Beyond Warlordism.
The Local Security Architecture in Afghanistan

**CONRAD SCHETTER, RAINER GLASSNER,
AND MASOOD KAROKHAIL**

Introduction

Triggered by the terror attacks of 9/11, the subsequent international intervention in Afghanistan has catapulted the country to the centre of international political attention. The military intervention by the US and allied forces, which started in October 2001 and led to the subsequent collapse of the Taliban regime in autumn 2001, resulted in a power vacuum, which was immediately filled by hundreds of commanders, as well as tribal and religious leaders. These »big men« either possessed a certain legitimacy or controlled the means of violence to a sufficient degree. This development was further strengthened by the US strategy of using Afghan militias to back up their fight against the remnants of al-Qaida and the Taliban (Suhrke et al. 2004).

Thus the world suddenly became aware of structures of violence which developed during 22 years of continuous war in the absence of a functioning state and could scarcely be changed by military intervention from one day to another. Consequently, the internationally encouraged peace process in Afghanistan was repeatedly shaken by recurring acts of violence and the lack of a designation of clear responsibilities for security tasks. This volatile situation was grasped by international observers as a complete lack of security and regarded as the core obstacle for all the political steps of the peace process – the »Emergency Loya Jirga« in June 2002, the »Constitutional Loya Jirga« in December 2003, the presidential elections in September 2004, and the parliamentary elections in September 2005. No less than Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations special envoy to Afghanistan from 2001 to 2003, coined the saying that Afghanistan is in need of three things: »Security, security, and security.«

Notions of »security« can vary a lot and even be understood in contrary ways. In the case of Afghanistan international policy-makers, journalists, and researchers (Sedra 2002; Ignatieff 2003) have heavily stressed the lack of physical security, circumscribing it with the term »warlord-

ism.« This labeling was the expression of a modern, state-centric understanding of physical security, which generally assumes that state institutions hold a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Contrary to this ideal situation, individual actors – so-called warlords – were identified as the ones who de facto control the means of force. Since 2002, virtually no influential political figure in Afghanistan has been able to elude this label, which subsequently became the category for all actors spoiling or even casting doubt on the international agenda of the Afghan peace process. Hereby the term »jang salar« (Dari term for »warlord«), which had never been used in Afghan parlance in the past, found its way into Afghan rhetoric and is used – in contrast to the mainly used term »commander« – in a very biased and negative sense.

The aim of this paper is to show that the term »warlordism« and its connoted perceptions are not adequate to characterize the structures of violence in Afghanistan. While we do not deny the existence of warlords in Afghanistan, the manifold forms of individual leadership, as well as the local differences regarding security arrangements, are too significant for them to be positioned on a linear axis between warlords on the one hand and the modern state on the other. To support our argument, we will first discuss the term »warlord« itself. Secondly, we will discuss the security situation on the provincial level in three case studies (Kunduz, Kandahar, and Paktia). In this way we intend to demonstrate that the variety of security arrangements on the local level is enormous. Drawing from these examples, we will elaborate various patterns which are of primary importance for defining the local security architecture.

Warlordism in Afghanistan

Besides the war against remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaida, which is increasingly becoming dominant in the south of Afghanistan and has destabilized large parts of that region, the dominance of so-called warlords has been stressed in recent years as the major security threat (Sedra 2003). The most prominent individual examples of these so-called warlords were Rashid Dostum, Mohammad Fahim, and Ismail Khan, who became the archetypes or icons of today's warlordism. The argument persistently advanced is that their arbitrary habits and their control of the means of force are the main impediments to establishing a countrywide peace and security.

