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Chapter 5

State-Building for Peace-Building: What Theory and Whose Role?

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INTRODUCTION

It is now widely agreed that the primary cause of civil war, poverty, underdevelopment and humanitarian crises is state failure. Thus, to end civil wars, reduce poverty and promote economic growth, and protect civilians, states must be built, or rebuilt. Foreseen by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his 1994 *Agenda for Peace* and declared by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in its 2005 Paris Principles to be its “central objective”, state-building is now the primary focus of a wide range of international actors in both development and security communities.

Neither the empirical or analytical basis for this consensus is clear, however. Both practitioners and the research communities also agree that the results from international assistance to state-building are discouraging, yielding no examples of success from which one might learn. Astri Suhrke’s conclusion for Afghanistan is echoed throughout the case study literature: “aid has overwhelmed and marginalized the Afghan state, thus undermining the very state-building process it supposedly is designed to promote”.¹ Comparative case studies identify long lists of what does not work as currently practiced and recommendations for change, not evidence of what does (e.g., Call, 2008). One finds little discussion, moreover, of the causal reasoning behind specific state-building policies and their presumed outcomes with which one might analyze such results. The policy literature provides no theory of state-building, only many partial explanations, major disagreements and debates, and concern for the lack of policy coherence.

The academic literature raises even more fundamental questions about this consensus. In the literatures on civil war and on economic development,

the causal direction is the *reverse* of that presumed by the policy consensus: state-building (a contest between a government and its rivals or among rivals over who rules) is what civil wars are about and thus why they start, and state failure or strength is the outcome of a chosen strategy of economic development, not its cause. The idea that state-building can be an international policy undertaken in a discrete period of assistance, moreover, violates all academic knowledge on what is called state formation. State-building is a long historical process, specific to each country, and the product of decisions by local rulers when their power and authority are under threat from domestic challengers or due to changed economic or security conditions, usually as a result of exogenous shocks.

This chapter proposes, accordingly, that international policies of state-building and their consequences are better understood and analyzed in any particular country as a part of its longer historical process of state formation and transformation. State-building as an *international* objective of assistance policies to prevent or end armed conflict should be seen in context as external resources that will influence the political balance among these domestic actors in their contest over the state and its transformation at that historical moment. Assistance policies may also have acted as exogenous shocks that destabilized the domestic political equilibrium in the first place, thus part of the cause of armed conflict. Similarly, if international assistance policies during a period of ceasefire do not help to restore a political equilibrium but, instead, continue the political contest, they become endogenous to that contest and can prolong the war rather than supporting its end.

Two aspects of current state-building policy make such an analysis difficult, however. The first is that state-building as a goal of international assistance actually comprises a set of many different international policies and actions, each with its own separate rationale, and linked only by the target of their policies and projects. There is no overall strategy of state-building. The particular components of concern for each actor do not follow from an agreed theory of state-building—major debates exist among these external actors. And the separate theories of state-building at least implicitly guiding assistance policies are not theories of peace-building—why state-building as thus conceived should lead to a sustainable peace. Most policies were developed for other purposes and circumstances and have evolved in the past two decades as they adjusted to these different conditions, but in a piecemeal and ad hoc manner.

The second aspect is that international state-building, as with peace-building more generally, tends to be “narcissistic” (Fortna, 2008, p. 175). Policy design, needs assessment, and evaluation are all done by outsiders.

They view their actions as exogenous to local politics, but paradoxically assuming little influence while expecting much. Countries and local actors are viewed largely as aid recipients whose actions are relevant only in terms of outsiders' policies and expectations, as captured in terms such as "political will", cooperation, obstruction and absorption capacity. We know very little about what Fortna calls the "peacekept," that is, "the decision-makers within the government and rebel organizations".²

Because state-building as a policy of international assistance is, this chapter argues, only part of a larger context of state transformation in each specific instance, then its goal of "a durable exit from poverty and insecurity" (OECD, 2005, Preamble) requires a reassessment of current policy. The question is not whether the state is central to peace and development, but what aspects of state-building are necessary to end civil wars, and secondly, what role international assistance and external actors can and should play in that state-building process.

The goal of this chapter is to elaborate these two aspects of current policy as background to urge such a reassessment. It turns first to the many different components of the current consensus on state-building and then to fundamental debates within the literature. The chapter turns second to the efforts in the academic- and policy-oriented literature to explain the inadequate results of existing policy and practice: for some, the problem lies with the theoretical framework and model of state-building, but for most, the problem lies with operations. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the very different nature of the state-building problem in countries emerging from civil war then is presumed by current international policy and practice and its implications for a reorientation of international assistance.

