

# Newsletter, January 28, 2021

Dear friends,

There is not much to report. Many things are stagnating. And that, although there have been some changes in world politics? Yes, America has a new president. He has already set many new accents, including in foreign policy. But the new U.S. policy has not yet been defined in detail. That also applies to Afghanistan. The Trump administration had withdrawn all but 3,000 American troops from Afghanistan. The rest should follow by April. The Biden administration is currently considering whether to stick with this decision or whether things should be completely different. A contingent of Bundeswehr troops is also still in Afghanistan.

One can try to get the thoughts of the U.S. government. Donald Trump's decision to withdraw includes the following background: the rigorous expansion of U.S. oil production, primarily through fracking, and the long-term decline in demand for oil as an energy source, is reducing the importance of the Middle East for the United States. This trend will continue even if the Biden administration curbs its own oil production for environmental reasons.

Afghanistan's location between Iran and China remains important regardless of oil. The question is what will become of the deployment agreement that the Obama administration was still negotiating with Afghanistan. A Guantanamo-like solution is conceivable here, which could be independent of any other troop withdrawal.

In the current state of limbo, the Afghan parties to the conflict, the government and the Taliban, have not seriously pursued a rapprochement. If the Biden administration continues to pursue the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in the medium term, it will hopefully first establish a solid foundation for doing so.

The Taliban are an important tool of Pakistan in Afghanistan. Without material supplies from Pakistan, the Taliban would not exist. Pakistan certainly has reasons to keep the Taliban movement in Afghanistan. Peace negotiations with the Taliban without Pakistan's involvement have no realistic basis. A lasting peace for Afghanistan cannot be created in this way. But that was not Donald Trump's intention either. He wanted to withdraw his soldiers. After that, the deluge could quietly come.

The Biden administration will hopefully strive for a solid peace solution with the involvement of Pakistan. This will continue to include pushing the current government and the Taliban to make peace. A Taliban movement decoupled from Pakistan could shed its hyper-Islamic ideology, which its Pakistani birthers had given it. This might alleviate somewhat the fears that the Taliban arouse among the urban population, especially among women.

Another Afghan war party are the Da'esch, the followers of the Islamic State. Perhaps even they can be incorporated into a peace concept. If that is not possible, a closing of ranks between the current government and the Taliban would probably be enough to eliminate the Da'esch.

Creating a viable solution to these problems will take time. Afghanistan will hover in the current uncertainty for even longer.

And it is unpleasant for the people. The security situation is very fragile. Attacks and raids are frequent throughout the country, some with a political background, often purely criminal. Corona is ignored. People are simply tired because there is no protection after all. The epidemic rages on. No one knows the extent. Now in winter, the air in the city of Kabul is particularly polluted. Breathing problems, coughs and headaches are common.

OFARIN's teaching program is going well. Due to demand, we have opened a few more classes. Eleven teachers are now working in Punjir, including two girls. In the countryside, this is something special.

We are not making any progress in solving personal problems, such as that of our previous teacher Muzhgan, about whom we reported in the last but one newsletter. Muzhgan's parents had died of Corona. The brothers, some of whom were drug addicts, sold the parents' property, and Muzhgan had to move in with her sick grandmother to live with one of the brothers. There is a chance that Muzhgan and her fiancé will marry. This would make her independent of the brothers. But that is a matter for the families. You can hardly encourage them from the outside.

Please, try to imagine what it means for many younger women to always have to live in the "protection" of a family! Women living alone are fair game. This is not just a matter of patriarchal or religiously based laws. It is above all a question of public safety. The state cannot provide for the safety of women. In most cases, younger widows are remarried by their husband's family.

A colleague, a maybe 30 years old woman, is somewhat heart sick. Her parents were also ailing. The mother died a few years ago. Now the father died. Our colleague's brother traveled from Germany to attend the funeral service. He sold the father's apartment and decided that the sister must move in with an uncle. The uncle had never cared for his niece or her sick father. There was no love lost between them. But what was the brother to do? He had to return to Germany. Leaving the sister alone in her parents' apartment was not an option. Now our staff is very worried about the colleague. They think she is acutely suicidal. No one knows what to do. Not even me.

Our goal is school education. That will only help to make girls and women freer after a few decades. But without school, which teaches basic cultural techniques and mutual respect, this will never happen.

Last year, you helped us a lot to move forward. If in 2019 we had donations of just under €135,000, in 2020 it was a good €202,000. Unfortunately, it is in the nature of our mission that we never have enough with any amount of donations. The bigger OFARIN's program becomes, the more people we will help. Greed for money is part of OFARIN's genes. But for that OFARIN is a really successful program, which can be recommended.

In the meantime, we have sent all the certificates for your donations, except for a very few for whom we could not find postal addresses to send the certificates. Please, get in touch if you still need a certificate for 2020, and don't forget your address!

The increased volume of donations means an increased amount of processing for us. Lazy as we are, we want to be quite consistent this year and only issue certificates for donations over 200 €. For donations up to 200 € the tax office will recognize your deposit slip. We also want to send out donation receipts only at the beginning of 2022. This should meet the needs of almost all donors. If it should be different for you and you need our certificate earlier or for a donation of less than 200 €, please write to us! We will then do what is necessary.

For our homepage and also for the sending of these newsletters a company with the for German listeners and readers ugly name wix.com is responsible. We are very satisfied with their services. Unfortunately, a lot of spam is sent via wix.com, so that some e-mail providers block the receipt of mailings with the sender wix.com on principle. This is the case for t-online, for example. So, every month about 80 circulars had to be sent "on foot" as attachments of e-mails. We now have our own address ofarin.org at wix.com. The newsletters are sent with this address. We hope that all email

providers can live with this address. But what happens on the Internet is unpredictable for us simple users. Therefore, please contact us if you notice that you do not receive the newsletter!

To receive these newsletters, you can register in the homepage of [ofarin.de](http://ofarin.de). However, we are so pushy that we recruit everyone to receive the newsletters who shows interest in OFARIN, especially new donors. Anyone who finds the newsletters annoying must write to us. Then he will be removed from the distribution list. By the way, there are also people who have nothing to do with e-mail, internet and all that stuff. The more I get involved with the Internet, the more sympathetic I become to these people. Digitization muffins who are interested in OFARIN are welcome to receive the newsletters as postal letters. If you would like to receive the newsletter by mail, please send us your postal address!

Best regards,

Peter Schwittek

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