In view of the omnipresence of the term »warlord« in the recent literature on Afghanistan to describe the lack of security (Giustozzi 2003, Peake et al. 2004, Sedra 2003), it makes sense to shed light on the etymology of this term. Within the general debate on state collapse in recent years, the term »warlord« was attributed to competing elites, which gained control of the security sector (Reno 1998, Mackinlay 2000) and looted the country for their own profit (Collier 2000). But the etymological notion of the term »warlord« has been criticized from various points of view. First, the term bears a negative connotation and one-sidedly suggests a connection of the actors to warfare. Second, the positive suffix »-lord« was criticized for elevating the respective actors to the status of noblemen. But when we look closely at a whole series of different Afghan actors commonly labeled warlords, it is striking that they neither draw their income from warfare per se nor exhibit honorable or baronial behavior. Accordingly, it can be argued that the term »warlord« is misleading because it is used for a wide variety of actors who seldom have much in common (Giustozzi 2003). In light of this fact it has to be questioned generally whether the use of the term makes sense. But since this expression was picked up very quickly by the media and policy-makers and is well established in the public awareness, it is unlikely it will be dropped. Hence, it has to be stressed that this term, even though it lacks the necessary differentiation and sharpness, tackles the problem in a memorable way, like no other term; thus military grades such as »commander« or »general« assume a legality which these actors usually do not have, while terms such as »leader« or »power-holder« lack the aspect of violence. Moreover, discussion of the term »warlord« has also spread among the Afghans. Thus former members of the Northern Alliance suspect that the label »warlord« is an attempt to sideline them on the national level (Yusufzai 2005).

While the term »warlord« is subject to criticism as well as public recognition and popularity, the deeper problem lies within the perceptions which usually go along with use of this label. Two main perceptions can be identified which often turn out to be chimaeras in reality: First, that warlords allegedly are the counterweight to the state (Berdal & Malone 2000); secondly, that the sole motivation of warlords is their personal economic profit and enrichment. Concerning the aforementioned, the term »warlord« is commonly linked to actors who are diametrically opposed or hostile towards the state. They are identified as the »bad guys« boycotting or spoiling the peace process and jeopardizing the

establishment of well-organized and regulated state power. Thus this point of view carries the risk of suggesting a bipolar semantic order which rarely exists in reality because most of the so-called warlords operate in a limbo of power: On the one hand they take over state functions and posts as governors, ministers, police chiefs or military officers, while on the other they pursue their own interests and do not hesitate to deploy state resources to accomplish their private goals (Reno 1997). Although the emergence of so-called warlords is tied to the weakness or fragility of the state (Milliken 2003; Rotberg 2004), warlordism should not be understood as an antipode to the state. In contrast, the relationship between warlords and the state can be described as a process in which the former take over state positions and simultaneously fail to fulfill state functions and to obey the state rules.

The other perception prevalent among academics as well as among the media and policy-makers is that warlords are modern robber barons: They are viewed as relentlessly exploiting the ordinary population, mainly motivated by greed for individual, material profit (Collier 2000). According to this narrative, wars are fragmented in terms of the profit interests of individual actors and are perceived as economic struggles over lootable resources (Jean & Rufin 1999; Le Billon 2000). This line of argument lacks the socio-economic contextualisation of the individual actors. Most of these warlords are embedded in social-economic contexts and are part of reciprocal interpersonal networks. The loyalty of their militiamen depends not only on economic benefits, but is often tied by family, clan, tribal, ethnic or religious relationships. Many of the Afghan warlords spend their revenues to strengthen their networks. The exchange of women through marriage is a common strategy used to tighten relationships with important allies. Furthermore, it is misleading to confine a warlord to the military sphere. Functional differentiations between politics, economics, and the military are virtually non-existent in nonmodern societies such as those we find in Afghanistan. Moreover, social status is not necessarily defined by wealth. In most cases, it is rather achieved by conforming to a certain positively connoted archetype of Afghan society such as the »brave warrior« (Rashid Dostum) or the »wise emir« (Ismail Khan). Thus individual behavior is tied to ideal figures of Afghan society in a positive way.

Based on closer examination of the academic discussion on warlordism, we decided not to reject the term »warlord« completely but to define it more narrowly and more precisely. In this way we attempt to elude both

a judgmental, even negative connotation and a blurred, even exchangeable definition. Our aim is to provide a definition which aims to elude the pejorative notion of the term warlord, but one that focuses on the functional characteristics of these actors. In this way, first, we underpin the connotation of the actors with the control of the means of physical force. Secondly, we focus on relations between actors and structures. In doing so, we understand warlords as actors who are able to make decisions without necessarily being controlled by institutional bodies of state or society. Thus warlords control the means of physical force – private as well as state owned – and have the potential and capacity to decide about its use.

The Localization of Security

As demonstrated above, the term »warlord« is not adequate to describe the current (in)security in Afghanistan. There is no uniform type of actors nor can these actors be accurately described with a single term. But alongside the variety of actors, regional differences play a crucial role. We intend to show that on the local level different social, economic, and political factors result in different security architectures. Moreover, it would be misleading to position these security architectures on a linear spectrum between the poles of the state on the one side and the warlords on the other. The main reason is that there are many more variables which define the security situation. In each case study – Kandahar, Kunduz, and Paktia – we chose the provincial level as the level of research.