COMPONENTS OF THE CONSENSUS

As a policy, state-building is composed of many separate agents and their policies and respective conceptual and theoretical underpinnings. It is an agglutinative field, adding new components over time without rejecting previous policies, and it continues to evolve. Its constituent communities remain distinct and bureaucratically autonomous, and their convergence on the importance of the state and the goal of state-building is not reflected in a common policy or even common motives. I suggest there are currently six components; others might divide the field differently. In analyzing the influence of these policies on peace and development in a particular country, what matters is to distinguish among them.

Good governance. The idea that economic development (most often called “post-conflict reconstruction”) is essential to a sustainable peace after civil war is quite recent. When international assistance in peace-building begins in the early 1990s, there are references to the need for a national reconstruction plan in some peace agreements, such as that for Cambodia, but it is only with the extensive involvement of the World Bank in designing a post-war recovery and reconstruction programme for Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 1994–96, that the argument on the existence of a “peace dividend” of early economic recovery begins to be made. Because World Bank assistance requires a prior agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and an IMF agreement requires a prior settlement of a country’s debt arrears, economic policies for peace are not formulated in terms of their contribution to peace but in terms of policies necessary for aid—beginning with IMF-designed macroeconomic stabilization and related policies to pay the debt arrears and manage future foreign debt and trade deficits. The addition of a development component, similarly, arose in relation to humanitarian relief and its limits, thus the appropriate timing for its reduction and by default, the start of normal development assistance. Again, the relation between development and peace was assumed.

The focus on the role that the state should play in this peace-oriented economic development, similarly, originates outside the peace and conflict literature in the emphasis emerging during the 1990s at the World Bank and the development assistance community more broadly on the necessity to economic growth in general of what it calls “good governance”. Thus, without much reflection, economic growth was assumed necessary to peace, and whatever role the state should play in achieving economic growth was thus necessary, too.

Given the particular importance of an IMF programme in the initial period after a ceasefire or peace agreement, it is perhaps ironic that the emphasis on good governance at the World Bank was actually a response to the acknowledged failure of structural adjustment programmes and their associated aid conditionality in the 1980s to generate growth in poor countries. The diagnosis was that governments had been unwilling or unable to implement the necessary policies. The Bank refocused, thus, onto political reform to obtain policy makers and states that would. Unrelated to war, the shift began in the Bank’s 1989 report on Africa with a call for democracy (Abrahamsen, 2004; Harrison, 2004; World Bank, 1989). The assumption, apparently, was that democracy meant greater influence of citizen participation on government policy and democratization of what were generally considered neopatrimonial, rent-seeking political regimes would, thus, give greater influence to the private-sector, middle class and

its economic interest in liberalization. Worried that this call for democracy would appear to violate the Bank's charter, the Bank's lawyers required a change in language. The more neutral term *governance*, as is manifest in the 1992 study *Governance and Development*, was chosen. By the mid-1990s, econometric studies by bank researchers, such as David Dollar and Craig Burnside (Burnside and Dollar, 1997, 2000, 2004), demonstrated, it was said at the time (a large critical literature has emerged since³), that government and government policy, a factor that they labelled institutions, was critical in explaining variations in economic growth. The influence of new institutional economics was also being felt simultaneously on policy debates within both the World Bank and the IMF over the cause of failure in the economic transitions in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union of shock-therapy (radical macroeconomic stabilization, liberalization and privatization) to generate predicted results in all but Poland (the Czech Republic was said to have followed these prescriptions, but it did not, in fact) (Selowsky, 1998). By 1997, the Bank devoted its annual development report to *The State in a Changing World*. Neither the institutional bases of economic growth nor the debates among economists about economic reforms in transition countries, however, concerned peace or peace-building.

The role of "good governance" assumed even greater importance in the late 1990s when the aid community, and above all bilateral donors, turned their attention to measures of aid effectiveness and, as with structural adjustment, the discouraging evidence on the contribution of aid to economic growth or poverty reduction emerged. The chosen solution was to be more selective by directing aid only to those countries with governments that demonstrated political will and institutional capacity to implement the necessary policies. Already in 1996, World Bank researchers developed indicators to measure these "good governance" standards (the Worldwide Governance Indicators [Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido-Lobaton, 1999; Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2008] and related CPIA⁴ at the World Bank), which were soon followed by related global indicators such as measures of corruption used as a precondition for US aid through the Millennium Challenge Account of the Bush Administration and lists of countries likely to be "bad performers" or "difficult partnerships", such as poor, highly indebted countries (Low-Income Countries Under Stress [LICUS] and Highly-Indebted Poor Countries [the HIPC Debt Initiative]) for the World Bank. Although the World Bank developed a separate unit for post-conflict countries, the purpose was to create a dedicated fund for (small) post-conflict-related projects, not to support the development of a separate theory about the relation between development and peace-building. The decision by 2004 of both the Bank and

the OECD DAC to combine units on post-conflict countries with those on highly indebted, poor, difficult partnerships, calling them all “fragile states” would appear to substantiate this analysis, that of a shared assumption that aid for development in general was simultaneously aid for peace.

