groups resisting the Pakistani state.[4] Simultaneously the on-going war and conflict in border spaces has limited the political and institutional outreach of governments in these areas. Several border districts in Afghanistan have no permanent civilian government presence due to poor security.[5] In Pakistan, military operations in border zones over the last ten years have weakened established governing institutions and marginalized the role of the Political Agent (PA), which previously headed the civilian administration in FATA.[6]

While the establishment of border crossing points provide legalized channels to some of the people and goods that flow across the border, border management alone cannot possibly significantly diminish the illegal flows and control the movement of insurgent groups between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Control of the approximately 2,600-kilometer-long border is a daunting task for a number of technical and political reasons, not least because the administrative reforms and measures on the Afghan side are insufficient unless they are mirrored by similar structures on the Pakistani side. Even after more than a decade of border management and security sector reform, Afghan Taliban still manage to travel unimpeded through the border zone between Pakistan and Afghanistan.[7] The Pakistani Taliban offshoot, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), has in fact grown to develop its own capacity for transborder operations.[8] Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) remnants have been able to shift between Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal

4 Jayshree Bajoria and Jonathan Masters, "Pakistan's New Generation of Terrorists," *Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder*, September 26, 2012, http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/pakistans-new-generation-terrorists/p15422.

5 Fabrizio Foschini, "One Year of Transition: A Look Back," *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, March 18, 2012, http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/one-year-of-transition-a-look-back-1/ and http://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/one-year-of-transition-a-look-back-2/.

6 International Crisis Group, "Pakistan: Countering Militancy in FATA," *Asia Report*, no. 178 (October 21, 2009), http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/southasia/pakistan/178_pakistan___countering_militancy_in_fata.pdf; also see Zulfiqar Ali, "Political Administration Not Prepared to Replace the Army in FATA," *Dawn*, December 16, 2013, http://www.dawn.com/news/1074269.

7 Zia Ur Rehman, "Taliban Militants Striking Pakistan from Afghan Territory," *Combating Terrorism Center,* September 26, 2012, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/taliban-militants-striking-pakistan-from-afghan-territory.

8 S. Paul Kapur and Sumit Ganguly, "The Jihad Paradox: Pakistan and Islamic Militancy in South Asia," *International Security* 37, no. 1 (Summer 2012):134–135.

Areas and northern Afghanistan and into Tajikistan,[9] which has facilitated their connections with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. While the border spaces obviously are a test of the capability and willingness of neighboring and regional states to cooperate with each other, they also are the ultimate test of the sustainability and determination of the policies of the international community to build up peace and stability in and around Afghanistan.

International Security Assistance and the War on Terror

According to a Congressional Research Service report released in August 2015, the U.S. has provided about $100 billion to Afghanistan since the change of the government in Kabul in autumn 2001, of which about 60 percent has been for "train and equip" missions for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), including the ANA (Afghan National Army) and ANP (Afghan National Police).[10] Since 2010, Afghanistan has seen an immense expansion of its military and police forces designed as substitutes for the anticipated departure of international troops. By September 2012, the ANSF had grown to 352,000 troops; and this number has become the rough standard for the post-withdrawal situation.[11] At the Tokyo summit held in July 2012, the U.S., NATO, and other donors pledged $16 billion over four years, from 2012 to 2015, amounting to $4.1 billion per year in security sector support. Later, this support was extended to continue beyond 2015, initially for the next two years and subsequently until the end of 2020.[12]

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9 Frank Shanty, *The Nexus: International Terrorism and Drug Trafficking from Afghanistan* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), 128; and see Matthew Stein, "Uzbekistan's View of Security in Afghanistan After 2014," *Military Review* 92, no. 3 (May–June 2012): 75–76, 78.

10 Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service*, *CRS Report*, August 17, 2015, summary, https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30588.pdf. The plan for 2016 is $5.3 billion, of which $3.8 billion for the ANSF (ibid.). These figures do not include the cost of U.S. combat operations, which is estimated to be around $686 billion from October 2001 to December 2014 (Amy Belasco, "The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11," *CRS Report*, December 8, 2014, summary, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33110.pdf).