Kandahar – Feudal Warlordism

The city of Kandahar is not only the capital of the homonymous province, but also the main centre of Southern Afghanistan. Kandahar has played an important role in Afghan history: Afghans perceive Kandahar as the birthplace of modern Afghanistan and the town served as the stronghold and secret capital of the Taliban. Since the movement was ousted from Kandahar in December 2001, the province has been dominated by a handful of strong warlords collaborating with the government, as well as by the Taliban and international anti-terror forces.

To understand the emergence of warlordism in Kandahar, it is important to take the socio-economic structures of the province into consider-

ation. The Pashtun confederations of the Durrani and Ghilzai, which comprise several tribes, have been competing for control of Kandahar city since the eighteenth century (Noelle 1997). In contrast to the Pashtuns of Eastern Afghanistan, the tribes of Kandahar are structured in a hierarchical manner. Already during the eighteenth century a small landowning aristocracy emerged within each tribe which managed to seize economic resources and control local decision-making processes, while ordinary tribesmen often ended up as their clients (»hamsayagan«). Thus tribal coherence has been built not only on common tribal identities and values, but also on access to economic resources, patronage, and protection.

These socio-economic structures are reflected in the security architecture of today's Kandahar province. Within each large tribe we find a single or a very small number of powerful warlords stemming from landlord or business families and maintaining their own private militias (ICG 2003a). The power elite of Kandahar province encompasses no more than half a dozen men.[1] Furthermore, these warlords compete for the control of core government positions to get beyond their regional influence. They have already succeeded in taking over core positions within the Kandahar provincial administration and successfully placed their clients within the civil administration, as well as the key local security posts. Especially within the security sector the warlords managed to transform their militias into regular army units during the DDR process (ICG 2003b: 26) To illustrate these structures of violence, it is useful to portray two prominent warlords: Ahmad Wali Karzai and Gul Agha Shirzai.

Ahmad Wali Karzai is the younger brother of President Hamid Karzai and currently the head of the provincial council of Kandahar province (HRW 2004). The Karzai family has been influential in the Kandahar region for decades and belongs to the leading families of the Popalzai tribe, to which the king's family also belongs. Ahmad Wali Karzai makes use of his closeness to Hamid Karzai while at the same time being the main representative of the Popalzai tribe in Southern Afghanistan. Furthermore, he is said to control a big share of the drugs trade in the region (Baldauf 2004; Gall 2004).

After the Popalzai, the Barakzai are the second largest tribe in Kandahar province (ICG 2003b). The most prominent member of the Barakzai

---

1. Findings of a survey undertaken in 2005/2006 by the Tribal Liaison Office (TLO) on local leadership in Kandahar province. Information about Kandahar is based on field research if not indicated otherwise.

is Gul Agha Shirzai. However, in contrast to Ahmad Wali Karzai, Gul Agha Shirzai does not descend from the tribal aristocracy: his father, Haji Latif, was an important »mujahidin« commander in the 1980s and his family gained influence through large property holdings. Gul Agha Shirzai has served twice as provincial governor and for a short period as a minister in Hamid Karzai's cabinet. He has to be considered one of the most powerful men in Kandahar, not least since he integrated his militias into the Afghan National Police during the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration process. His militias also assist the Coalition Forces in fighting insurgency groups.

The situation in Kandahar is strongly influenced by the US-driven »War against Terrorism« and the counter-operations of anti-government resistance. While information about the latter is rare, it is interesting that the opponents of the Coalition Forces are deeply embedded in local communities. Thus rural districts such as Panjwaye, Naish, Arghistan, Khakrez, and Ghorak are under the control of the Taliban and have become backbones of the anti-government resistance. From these districts the Taliban movement started its rapid military expansion in the mid-1990s. Here the population shares norms and values with the former Taliban regime. Moreover, the local population still perceives the physical security provided by the Taliban as more adequate than that established by the government or the Coalition Forces. One commonly heard statement is that the harsh and uncompromising power exercised by the Taliban put an end to banditry and created a certain accountability for everyday life. In addition, the military operations of the Coalition Forces tightened the relationship between the Taliban and the local population. Especially military actions such as routine house searches violate local customs, such as the concealing of the womenfolk from men's eyes. Due to the high intensity of violent actions between the Taliban and the Coalition Forces, the local elites are forced to position themselves either with the Coalition Forces or with a »total spoiler« position. The dramatic increase of violence and instability (Glassner 2006) along with increasing anti-government sentiments have made local institutions such as *shuras* ineffective in bridging the gap between the government and local communities.