Similarly, the interest among bilateral development agencies in developing conflict assessment strategies so as to reduce the role that aid was seen by some to be playing in *generating* conflict in 1999–2004 had ceased by 2006. The problem of poor economic indicators, whether measured by growth rates, ability to service debt or poverty measures such as poor performance on the Millennium Development Goals established by the UN in 2000, was even more explicitly said to be states and the lack of good governance.

Nonetheless, the 1997 *World Development Report* was followed immediately in 1998 by a World Bank policy on post-conflict reconstruction. The Bank designed such policies, based increasingly on a needs assessment mission in the country which it did jointly with the United Nations Development Programme after 2003, and every peace agreement with any international assistance in its implementation was followed rapidly by a donors’ conference (led by the World Bank alone or together with the relevant regional development bank and interested major powers) to pledge aid for specific components of the programme. Although primarily infrastructural reconstruction and development, the need for speed was increasingly emphasized on the grounds that a visible peace dividend was essential to sustain the peace process.

State-building in such a programme meant what the 1997 *World Development Report* did, that is, reducing the activities of the state to those functions (it names five) necessary for markets to work; secondly to make the state more economically efficient such as ways to reduce transaction costs, attack corruption and introduce cost-savings incentives through competition with the private sector; and third to lower social and political expectations to be more in line with existing capacity. Moreover, in some cases, beginning with Guatemala and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the World Bank participated in peace negotiations directly to ensure that institutional choices made by the parties were fiscally responsible and primarily “agencies of restraint” (Collier, 1996, pp. 282–283). Although this growing focus on the state by the development community did generate a substantial debate about whether it reflected a new appreciation for the developmental role of the state and its very rich literature and practice in the 20th century or a move to consolidate the same neoliberal, pro-market policies through governmental reform (Abrahamsen, 2000; Crawford, 2006; Doornbos, 2003, 2006; Orford and Beard, 1998), the Bank itself acknowledged the latter position with its 2002 Development Report, *Building Institutions for Markets*.

Aside from its assumption that economic growth was necessary for peace, and good governance was necessary for growth, as Merilee Grindle argues in her 2004 plea for “good enough governance”, the state-building agenda of goals and tasks was “overwhelming”, “unrealistically long and growing longer over time”, with no priorities identified or guidance on what is essential, on sequencing or on feasibility. In the 1997 report, Grindle counted 45 aspects of good governance that “must be done”; by 2002, “the list had grown to 116 items” (Grindle, 2004, pp. 526–527). The 2005 “Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Essential Tasks Matrix” of the US Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in the Department of State consists of 359 pages of tasks with temporal sequencing for each, although no priorities among them. The narrowly conceived “economic stabilization and infrastructure” section (separate from governance and social well being, for example) takes up nearly one-half (170 pages).

Peacekeeping operations. A second component of the consensus on state-building in international assistance policies emerged during the 1990s in response to a momentary but unexpected spike in the trend of armed conflict globally and its related international response, an era of activism, particularly by the United Nations, to end the civil wars of the early 1990s and their associated violence, atrocities, genocides, ethnic cleansing and war crimes. These actions were two-pronged: to help negotiate an end to the civil war and then to deploy peacekeeping operations to help implement the agreements made. The first is said to begin in 1989 with Namibia, although this operation was actually authorized in 1976, on the basis of a 1967 assumption of UN “legal responsibility”, but delayed by South Africa for more than a decade (Chesterman, 2004, pp. 58–59). The framework and term (peace-building) for what became 33 peace operations deployed between 1989 and 1999 alone (many more after 2000) under ever more complex mandates is presented by UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in his January 1992, *An Agenda for Peace*. A far more sober Supplement in 1995 and the actual evolution of UN peace operations during the 1990s reveal, in fact, a more modest and less comprehensive practice.

Because it is generally accepted that UN peacekeeping operations now are the heart of state-building activities, it is important to notice that this component, while clear about peace-building, does not yet have an explicit theory of state-building or agreed definition of the concept. Nor does it have an agreed rationale for state-building as key to peace-building. Instead, as Simon Chesterman (2004) demonstrates, the trajectory of peacekeeping generations, from traditional to second-generation to complex,⁵ has not been

driven by theory but by practice. Some argue that this absence of explicit reference to state-building parallels the debate within the World Bank over the legal limits of its Charter on activities that might appear to be political and thus a violation of the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state. In the case of the United Nations, the principle is reinforced by the sensitivity of its member states and thus greater reluctance even to suggest a term. But this does not fully explain the reluctance to equate peace-building and state-building or even to give state-building highest priority.