11 Katzman, "Afghanistan," 31.

12 The Tokyo Conference took place on July 8, 2012. It was an international meeting to discuss strategy and financial support for Afghanistan's security and its political and economic development beyond 2014 in anticipation of the U.S. military withdrawal from the region. See Anthony Cordesman, "Afghanistan and the Tokyo Conference: Hope,

Pakistan also began to receive unprecedented levels of security sector assistance from the U.S. after it joined the U.S.-led coalition as a "frontline ally" in 2001. For the period of 2002–2013, it received approximately $25 billion, out of which around $17 billion was security assistance, including $10.7 billion packaged as Coalition Support Funds (CSF).[13] The CSF funding reimburses Pakistan for costs incurred by the military during its counterterror and counter-insurgency operations on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. By June 2015, CSF funding amounted to $13 billion and the authorization for the next fiscal year (until end June 2016) was $1.5 billion.[14]

By comparison, U.S. security assistance to Central Asian states has been far smaller but has increased significantly since September 2001,[15] despite congressional restrictions on U.S. security assistance to governments with human rights violations (Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, for example).[16] By the end of 2001, the U.S. had negotiated with the governments of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to station military troops on their territory and gained access to the Karshi-Khanabad base in Uzbekistan as well as the Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan.[17] Between 2001 and 2005 the United States Army, Air Force and Marine Corps maintained the military base in Karshi-Khanabad (also known as K2 and "Stronghold Freedom") for support missions against al-Qaeda in neighboring Afghanistan. Under a joint declaration titled "Strategic

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Fantasy, and Failure," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, July 9, 2012, http://csis.org/publication/afghanistan-and-tokyo-conference-hope-fantasy-and-failure; also see Thomas Ruttig, "Jumble of Figures: How much money came out of Tokyo?," *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, July 9, 2012, https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/jumble-of-figures-how-much-money-came-out-of-tokyo/; also see "Afghanistan Aid: Donors Pledge $16bn at Tokyo Meeting," *BBC*, July 8, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-18758148. On December 1, 2015, the foreign ministers of the NATO member states agreed on the need to secure funding for the ANSF until the end of 2020. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_125364.htm.

13 K. Alan Kronstadt and Susan Epstein, "Direct Overt U.S. Aid Appropriations for and Military Reimbursements to Pakistan, FY2002–FY2014," *Congressional Research Service*, April 11, 2013, http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/207789.pdf.

14 Ibid.; "Pakistan Gets $336m in Coalition Support Fund, Foreign Reserves Climb to $19bn," *Dawn*, Karachi, July 28, 2015, http://www.dawn.com/news/1196920/pakistan-gets-336m-in-coalition-support-fund-foreign-reserves-climb-to-19bn.

15 Jim Nichol, "Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interests," *Congressional Research Service, CRS Report*, November 20, 2013, 50–51, http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/218963.pdf.

16 Ibid, 53; also see Roger N. McDermott, *Kazakhstan's Defense Policy: An Assessment of the Trends*, (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2009), 13, 17, 22.

17 Jeffrey Mankoff, "The United States and Central Asia After 2014," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, January 2013, 3, http://csis.org/files/publication/130122_Mankoff_USCentralAsia_Web.pdf.

Partnership and Cooperation" (2002) the U.S. also assured Uzbekistan of its commitment to destroying IMU bases in northern Afghanistan.[18] The U.S.-Uzbekistan military and security partnership unraveled in autumn 2005, but as the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) was expanded half a decade later, the U.S. began re-engaging Uzbekistan by first providing modest non-military security assistance (subsequent developments are discussed by Vadim Romashov in this book).[19] The U.S. continued to use the Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan for troop deployment and logistical purposes until late spring 2014. ISAF also established direct military cooperation with Tajikistan, which has included refueling operations for coalition aircraft, hosting a small contingent of French jets at Dushanbe airport, and allowing coalition aircraft to cross its territory. Additionally, the Central Asian states, and especially Tajikistan with its 1,340-kilometer-long border with Afghanistan, have received multilateral assistance to improve the security and management of their borders. Since 2003, the Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI) has functioned as a coordinating forum that brings together the EU, U.S., Russia, China, Japan and Turkey as well as a wide range of global organizations to discuss border-related issues with the five Central Asian states and Afghanistan. The prime motor in this activity has been the Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) program which was initiated by the European Commission in 2003. BOMCA was allocated €36.5 million for the period of 2003–2014, out of which €33.6 million was provided directly by the European Commission. An additional €5 million has been allocated for the period 2014–2017.[20] Such programs proclaim broad-

[18] Nichol, "Central Asia," 16; also see Jim Nichol, "Central Asia's Security: Issues and Implications for U.S. Interests," *Congressional Research Service*, *CRS Report*, April 26, 2007, 25–26, 31–33, https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=473486.