Opium cultivation also has a strong impact on the security situation. Although it dates back to pre-war times in Kandahar province, this economy only started to boom in the late 1980s when the Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan. In 2005, nearly 13 percent of the Afghan area

under poppy cultivation was situated in Kandahar province (UNODC 2006: 39). The dominance of the opium economy is so strong that hardly any elite family can maintain a leading position within its tribe without an involvement in the drug economy. However, the counter-narcotics strategy of the international community, which was initiated in 2004, pressures those elites loyal to the government to curb their poppy cultivation (Blanchard 2005: 17–18). This has led to a situation in which patronage networks are facing a tremendous change: More and more farmers and traders, for whom the drug economy constitutes the basis of their daily livelihood strategy, are shifting their loyalty to the Taliban. Today the drug trafficking networks make use of both the government and the Taliban, depending on which group controls the respective area.

Summing up, in recent years, the combination of insurgency, well-financed drug networks, and hierarchical tribal structures has restricted the influence of the Afghan government in Kandahar province and instead favored the emergence of strong warlords and the Taliban. The only difference between the former and the latter is that the Taliban still maintain a corporate identity and act in a collective way. But the Taliban are becoming more and more an umbrella for heterogeneous actors such as militant Islamists, drug barons, tribal elders, and warlords.

Kunduz – Fragmented Warlordism

Despite the long distance between the capital Kabul and Kunduz, as well as the geographical barrier of the Hindu Kush mountain range, the Afghan state has been quite influential in the North-eastern province of Kunduz since the emergence of the Afghan state at the end of the nineteenth century (Noelle 1997). This was a prerequisite for the Pashtun colonization, which took place in several waves from the early 1920s, encompassing stockbreeders, farmers and the Pashtun aristocracy. While the latter received large landholdings from the central government, especially the migration of stockbreeders created tensions with the autochthonous population (Grötzbach 1990; Shalinsky 1982). This colonization policy required a strong state to effectively control the distribution of land. Consequently all influential officials were Pashtuns, mostly related to the king's family. Accordingly, the language spoken in the provincial government was Pashtu, a fact which effectively excluded the bulk of the population from direct access to the state (Patterson 2004). The result of this colonization was a complete change of the power structure due to

the confiscation of large, mainly Uzbek, landholdings. Moreover, the ethnic diversity of Kunduz is enormous, often changing from village to village. Besides Pashtuns, also Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazara, Arabs, Baluchs and Turkmen are located in Kunduz province.

This historical anchorage of the Afghan state in Kunduz has had a significant influence on the constellation of today's power architecture. Holding an official position in Kunduz province is regarded by the elites as a guarantee of power and as an important material as well as symbolic resource. The intermingling of the pursuit of personal interests and holding a state position directly affects the security situation: For example, high ranking officials within the highway-, border- and provincial police, are accused of deploying policemen for their own interest. In fact, the local population describes the police as their private militias in uniform.[2]

Due to migration and Pashtunization as well as the ethnic diversity within the province and due to the frequently changing frontlines during the war, there are no universally accepted communal forms of organization and institutions that would be capable of checking and balancing the power of individuals. This has resulted in myriads of mini-fiefdoms, as well as localized »rules of law« or »rules of the gun.« Thus each village is headed by a »big man,« who often held the position of a commander during the civil war. The appraisal of these »big men« differs from place to place. While some are seen as good and honorable, others are described as killers and stealers. Smaller warlords can often act with impunity since they are backed by others. In the past, the territory under the control of the respective commanders was sharply demarcated due to the levying of taxes such as »ushr« or »zakat« (Dorronsoro 1999; Goodhand 2002). But with the collapse of the Taliban and the presence of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Kunduz, the commander system experienced its demise: the levying of taxes was disrupted and consequently the borders of the warlords' territories vanished. Nowadays, armed militias are not often to be seen; nonetheless the mutual relationship between commanders and militiamen remains significant. Due to the hierarchical structure of the militias in Kunduz, the loyalty of a militiaman is primarily directed to his immediate commander. Alliances among militias tend to be bro-

---

2. Within the context of projects funded by the German Peace Research Foundation and the Volkswagen Foundation, the authors carried out research in Kunduz and Paktia province in spring and summer 2005.

kered on a broader scale and seldom rely exclusively on tribal, ethnic or regional similarities. No communal or religious institutions exist any longer to control these small warlords and their militias.