This practice has been defined instead by the mandate that the Security Council defines for each operation. Because that mandate is defined, in turn, by the specific terms laid out in the negotiated political settlement to the war, when there is one, although limited by the resources which Council members are willing to commit, and because civil war is about the state, however, the role of the peacekeeping mission is state-building in some form in all but name. Initially, that role was simply to facilitate the political equilibrium established by the ceasefire or third-party negotiated peace agreement, through monitoring whatever components of disarmament and demobilization are agreed among the parties and elections to a post-war government (but also to help organize them by the time of the Cambodian mission in 1993). Already by 1993–1995, it is possible to argue that their role in implementing the human rights provisions of the El Salvador agreement, in assisting RENAMO in standing for elections as a nascent political party instead of a rebel army in Mozambique, and in implementing the judicial reforms intended as confidence measures for disarmament in Guatemala did contribute to governmental change, if not state-building itself.

By 1994, however, human rights field officers had begun to promote what by the end of the decade was called the “rule of law”—“to engage in institutional reform that would buttress respect for human rights, enhance accountability for perpetrators, and seek to involve nongovernmental organizations so that they would have a say in how their state operated . . . [including] the judiciary, the police, the military, and the prisons” (O’Neill, 2008, p. 94). By 1999, peacekeeping operations had even been tasked to assume the authority of transitional administration in Kosovo and East Timor for the purposes of building states where there had been none before.

Causes of civil war. Although the relation between the state and peace was assumed by the good-governance agenda of development donors and automatic in the mandate of peacekeeping operations, theorizing about peacebuilding did emerge during the 1990s among researchers studying the causes of civil war. Two schools of thought dominated, one from the

development community and the other from the scholarship on rebellion and revolution. Although these researchers' focus was to explain the onset of civil war and to identify risk indicators that could be used as early warning indicators for policy action, their research coincided with the growth in international activism to negotiate an end to the violence of civil war and assist in implementing the resulting peace agreement. The research thus became influential on these policies.

The first of the two schools was actually led by World Bank research economists who focused on the motivation for rebellion. Rejecting wholesale a long-standing academic school in political science that focused on insurgents' political grievances, such as perceptions of injustice, actual discrimination and repressive government, the team led by Paul Collier argued in their research that the causes were economic, but not inequality and poverty, rather opportunities for looting and illegal profit by greed-oriented rebels and the unemployed young males they could recruit. Economic growth in general was the solution, together with careful controls by both the government and the international community over the management of natural ("lootable") resources, such as diamonds, sharp cuts in the military budget to release funds for investment and the good-governance reforms sought by the development community to increase the "absorption capacity" for aid in the post-war state so that growth would occur.

The second of the two schools in what was labelled a debate between "greed and grievance" (Berdal and Malone, 2000) was promoted by those who explained rebellion as a response to discrimination, particularly toward minorities, and especially by dictatorial regimes. Democracy and minority rights were the solution. This school was particularly influential in the United States, where it reinforced commitment to democracy promotion, but it also encouraged non-governmental organizations, such as the foundations created by political parties in the United States and Germany, and official ones, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to use the security umbrella of peacekeeping operations to provide assistance for political development of political parties, legislatures and legislators and the civil service. It is worth noticing, however, that their emphasis on political rights, participation and inclusion was a narrowing of the older school's emphasis on (locally defined) social justice.

By the late 1990s, growing criticism of the economic arguments promoted by the World Bank coincided with the emphasis on legitimacy in the second school to produce a kind of consensus that civil war was caused by governments that had lost legitimacy (the "grievance" school) or were insufficiently strong to deter or defeat rebels (the "greed" school) (Fearon

and Latin, 2003). The solution was state capacity to be militarily effective against potential rebels while becoming democratic so as to reduce the risk of rebellion and regain legitimacy.

The return to questions of legitimacy in the research community also coincided with developments in the policy community in its search for legitimate bases for intervention to protect civilians, whether in humanitarian emergencies such as Sudan or by ending wars in Bosnia, Liberia and Somalia. If governments failed to protect their citizens, as the 2000 report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty formulated an emerging consensus, there was an international responsibility to do so. Any such intervention would then, necessarily, oblige actions to build states in their place that could provide order, services and rights effectively and were, thus, legitimate.