[19] Daniil Kislov, "U.S. Ambassador in Uzbekistan George Krol: 'We Recognize Democracy May Develop and Look Differently in Uzbekistan'," *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, September 25, 2012, http://www.turkishweekly.net/2012/09/25/news/us-ambassador-in-uzbekistan-george-krol-we-recognize-democracy-may-develop-and-look-differently-in-uzbekistan/; also see U.S. Department of State, "State's Blake on U.S. Policy in Central Asia," *U.S. Embassy Bishkek*, October 18, 2012, http://bishkek.usembassy.gov/states-blake-on-us-policy-in-central-asia-october-22-2012.html.

[20] CABSI was founded in 2003 by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior as a platform for dialogue and discussion on border management activities in Central Asia. Each year the CABSI Consortium meets to review the progress of BOMCA with its five Central Asia partner countries. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is the implementation agency for BOMCA for the EU along with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) as an implementing partner. European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, "Central Asia—Border

based political support; however, the sums received by the individual Central Asian states are seven-digit in comparison with the billions allocated for Afghanistan. Among the largest items of non-military assistance is the U.S. support for improving the capabilities of the Drug Control Agency in Tajikistan, which amounted to several millions of dollars in 2015.[21]

Civilian Assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan

In Afghanistan, the civilian assistance provided by the U.S. alone between 2001–2014 has amounted to $37.4 billion, and a further, almost equivalent sum has come from other sources. Besides reconstruction of physical infrastructure, a substantial amount of this assistance has flowed into rebuilding Afghanistan's governmental institutions, improving its rule of law and governance, and boosting its political structures, including its electoral system. Pakistan has also received enhanced assistance for its civilian sectors from the U.S. and other donors. Non-military assistance from the U.S. during 2002–2014 totalled $9.3 billion.[22] Civilian aid to Afghanistan accelerated during 2010–2014, generally doubling aid figures from the middle of the last decade. In Pakistan this peaked in 2010, after the U.S. Congress approved the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act in 2009, and then stabilized in modest declines for each subsequent year.[23]

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management," accessed June 6, 2015, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/central-asia/eu-support-border-management-central-asia_en.

21 The U.S. Central Command has provided more than $130 million in assistance to law enforcement agencies in Tajikistan since 2007. "US Embassy Dushanbe Provides Tactical Equipment to Tajikistan's Agencies Involved in Counter-narcoti [sic]," *Asia-Plus,* Dushanbe, August 12, 2015, http://www.news.tj/en/news/us-embassy-dushanbe-provides-tactical-equipment-tajikistan-s-agencies-involved-counter-narcoti; also see Embassy of the United States, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, http://dushanbe.usembassy.gov/index.html.

22 A great majority of direct overt aid to Pakistan is in the form of Economic Support Funds (ESF). Katzman, "Afghanistan," 72, 75; K. Alan Kronstadt and Susan Epstein, "Direct Overt U.S. Aid Appropriations for and Military Reimbursements to Pakistan, FY2002–FY2016," *Congressional Research Service*, September 30, 2015, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/pakaid.pdf.

23 Simultaneously the share of economic-related assistance to Pakistan has increased in relation to security-related assistance. This was the rationale of the Enhanced Partnership for Pakistan Act (commonly known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill, KLB), which sought to untie economic-related aid from security issues and thus make it more stable. The act authorized a tripling of U.S. economic and development-related assistance to Pakistan ($7.5 billion over five years, FY2010 to FY2014). Center for Global Development, "Aid to Pakistan by the Numbers," accessed June 10, 2015, http://www.cgdev.org/page/aid-pakistan-numbers.

This enhancement in civilian assistance occurred in parallel to the ongoing war in Afghanistan and military operations in Pakistan's border zones. The underlying political rationale of civilian assistance in this instance is that better governance, especially at the district and local levels, would increase state capacity in providing goods and services to the people and thereby reduce the popularity of groups such as the Taliban. In 2009–2010, more than 70 percent of USAID civilian assistance flowed into Taliban-dominated war zones in southern and eastern Afghanistan.[24] However, initial optimism about the possibilities to build administrative, educational, and business infrastructure even in the remote areas began to fade over the course of the decade, partly for reasons commonly related to development assistance: the lack of local infrastructure fit for the allocation of funds as well as a socio-cultural environment in which it was difficult to operate without engaging in practices such as those pertaining to bribery amongst law enforcement officials. However, there was also a more specific reason: large counter-insurgency operations of "clear, hold and build"[25] launched in southern and eastern Afghanistan in 2009 did not decimate the Taliban. Instead, they served to push fighters across the border into Pakistan's tribal belt in order to regroup and reorganize.

