Shifting or shirking responsibility?

Bonns second Afghanistan conference in perspective - A comment

Nothing is straightforward in Afghanistan, for this remarkable finding of German foreign policy. In Bonn, it was not so much the negotiations at the meeting with the Taliban, but rather the continuing process of conflict within the international community and the Afghan government. This was the case in Bonn, and it was also the case in Islamabad, where the first of the two conferences was held.

On December 5th, 2001, a team of over 1000 delegates from more than 30 countries and 15 international organizations discussed the basic framework for a new phase of international engagement in Afghanistan. But the overall aim of the conference was not set to find parameters for the country's future. It was more about finding a good story line for the West to get out of Afghanistan as soon as possible and winning the public over. Therefore, tremendous efforts were made to underline the achievements of the last decade as well as the impression that those achievements were not in vain. As a result, the conference is widely considered an important step forward in the process of international engagement in Afghanistan.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai was able to make the monopoly over the use of force, ensuring that security responsibilities were handed over in almost 50% of the territory. This was an important milestone in the process of international engagement in Afghanistan. It was also an important step forward in the process of international engagement in Afghanistan.

In contrast, the ISAF was not able to crack down on the Taliban and other OMIs in the country which are starting to interpret the withdrawal as a sign of weakness during the engagement. Interestingly, the ISAF is now promising that a military strategy will be developed, and a political one is the only way forward. But, of course, the ISAF will only be able to do so if the leadership of Bonn II is able to leverage the political and military momentum, meaning that ISAF fulfilled its mandate of providing security.

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Indicating the long and difficult way towards a political solution for future Afghan governments, this is not only about the presentation of a positive political exercise. Nor is it about finding a good story line for the West to get out of Afghanistan as soon as possible and winning the public over. Therefore, tremendous efforts were made to underline the achievements of the last decade as well as the impression that those achievements were not in vain.