Although these arguments provided a more explicit theoretical grounding for state-building, to restore or build a government capable of governing, their analysis was presented and tested at such a high level of aggregation that they did not generate actionable prescriptions beyond very vague policy recommendations about “capacity-building” to “deliver services” and create a “rule of law.” The concepts of “political will” and “capacity” were often not distinguished, nor were the specific capacities and institutions that matter most.

Peacemaking. As the previous section on peacekeeping operations argued, state-building emerges most explicitly from the diplomatic process and subsequent Security-Council mandate given to peacekeeping/peacebuilding missions. Over the 1990s, peace negotiations ended an ever larger percentage of civil wars, in sharp contrast to the cold-war era (ending 38 of 54 civil wars, or 70 per cent in the period 1990 to 1999 [Fortna, 2004b]). The resulting written, signed document, in turn, came to include ever more details about the post-war state beyond the holding of elections and the principles of a post-war security structure (such as a unification of armies or a demobilization of insurgents). Diplomatic practice had begun to converge, Chandra Lekha Sriram (2008) argues, on a set of what she calls “governance incentives” that third-party negotiators “commonly [offer] to induce armed groups to negotiate peace agreements, and to implement peace agreements”. She identifies four types of such governance incentives: power-sharing, inclusion of former combatants in security forces, resource-sharing (direct economic benefits or a share in the governance of resources), and territorial autonomy. These are explicitly state-building commitments. Although the Dayton peace agreement for Bosnia-Herzegovina under US leadership was an explicit, early

state-building constitution and strategy, peace negotiations in general become ever more detailed on the constitutional provisions and state transformation which peacekeeping missions are sent to help implement.

As other analyses (e.g. Curtis, 2005) of the effect of peace-agreement terms on the post-war state (many of them based on highly developed theories of conflict resolution) also find, however, Sriram's comparative analysis demonstrates that these diplomatic incentives to end the conflict "frequently generate institutional arrangements and political dynamics that are unstable in the medium to long term". Because each negotiated settlement is a joint product of the warring parties at the negotiating table and their external mediators and because the context in which each settlement must be implemented includes a country's pre-war political institutions and those that warring parties developed to wage war and administer territory they controlled, the result varies as great as there are cases, despite the common principles that negotiators take from one case to the next. The evidence of outcomes, however, is sufficiently common to suggest strongly that theories of war termination or conflict resolution are not theories of peace or the relation between state-building and sustainable peace.

Security and justice. In 2000, the Brahimi Panel Report on United Nations Peace Operations called for a "doctrinal shift" on security in peacekeeping operations. While peacekeeping troops and UN civilian police had been monitoring the implementation by militia and leaders of the armed forces of their commitments in a peace agreement to cease fighting and demobilize and in some cases, as El Salvador, the commitment by the government to respect the human rights of all its citizens, the result was not an end to violence but a shift from wartime violence to new sources of post-war violence against civilians that was often even greater in levels than during the war. The panel's call for a doctrinal shift was to recognize that post-war civilian security—establishing "the rule of law", transforming police forces from agents of state security to protectors of individuals and their human rights, and building the components of judicial systems necessary for enforcement of the civil and criminal law (such as trained and apolitical judges and prosecutors, administrative staff of a court system, intelligence activities, in addition to trained police)—were also essential to peace.

Two additional pressures for this doctrinal shift on security occurred at the same time. Peacekeeping forces sent to monitor peace agreements that did not have the full support of the population and provoked new violence, such as in the return of refugees to their pre-war homes in Bosnia-Herzegovina or the continuing fight in Kosovo for independence, began to insist that they were not trained or suited to "policing" tasks. Greater effort needed to be put

on the development of local police forces, not just demobilization of armed groups. Second, by 1998, the Canadian and British development agencies began a major focus on military expenditures and the need for security sector reform as critical to a shift in fiscal resources to post-war development and, simultaneously, civilian (democratic) control over the security apparatus (particularly the military) in post-war countries.

These pressures reinforced the explicit state-building components initiated earlier by the human rights community and the growing focus among human-rights activists on the necessity to peace, in their view, of “transitional justice”. They argued, that is, that no peace is sustainable without full accountability for crimes committed during the war as defined by the international laws of war. International criminal courts established for the Yugoslav, Rwandan and Sierra Leone cases required assistance from police and courts within these countries and, subsequently, the assumption by a domestic judicial system of this responsibility.

Regime change. Finally, the policy consensus on state-building cannot be separated from three explicit state-building projects of contemporary international intervention aimed not at peace but at regime change. These American military interventions and imposed constitutions, with or without UN assistance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan and Iraq, are now identified as state-building (in American jargon, inappropriately labelled nation-building). Although an explicitly conflict-provoking strategy and not driven by any theory of the relation between state-building and a lasting peace, their failures to stabilize politically have generated pressure for change in most other contemporary cases of peace-building.