Multilateral Support Structures

In international non-military cooperation on Afghanistan the concentration of efforts on rebuilding political institutions and governance structures with external assistance has obscured political and cultural dimensions and aspects of local politics that have sustained the support for the Taliban and its networks, especially within the border communities.[26] The political approach to rebuilding the post-Taliban Afghan state has been two-pronged: the

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24 Gregory Johnson, Vijaya Ramachandran, and Julie Walz, "CERP in Afghanistan: Refining Civilian Capabilities in Development Activities," *Prism* 3, no. 2 (2012): 82–85.

25 "Interview: McChrystal Says Solution in Afghanistan is Developing Governance," *Radio Free Europe/Radion Liberty*, June 30, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/Interview_US_Commander_In_Afghanistan_Says_Real_Solution_Is_Developing_Governance/1765881.html; also see U.S. Department of Defense, "Commander's Initial Assessment," news release, *Washington Post*, September 21, 2009, http://media.washingtonpost.com/wpsrv/politics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf?hpid=topnews.

26 Siegfried Wolf, "Taliban and Democracy: The Unequal Equation," *Panorama*, June 28, 2013.

international community has assisted in building political institutions as well as the massive reconstruction process within Afghanistan and Pakistan; and institution-building practices have been extended to the region as a whole in order to promote region-wide inter-state cooperation. Since 2001, this has been the focus of many noteworthy political initiatives. The Bonn 1 process in 2001[27] created optimism for the future of regional cooperation centered on Afghanistan. All of Afghanistan's neighbors, as well as other regional actors such as India, Turkey, and the Arab Gulf states, cooperated with Afghan and international actors to produce the framework for the reformed Afghan state. With the beginning of President Obama's first term in 2009, there was a renewed focus on reviving regional initiatives that created new diplomatic instruments, such as the "Contact Group" and a regional security and economic cooperation forum.[28] International diplomacy focused on creating various trilateral and multilateral platforms within the region, with Afghanistan as a centerpiece.

The most well-known initiative to revive regional cooperation is the 14-member "Istanbul Process."[29] Also known as the "Heart of Asia," it was launched in Istanbul in November 2011. Initially, the Istanbul conference was designed as a platform for developing regional arrangements to support the security of Afghanistan after 2014. The Afghans, in particular, demanded binding guarantees about mutual non-interference under the aegis of the United Nations that would start the process of shutting down insurgent safe havens beyond Afghan borders. Because the proposal was rejected during the initial stages of negotiation, it remains unclear what precisely it was that the Afghan delegation was proposing. While some sources suggest that the Afghans were hoping to set up a structure similar to the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), Pakistan, Iran and Uzbekistan re-

27 Afghanistan Government, "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions," accessed June 10, 2015, http://www.afghangovernment.com/AfghanAgreementBonn.htm.

28 Office of the President, "White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy toward Afghanistan and Pakistan," March 2009, 2, http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf.

29 The "Heart of Asia" Ministerial Conference Declaration, "Istanbul Process: Stability and Prosperity in the 'Heart of Asia' through Building Confidence and Shared Regional Interests," April 26, 2013, http://mfa.gov.af/en/news/19668; also see U.S. Department of State, "State's Blake in Kazakhstan on Istanbul Process," April 26, 2013, http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2013/04/20130429146581.html#axzz2j7GGZNWd.

jected the draft declaration even before the conference began.[30] In rejecting this new arrangement, which had originally been proposed by the U.S., other Western countries and India, the government of Pakistan maintained that regional security issues could be handled within existing regional frameworks such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).[31] At the Ufa summit meeting held in July 2015, both India and Pakistan entered the process to become full and permanent members of the SCO.[32]

The founding members of the SCO (China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) as well as the new members, India and Pakistan, all face varying challenges from militant organizations. Chinese authorities see Uighur militant groups such as ETIM in northern Afghanistan and in Pakistan's tribal belt as a separatist threat in Xinjiang province, which links China with Central Asia and farther afield to Europe through geo-economic strategies under construction (see the contribution by Mika Aaltola and Juha Käpylä in this book). Muslim Uighurs originating from Xinjiang have found sanctuaries within co-ethnic communities in Central Asia and, increasingly, in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Central Asian states have all faced the threat of the transborder Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and its offshoot, the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), and since 2014 the support given by the Islamic State to this regional insurgency has been renewing fears that had been fading about the presence of al-Qaeda within the region. Russia has had a long history of conflict with Chechen and Dagestani rebels, who move around within the region seeking resources and support from other regional militants.[33]