The cities of the province (Kunduz, Khanabad, Imam Sahib) are today controlled by the police, which are made up former militiamen. The rural areas are still controlled by myriads of warlords. But the security architecture varies from place to place, as illustrated by the two districts of Imam Sahib and Khanabad. Imam Sahib is situated on the border with Tajikistan. It is a fertile agrarian district and moreover a key hub for the drugs trade. Accordingly, both the district itself and the post of the chief of the border police are strategically very significant. Imam Sahib is dominated by the Ibrahimis, an Uzbek clan, which rose from nothing to become the predominant family of that district and beyond in the course of war. Ibrahim Abdul Latif became the governor of Kunduz province in 2002 before he was appointed governor of Faryab (2004). His brother Haji Raoof earned a reputation as a commander, headed the border police in Imam Sahib and won a seat in the parliamentary elections. Finally, the locally strategically important position of the »mirab bashi,« who controls farmers' access to the important resource of water, is monopolized in the hands of Afiz, the brother-in-law of Haji Raoof, whereas in other districts this position is commonly exercised by members of different clans and usually varies from irrigation canal to irrigation canal (Shah 2006). Thus the Ibrahimis rule the district in a quasi-feudalistic way and control access to economic resources. Hence, most small warlords in Imam Sahib are directly dependent on this family.

While the means of force in Imam Sahib are monopolized by one family, Khanabad provides a different picture. During the war the district was under the control of Commander Amir, the most influential commander of the Islamist Abdulrab Sayyaf in north-eastern Afghanistan. After Amir's death, he was followed by his brother Ghulam, who lost several of his sub-commanders due to the upsurge of ethnic and political polarization since the collapse of the Taliban. Taken together with the lack of commonly shared institutions, this led to a fragmentation of violence and the emergence of a myriad of loosely connected small »big men«, rarely controlling more than one village. Their actions are restricted solely by competition with other »big men,« but not controlled or regulated by the local population or the government.

Summing up, a wide variety of warlords and »big men,« who differ widely in the scope of their influence and power, control the means of

physical force in Kunduz province. Moreover, a complete lack of religious, ethnic-tribal, or even modern institutions can be observed which might be capable of constraining the arbitrary acts of the rulers. This results in a strong localization of the »rules of the game« and varying architectures of the power structure from district to district, and, as in Khanabad district, from village to village. Additionally, the rentier economy of large landlords strengthens the position of the warlords, makes them independent of the population, and further weakens the existing collective institutions.

Paktia – the Rule of the Tribes

Paktia province is located in the eastern part of the so-called Pashtun belt and is more or less ethnically homogenous. Despite its geographical proximity to the capital, Kabul, the presence of the state in Paktia has always been weak, which is largely due to the strength of the tribal system. By the end of the 1970s, state influence did not extend beyond the provincial capital of Gardez. Similarly, the Taliban were present only in the provincial capital and had no control whatsoever of the countryside. Even today the power of the government is very limited: the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police are concentrated in Gardez and along the main roads.

The Pashtuns of Paktia are divided along tribal lines. Tribal identities are still perceived as the most important points of reference, incorporating ideas of honor and justice as well as day-to-day behavior (Steul 1981; Glatzer 2002). The »pashtunwali,« the Pashtun tribal codex of law and behavior, comprises the commonly accepted »rules of the game,« which are binding for everybody and provide strict guidelines on how to deal with specific situations. Although the community values of the »pashtunwali« vary slightly from tribe to tribe, the main underlying notion influencing all interpretations of it in the east is that all Pashtuns have equal status and no one should possess more rights and power than the others (Janata & Hassas 1975). According to this notion, all Pashtuns descend from the same ancestor and possess equal social and political status. Furthermore, the Paktia tribes settle their problems by consensus building, meaning that tribal gatherings (»jirga«) are the place to mediate conflicts until a solution is found. In contrast to many other regions of the Pashtun tribal belt, such as the already discussed case of Kandahar, the tribal system in Paktia is still intact.