FOUR FUNDAMENTAL DEBATES ON STRATEGY

Each of these components of the consensus on state-building in practice are only pieces of the totality of state-building activities. To add them up to a strategy in which these separate activities can be complementary, on the assumption of those promoting policy coherence that this would make such assistance more effective, requires confronting a second problem: fundamental disagreements about strategy which deeply divide camps of researchers and practitioners. I suggest that four debates currently dominate.

The most fundamental debate is about whether a strategy of state-building is even possible. Two of the most influential works in this policy agenda illustrate the two poles. On one side are those, with Francis Fukuyama in his 2004 *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*,

who insists that failure currently flows from a lack of respect for context, for historical and cultural difference, and for the essential role of local “ownership” to success. Fukuyama provides three reasons. First, a very small part of what he calls the four nested dimensions of “stateness” is transferable knowledge at all. Second, in no aspect of state-building, including the only dimension that he considers susceptible to being transferred, that of public administration or management, are there theories, principles, or optimal sets of institutions to guide state-builders. Third, all external efforts at state-building in any part will fail if they are not preceded by domestically generated demand.

The opposite position is best represented by Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart (2008) who argue that the problem is not theory but insufficient agreement among state-builders on what state-building entails. In *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*, they write that “The key to state building is first to agree on a goal and the functions of the state to support this objective . . . a strategic framework for defining the functions of the state, designing the organizational structure necessary for the performance of those functions, and aligning actors to the goal of state building”. Unless one accepts their list of ten functions, however, this criticism is effectively no different than that of Fukuyama’s insistence on context because there are almost as many proposed frameworks and templates or best-practices codes as there are critics urging such agreement and policy coherence.

A second debate concerns the position that international state-builders should take in the field. Should the international community be more assertive—more colonialist as Chesterman says⁶—or should it have more of a “light footprint”, in Lakhdar Brahimi’s unsuccessful effort to put the Afghan authorities in the driving seat in 2002? Although all studies on post-conflict state-building emphasize the necessity of what they call local ownership, the concept itself is rarely defined operationally. In theory, a middle position appears possible as in the proposal developed by Ghani and Lockhart for a negotiated partnership between international actors and national authorities from the beginning. Balance of opinion and practice weigh on the directive side, however, on the argument best represented by Stephen Krasner’s claim that “Left to their own devices, collapsed and badly governed states will not fix themselves because they have limited administrative capacity, not least with regard to maintaining internal security” (2004, p. 86). The preference is for transitional administration, “neotrusteeships” (Fearon and Laitin, 2004), and a variety of forms of “shared sovereignty” (Krasner, 2004) such as the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP) in Liberia (Dwan and Bailey, 2006).

A third debate does not challenge the list of tasks identified by the multiple components but disagrees on their sequencing. The order matters substantially to success according to Paul Collier, *et al.* (2003), Collier and Hoeffler (2004), and Roland Paris (2004) for both of whom governmental institutions must be built before democratic reforms, including elections. In contrast, Ohiorhenuan and Kumar (2005) of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery at UNDP argue that all components of peace-building must occur simultaneously.

Most of the sequencing debate, however, distinguishes economic from political components. Among development actors, the key questions are when aid can shift from humanitarian relief to economic reconstruction, when normal development policy should begin, whether macroeconomic stabilization must occur first or priority should be placed instead on a peace dividend and social equity, and how to time aid flows in relation to the local government's "absorption capacity". Among peace-building actors focused on political tasks, there are three positions, according to Hampson and Mendeloff (2007, p. 671): the "fast track democratizers", the "security firsters", and the "slow democratizers".

The fourth debate regards the state-building components for economic development. What is the proper economic role of the state and thus *which* institutions should be built for post-war economic policy? This debate has two components, also, one related to development and the other to peace-building. As is the case in the field of development economics, so in peace-building, there is a fundamental disagreement over the appropriate institutions for economic development between neoclassical growth theorists, whose perspective and policies currently dominate state-building practice (as led by the World Bank, IMF, UNDP and most bilateral development agencies), and a school of heterodox economists to be found in universities, such as Mushtaq Khan (2002) and Ha-Joon Chang (2002) or in UN agencies, such as the Department for Economic and Social Affairs or the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), who argue for institutional and policy choices that currently wealthy countries used successfully to develop or the lessons of the effective post-war reconstruction of the Marshall Plan in western Europe.