However, the expectation that the SCO could develop region-wide cooperation in order to counter these threats is likely to remain only wishful speculation. This is because, firstly, inter-state disputes over conflicted borders and natural resources such as water still impact relations between the countries. Secondly, the politics of transborder militants is intertwined with

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30 Thomas Ruttig, "Afghanistan Conference in Istanbul: The clogged arteries of the 'Heart of Asia'," *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, November 1, 2011, https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/afghanistan-conference-in-istanbul-the-clogged-arteries-of-the-heart-of-asia/.

31 Yousaf Kamran, "Pakistan to Attend Istanbul Conference with Low Expectations," *The Express Tribune*, October 31, 2011.

32 "Pakistan, India, join Shanghai Cooperation Organization," *Dawn*, July 11, 2015, http://www.dawn.com/news/1193717.

33 Alexander Shlyndov, "Certain Aspects of Russian-Chinese Collaboration in the International Arena," *Far Eastern Affairs* 34, no. 2 (2006): 68–81.

the histories of these borders and how state practices are developed to achieve state interests. From time to time such groups serve at least the tactical interests of regional states vis-à-vis neighboring states.[34] Thirdly, the states cooperating in the frame of the SCO are generally reluctant to become engaged in developing multilateral cooperative structures that could restrict their sovereign decision-making. Therefore it cannot come as a surprise that the idea of creating a structure similar to the OSCE aroused the suspicions of Pakistan and other states. A region-wide security organization modelled on the OSCE remains unlikely in a region where countries resist maneuvering themselves into a restrictive framework akin to that experienced by Afghanistan. During the past ten years the OSCE had come under the criticism of Russia, Belarus and some other states, who had claimed that the organization's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was promoting the political interests of the West through its election observance missions. The SCO, which was formed in 2001 by China and Russia on the basis of the Shanghai Five, was contrarily seen as a platform to develop policies in accordance with the governments' preferences to confront threats such as radical Islam and transborder militant actors.[35] The idea that institution-building practices could be extended to the region as a whole, and that such region-wide cooperation could open pathways in solving security problems, resonates with the Western experience of integration and can be easily presented as a design for politically appealing policy in international forums. However, the non-institutional approach that is based on tradition and nowadays promoted as "Asian regionalism" within the region (see the contribution by Elnara Bainazarova in this book) may be a more realistic way to gain concrete results because it, in spite of perhaps being idealized for purposes of identity and prestige, is an already present, living tradition as well as a diplomatic practice to which the states are accustomed in their mutual cooperation.

[34] Paul Ames, "Afghan governors call for more international aid for border regions," *Associated Press*, May 7, 2008, http://www.genocidewatch.org/images/Afghanistan_08_05_07_Afghan_governors_call_for_more_international_aid_for_border_regions.doc.

[35] Thomas Ambrosio, "Catching the 'Shanghai Spirit': How the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Promotes Authoritarian Norms in Central Asia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 8 (October 2008): 1334.

Conclusion

Afghanistan since 2001 has made remarkable progress in institutional development in all primary state sectors, as a result of international support for the Afghan reconstruction and rehabilitation process. Its National Security Forces, in particular, are an important step in building Afghan sovereignty and state capacity in order to provide its population with a minimum degree of security once international forces withdraw. Yet, the international donor community has been slow to consider the consequences of the fact that the process of institution-building was undertaken almost entirely through the enormous infusion of external funds. In 2015, donor aid was estimated to account for more than 95 percent of Afghanistan's GDP and at least two-thirds of its government expenditure.[36] Therefore, the long-term sustainability of many of the institutions developed over the course of the last fourteen years in Afghanistan remains in question.