Due to this tribal structure and the underlying egalitarian understanding of society, political leadership is always strongly contested (Anderson 1983; Steul 1981). This is why the last two decades have been characterized by a continuous struggle between the tribes on the one hand and individual warlords challenging the tribal system, on the other. Very often, strong men – first »mujahidin,« then warlords – endeavored to gain a powerful status within their tribes. But as soon as they acted contrary to the code of the »pashtunwali,« conflicts arose between them and the tribes. This was especially the case after the collapse of the Taliban in winter 2001/2, when Bacha Khan of the Zadran tribe seized power in Paktia even without the legitimacy of his own tribe. Bacha Khan was initially backed by the Northern Alliance and the Coalition Forces for his operations against the Taliban. He was able to mobilize warriors from his Zadran tribe as well as small warlords such as Raz Mohammad and Wazir Khan. As a result of his arbitrary path to power over the province, disregarding the rules of the »pashtunwali,« most of the tribes regarded him as an illegitimate »bandit« or »jang salar.« Within a few days, the tribes reacted to Bacha Khan's seizure of power and managed to build up a counter force across tribal boundaries. After several days of heavy clashes in Gardez, which left about 100 people dead, the tribes were able to oust Bacha Khan from the town. The Coalition Forces sided with the newly appointed governor of Paktia against Bacha Khan. Following this event, the tribes established their power across the entire province. This development was further supported by the us strategy of arresting spoilers – Taliban or not – and deporting them to Guantanamo or Bagram.

Since that incident, policing in the tribal areas of Paktia has been carried out by the »arbakee,« a sort of traditional tribal police. According to the tribal system, the establishment of an »arbakee« becomes necessary if the decision of a »jirga« is not accepted by one of the persons affected by a dispute and if a ruling has already been passed. Hence, the »arbakee« implement the decisions of a »jirga« and are legitimized and controlled by tribal elders. But the »arbakee« remain an occasional force which is only in power as long as the tribal »jirga« is in need of it. Since first being established in 2001, the tribes have installed »arbakee« in all districts of Paktia, and today they far outnumber the regular police. The »arbakee« take over classic police tasks as well as protection of tribal resources such as forests and pastures. That scope of operations rests very comfortably with the notion of community policing. The »arbakee« are controlled by a »wazir« (commander) who takes part in tribal gatherings and receives

his orders from the tribal elders. Interestingly, since 2002 the »arbakee« have increasingly become an interface between state and tribes. Several security tasks such as protection of forests and road security were officially handed over by the provincial government to the arbakee. Moreover, the state has been permanently financing 40 to 60 members of an arbakee in each district since 2002 and even increased this number drastically during the elections. While paid by the state, the »arbakee« remain loyal to the tribes and are exclusively controlled by the tribal »jirga.« Consequently, the »arbakee« enjoy much broader acceptance by the local population than the regular police, which are often regarded as corrupt and ineffective.

But the tasks of the »arbakee« depend strongly on tribal norms and values, which in many cases are diametrically opposed to Western norms and values, but in full accordance with the »pashtunwali.« For example, the strictly obeyed exclusion of women from the public sphere in Paktia contradicts the idea of gender-equal communal participation. Also, the continuing legitimacy of blood feuds undermines attempts to introduce modern conflict-resolution mechanisms. Finally, one has to underline that »arbakee« do not constitute neutral forces, but are time and again involved in tribal rivalries. One example is the long lasting tribal feud between the Ahmadzai tribe and the neighboring Totakhel tribe, which was aggravated by the establishment of the »arbakee.« Furthermore, socioeconomic differences challenge the egalitarian idea within each tribe. Especially tribesmen benefiting from the remittances of family members working in the Middle East or Pakistan are gaining a stronger influence on decision-making, increasingly challenging the egalitarian character of the tribal system. However, the »pashtunwali« has so far remained strong enough in Paktia to compel tribal leaders to follow the egalitarian ideal in their rhetoric and behavior. In other words, the tribal system in Paktia obstructs or at least constraints the emergence of warlordism.