Behind this debate is a more basic disagreement, however, over whether "development as usual" (either neoliberal or developmental) is appropriate to the needs of peace-building. Should development institutions, as currently, lead the post-war reconstruction process at all? Or are there fundamental differences between a normal development process and post-conflict conditions and the "decisive importance" of political factors in the latter that

should be driving decisions on economic policy and institutions and thus should also relegate development institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and UNDP into a supporting, not leading, role as they now have (del Castillo, 2008, pp. 26, 45)?

ATTEMPTS TO EXPLAIN CURRENT RESULTS

The case-study literature on countries emerging from civil war almost universally finds that as currently practiced, state-building policies actually undermine the state, making it weaker than it was or than it would have been if left alone. In contrast to the model said to guide these policies of a market economy, liberal democracy, human rights, and transitional justice, the empirical evidence is that international aid policies strengthen the domestic political position of conservative oligarchies at the centre and traditional authorities locally (Kahler, 2008, p. 7; Nakaya, 2008; Curtis, 2005 and 2007). In place of economic growth and development, the data show growing unemployment, post-war violence explained by growing economic inequality and poverty, increased concern among outsiders with widespread public corruption and rent-seeking, including in military and police forces expected to manage post-war violence, astonishing levels of aid dependence over a long period, even in cases considered relative successes as Mozambique, and little or no new local governmental capacity despite capacity-building assistance. Indeed, Fukuyama argues, donors are actually “complicit in the *destruction* of institutional capacity” (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 39).

Explanations for these discouraging results focus almost entirely on the policies and actions of outsiders, the international state-builders. In line with the nature of these policies, the explanations do not follow from a general theory of state-building for peace or of peace-building. Some criticisms address the theoretical assumptions of these policies; most focus on the effect of international operations.

Operations of State-Building

Most efforts to explain the discouraging outcomes of current state-building focus on the way international state-builders go about their task. As the debate over the appropriate role of international assistance in state-building reflects, there is a clear tension between the goal of state-building and the means used. As Chesterman summarizes, the goal of creating a legitimate and sustainable government with the means of a “benevolent foreign autocracy”

is a contradiction (Chesterman, 2004, p. 1; see also Paris and Sisk, 2007, p. 4). As conventional wisdom during the 1990s settled on the importance of speed in providing what both peace-building and development communities call a peace dividend, the actor most responsible for initial state-building activities, in fact, became the military forces. Because they deployed first and fastest, donors looked to soldiers to deliver economic aid for this peace dividend in the form of small projects of repair and quick impact projects to “jump-start” recovery. Their role grew as the “security firsters” gained the upper hand in the debate on sequencing such that units of local government were also being organized by the military, as in the provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan or Iraq and their equivalent in Colombia. The consequence, however, is to militarize the fundamental tasks of government (public goods and economic recovery) at the very moment when the fundamental principle of peace-building is to “demilitarize politics” (Lyons, 2005) by transforming militia into political parties and combatants into civilians.

The tension between goal and means is reinforced by outsiders’ impatience and short-term focus. International actors have short time horizons and focus their policies and choices on what they consider necessary in the short run, with little regard for the often counterproductive effects in the long-run (Sriram, 2008; Paris and Sisk, 2008). Despite the substantial criticism of the international emphasis on holding elections before the necessary institutional conditions have been laid and the clearly counterproductive priority on the creation of an army over police, judges and local conflict-management institutions, these policies remain because their purpose is not sustainable state-building but allow the “exit” of internationals.

Impatience also leads to a third operational problem: unrealistic expectations and timelines. At least two consequences regularly follow. One is that such impatience leads state-builders not to build the capacity they say is their policy. As Fukuyama argues and many cases confirm, “outside donors want both to increase the local government’s capacity to provide a particular service . . . *and* to actually provide those services to the end users. The latter objective almost always wins out because of the incentives facing the donors themselves. . . . [and] almost always undermines the local government’s capacity to provide them once the aid program terminates” (Fukuyama, 2004, p. 40). The other consequence is that local actors are then held responsible for any failure to meet these expectations and timelines, rather than their unrealistic origins. The result is to sacrifice the crucial ingredient to all social change of political efficacy—the belief by individuals that their actions can have an effect.

A different kind of tension between external expectations and local realities is particularly common in relation to resources. As the economists’

debate over institutions includes, international demands expect the target country to meet the highest international standards for institutions and service delivery and even to do so rapidly, without regard to the resources necessary to achieve, let alone sustain, such standards. However laudable or theoretically persuasive are these expectations, if a country is too poor or too politically constrained, for example, to realize those standards and sustain them financially once donors and international organizations depart, then the question inevitably arises as to motives. For example, as Mushtaq Khan (2008) explains, “stable property rights and a political process based on accountability that does not depend on patron-client networks assumes the existence of substantial fiscal resources to make these processes work. These are not available in any developing country”.