While these issues cannot be avoided for as long as international funding continues, our focus has been a question that does not draw as much public attention. We argue that such institution-building has failed to address the problem of transborder militancy in the region, and that force-based approaches have in fact strengthened the dynamics causing the problem to worsen in the long term. In chapter 3 in this book, Simbal Khan discusses in detail the complex mechanism that has allowed transborder militant movements to survive within the conflict-laden spaces in South-Central and Central Asia. Both in Afghanistan and Pakistan these movements remain tied to the conflicted situation within border spaces. Furthermore, the presence of foreign troops has not made the central governments' approaches to the populations in the border areas any gentler; contrarily, it has disrupted communities and served to prepare the ground for yet more conflict. Continued suppression, the experience of injustice, and economic plight prepare the ground in which local insurgency gathers strength and becomes receptive to regional and extra-regional jihadist connections. Although the public image of the coalition troops on the Afghan side differs greatly from the reports of the U.S. drone attacks on the Pakistani side, these are two sides of the same conflict. Broadcasts reveal little of the horrors of nocturnal raids

[36] Katzman, "Afghanistan," 53.

and the fear by which the ANSF, backed by foreign forces, rules these border areas.

In the cases where it has been successful, the use of military force has been mostly limited to maintaining an uneasy status quo, evident for example in increased border fencing and the hardening of border controls by the Indian military to prevent infiltration by Kashmiri militants. Even here, however, the status quo seems to be uncertain, as border violations have increased since 2012.[37] Our conclusion is, first, that while most interventions by international and regional actors in and around Afghanistan have relied on use of force strategies along with a focus on institution-building, this approach alone has failed to address persistent conflict involving border areas. Second, there is no other way but to contribute to economic and social development within conflicted and marginalized spaces around border areas. The main challenge here is less about resources than about gradual community development. These issues call for close cooperation between donor agencies and local communities as well as the use of regional governments' own channels for development work, despite their propensity for corruption and other problems. Third, the long-term effects of policies of violence must be recognized. Whenever local populations' sense of justice is violated by military operations in a situation where the possibility for retributive justice does not exist, these operations—the acts of the government-supported security forces, national and foreign—are likely to generate new cycles of violence. The dilemma is that where the rule of law does not exist and the state can violently disrupt the everyday lives of the people, the state itself—the concept of the unified national state, its army and other institutions—becomes part of the conflict and the source of violence. It remains impossible to establish rule of law and democracy—the Western concept of the state—by force in an environment where these ideas do not already exist and make a sensible difference in the lives of people but where, instead, experiences with the state are characterized by violence and repression. While this is a general problem that leads us to immanent criticism of Western approaches and juxtaposes idealist construction of society (ideas—reforms—are defined in one context and implemented in

[37] Sadika Hameed, "Kashmir Violence Strains India-Pakistan Dialogue," *World Politics Review*, September 4, 2013, http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13191/kashmir-violence-strains-india-pakistan-dialogue.

another context)[38] with pragmatist realism (ideas arise from the life-experience to which they consequently apply), it is most acute in border spaces which draw in and shelter political dissent.

To sum up, we find that a crucial piece of the puzzle in which development is thought to facilitate security will remain absent for as long as the international emphasis on greater regional cooperation as a means to build security in the post-withdrawal situation in and around Afghanistan continues to stall over the issue of transborder organization and its linkage to militant activity and jihadist causes. The agencies who participate in implementing the various region-wide designs for energy cooperation and other border-crossing projects, which are meant to enhance regional economic development, would do well to include direct benefits not only for population centers but also for border communities in their goals. A step forward would be that the donors—international development banks, organizations and countries—include the benefits generated for the border communities in the initial conditions of funding and require this item to be a part of impact assessment. This would also be a way to pressure regional governments to seriously consider the economic and social condition of their border communities. The challenge for the international community, then, is whether these issues can also open up space for wider forms of regional and international cooperation to alleviate the dire economic situation of border communities, and whether such cooperation can be sufficiently broad-based so as to also include the historical powers in the region, Russia among them. This is important in order to ensure that external actors will not support regional states along ethnic lines as has been the case in the past and, possibly, remains a tempting practice in conflict situations involving international rivalries. This, of course, brings the question of border spaces back to the political roots of the problem at hand, which is the question of ethnically and regionally inclusive government on different levels of administration. Border spaces are not just a "missing piece" that calls for our attention but a piece in a more comprehensive puzzle.

[38] U.S. Foreign Assistance for Afghanistan Post Performance Management Plan-2011–2015, Volume I-Summary (August 28, 2010, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1871/Approved%20PMP%20updated%2010-02-2010.pdf), is a typical example of an idealist approach where development is about the implementation of western values of government. The goals in relation to the insurgent communities are mainly about delegitimizing their communications by means of media.