Security Architecture

Using these examples, we have illustrated the diversity of security architectures in different Afghan provinces. As the case of Kunduz clarified, one can even find a variety of different security architectures within a province, often diverging from valley to valley and from village to village. Although our definition of the term »warlord« applies to many of the

influential actors currently to be found in Afghanistan, the term remains inadequate to characterize all the varying forms of control of the means of force and to delineate them from state security structures. The fundamental finding of the present paper is that a contextualisation is key to understanding different security architectures. On the basis of the aforementioned examples, the basic observable dimensions affecting the local security structure must be seen as social structuring, economic resources, and of the state and international actors.

Social structures play an eminently important role and, moreover, always have to be regarded in the very specific local context: the different social structures in Paktia and Kandahar make clear that a characterization as »tribal Pashtuns« as such is too superficial to say anything meaningful about the tribal impact on the security architecture. Also the history of a region has to be taken into consideration: due to colonization in the twentieth century the population of Kunduz is highly heterogeneous. Common ground in terms of values and rules could hardly be achieved, contributing to the fragmented warlordism we can find in this province. In this regard Paktia proves the opposite: with its tradition of tribal culture accepted by the people at large, strong tribal institutions averted warlordism.

Similarly, local economies have an impact on the security architecture. In regions such as Kandahar, which rely heavily on drug cultivation and drug trading, one can witness the establishment of strong warlord structures. Apparently, the financial resources connected with the drug economy contribute to the strengthening of hierarchical structures. This argument is supported by the example of Kunduz, where a strong warlord clan succeeded in establishing itself in the district of Imam Sahib, which is strategically important for the drugs trade, while the district of Khanabad, which does not benefit from the drug economy, faces a fragmentation of the control of power and violence.

The presence of the state has a significant impact on the security architecture. In general, the endeavor of the state is to control the security sector and to establish a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. One could imagine that where the concept of the state is more accepted the dominance of the warlords is easier to break. But on the contrary, as the examples of Kandahar und Kunduz reveal, warlordism is very distinct in exactly those regions where the state is regarded – at least in the eyes of elites – as important. Thus warlords often perceive the state as a desirable resource to control and to have access to. Thus it seems that Charles

Tilly's (1985) argument – that warlordism is a concomitant phenomenon of the state building process rather than being diametrically opposed to it – also proves true in the case of Afghanistan. In contrast, the egalitarian tribal structures in Paktia, where the state is hardly recognized as such, prevent the consolidation of warlordism.

The role of the international community is difficult to judge. Without doubt the presence of international actors has led to the disappearance of weapons in public – warlords and militias are forced to display a low profile. This trend is particularly visible in those Afghan provinces which are being heavily funded by the international community for reconstruction (for example, Kabul, Herat). For many warlords, a share in international reconstruction resources constitutes a vital economic incentive. Yet the international presence does not always have a taming influence on the structures of violence. Ultimately, it was the establishing and equipping of Afghan warlords and their militias by the US army in its »War on Terrorism« which caused the temporary emergence of warlordism with Bacha Khan in Paktia and continues to determine security structures in Kandahar to this day.

We have tried to describe the complex and locally very heterogeneous security structures in Afghanistan. Although a broad definition of the term »warlord« can be applied to many actors of physical violence in Afghanistan, it fails to take into account the vast variety of local security architectures. While the presence of the state and of international actors also has a direct influence on the security architecture, it is primarily local social and economic conditions that shape the mechanisms involved in producing security. To obtain a better understanding of how these local security structures work, much more research on local governance constellations is needed.

List of References

Anderson, Jon W. 1983: »Khan and Khel: Dialectics of Pakhtun Tribalism,« in: Richard Tapper (ed.): *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 119–49.

Baldauf, Scott 2004: Warlord Politics Heats Afghan Vote, accessed at: http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/1006/p01s01-wosc.html.

Berdal, Mats R., and David M. Malone 2000: *Greed and Grievance. Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Blanchard, Christopher M. 2005: »Afghanistan: Narcotics and u.s. Policy.« crs Report for Congress. Washington.

Collier, Paul 2000: »Doing Well Out of War: An Economic Perspective,« in: Mats R. Berdal and David M. Malone (eds.): *Greed and Grievance. Economic Agendas in Civil Wars.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 91–112.

Dorronsoro, Gilles 1999: »Afghanistan: von Solidaritätsnetzwerken zu regionalen Räumen,« in: François Jean and Jean-Christophe Rufin (eds.): *Ökonomie der Bürgerkriege*. Hamburg: Hamburger Ed., 121–54.

Gall, Carlotta 2004: »Afghan Poppy Growing Reaches Record Level, un Says,« in: *New York Times,* November 19.

Giustozzi, Antonio 2003: Respectable Warlords? The Transition from War of All against All to Peaceful Competition in Afghanistan, accessed at: http://www.crisis states.com/download/others/SeminarAG29012003.pdf.

Glassner, Rainer 2005: fast Report – Semi-annual Risk Assessment June to November 2006, accessed at: http://www.swisspeace.org/uploads/fast/updates/fast%20 Afghanistan%202_2006%20final.pdf.

Glatzer, Bernd 2002: »The Pashtun Tribal System,« in: Georg Pfeffer and Deepak Kumar Behera (eds.): *Concept of Tribal Society.* New Dehli: Concept Publishers. 265–82.

Goodhand, Jonathan 2002: »From Holy War to Opium War? A Case Study of the Opium Economy in North-Eastern Afghanistan,« in: Christine Noelle-Karimi et al. (eds.): *Afghanistan – A Country without a State*. Linz: 139–60.

Grötzbach, Erwin 1990: *Afghanistan: eine geographische Landeskunde.* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

hrw – Human Rights Watch 2004: The Rule of the Gun – Human Rights Abuses and Political Repression in the Run-up to Afghanistan's Presidential Election, accessed at: http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/asia/afghanistan0904/afghanistan 0904.pdf.

Ignatieff, Michael 2003: *Empire Lite*. London: Vintage.

icg – International Crisis Group 2003a: Afghanistan: The Problem of Pashtun Alienation. Kabul/Brussels: icg.

icg – International Crisis Group 2003b: Disarmament and Reintegration in Afghanistan – icg Asia Report No 65. Kabul/Brussels: icg.

Janata, Alfred, and Reihanodin Hassas 1975: »Ghairatman – Der gute Paschtune – Exkurs über die Grundlagen des Paschtunwali,« in: *Afghanistan Journal* 2, 3: 83–97.

Le Billon, Phillipe 2000: The Political Economy of War: What Relief Agencies Need to Know, Humanitarian Practice Network Paper No. 33. London.

Mackinlay, John 2000: »Defining Warlords,« in: Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse (eds.): *Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution.* London: 48–61.

Milliken, Jennifer 2003: *State Failure, Collapse and Reconstruction.* Malden: Blackwell.

Noelle, Christine 1997: *State and Tribe in Nineteenth Century Afghanistan*. Richmond: Curzon Press.

Patterson, Mervyn 2004: *The Shiwa Pastures, 1978–2003: Land Tenure Changes and Conflict in Northeastern Afghanistan*. Kabul: AREU.

Peake, Gordon et al. 2004: *From Warlords to Peacelords: Local Leadership Capacity in Peace Processes*. Londonderry: INCORE.

Reno, William 1997: »Welthandel, Warlords und die Wiedererfindung des afrikanischen Staates,« in: *Welttrends* 14: 8–29.

Reno, William 1998: *Warlord Politics and African Society*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Rotberg, Robert I. 2004: *When States Fail. Causes and Consequences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sedra, Mark 2002: Challenging the Warlord Culture – Security Sector Reform in Post-Taliban Afghanistan. Bonn: BICC.

Shah, Usman 2006: Livelihoods in the Asqalan and Sufi-Qarayateem Canal Irrigation Systems in the Kunduz River Basin. January 2007 (Amu Darya Series 4), accessed at: http://131.220.109.9/fileadmin/webfiles/downloads/projects/amudarya/publications/ZEF_Amu_Darya_Series_SMWA_4.pdf.

Shalinsky, Audrey C. 1982: »Islam and Ethnicity: The Northern Afghanistan Perspective,« in: *Central Asian Survey* 1, 2/3: 71–83.

Steul, Willi 1981: *Paschtunwali – Ein Ehrenkodex und seine rechtliche Relevanz*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Tilly, Charles 1985: »War-Making and State-Making as Organized Crime,« in: Peter Evans et al. (ed.): *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 169–91.

UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2006: AFGHANISTAN – Opium Rapid Assessment Survey 2006, accessed at: www.unodc.org/pdf/research/Afg_RAS_2006.pdf.

Yusufzai, Rahimullah 2005: Warlords Are Going to Remain a Fact of Life in Afghanistan, accessed at: http://jang.com.pk/thenews/mar2005-daily/07-03-2005/oped/05.htm.