Critics tend to explain this disregard for what is locally possible by the parallel absence of evaluation; donors do not know (and do not ask) what the outcomes of their programmes are. The consequence for the recipients, however, is a serious local opportunity cost, that such policies crowd out consideration of local alternatives that might be in their reach and sustainable.

International assistance also, however, worsens the relative inadequacy of local resources to implement their policies. As studies of the economic impact of peacekeeping show (Carnahan, *et al.*, 2006), international operations compete with local governments for staff. Not only are the levels for professional education and training necessary to internationally promoted institutions most often unrealistic, but the local governments cannot compete with the salaries and work conditions offered by international actors for such scarce educated labour. At the same time as this upward pressure on local wages and salaries, outsiders (especially the IMF but without opposition from multilateral banks and bilateral donors) require macroeconomic stabilization policies in exchange for credits and loans that impose strict limits on the public expenditures needed to finance governmental ministries, a professional civil service and institutions that provide law and order. Insistence on the rapid privatization of state assets and trade liberalization then deprives the government of traditional domestic revenues. Donors in general also insist on control over their aid in separate, parallel budgets and in choosing their own, non-local implementing agents (Ghani and Lockhart, 2008; Boyce and O'Donnell, 2007; Rubin, 2005). Because from 40 to 70 per cent of all economic assistance in post-conflict settings goes to salaries for foreign consultants and advisors, in fact, “donor agents”, writes Miles Kahler, have “few incentives to improve government capacity, since improvement would mean their slow replacement” (Kahler, 2008, p. 15).

A different kind of imbalance in state-building, finally, occurs between the overall goal of state-building and the actual distribution of donor aid among

its specific components. International assistance is not distributed evenly but in relation to external priorities and interests. The effect is always to create a highly imbalanced state. Thus, for example, donors tend to fund generously a new or reformed army while little attention or finance goes to the institutions of civilian oversight (the parliament or judiciary). Certain executive branch institutions are given priority attention in building capacity and autonomy (a central bank, the ministry of finance), and the legislative branch is routinely neglected and even marginalized. Even within programmes, such as security sector reform, some elements are funded, as increasingly police training and reform, while other necessary components in a system of law and order, such as the courts, prisons and judges' salaries, receive little or no funding at all.

Models and Theories of State-Building

Criticism of the theoretical assumptions underlying state-building policies occupies far less space in the literature than that of operations, as if the theories are correct but the practice problematic. It has two main arguments: a model of the state (and of state-building policies) that is inappropriate or even counterproductive to the task of building peace, and the inadequate or even faulty knowledge of policies.

Most dramatic, perhaps, is the criticism lodged against programmes to promote democracy and the rule of law by Thomas Carothers and against those promoted by public-choice economists for the state by Fukuyama. As mentioned above, Fukuyama argues that neoclassical economic theory wrongly presumes there is an optimal model of public administration and that the key measure of a state is its scope as opposed to its strength (Fukuyama, 2004). In fact, he argues, there is no optimal set of institutions for most aspects of the state, little if any transferable knowledge, and the role of cultural norms and specific histories are far more important than formal institutions and efficiency calculations in making states effective. Carothers argues persuasively that the core assumptions of democracy-promotion programmes are also simply wrong. The democracy-promotion community "embraced an analytical model . . . derived principally from their own interpretation of the patterns of democratic change taking place [in the 1980s]" and "to a lesser extent from the early works of the emergent academic field of 'transitology,' based on the work by Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and colleagues on the transition from authoritarian [military] regimes to democracy in Latin America and Southern Europe in the 1980s (Carothers, 2002, p. 6). Neither pattern included civil war conditions and

both have been empirically discredited in the meantime. As for rule of law, which is increasingly seen by international actors as a “solution to the world’s troubles” (Carothers, 2006, p. 3) because it is said to be necessary to both economic development and democracy, the empirical evidence suggests that the causal relationship may well be in the opposite direction than posited (Carothers, 2006, pp. 18–19). Moreover, these programmes are “operating from a disturbingly thin base of knowledge”. They conceive of the rule of law in institutional terms whereas “law is a normative system” and this institutional approach consists of “simply rewriting another country’s laws on the basis of Western models”—which “achieves very little”.

All three sets of policies—for economic development, for democracy and for the rule of law—also share a fundamental flaw in relation to civil war. Despite their label of state-building, these policies presume that a state exists. Development agencies aim to reform or strengthen an existing state, not to create it from scratch. Most commonly, as discussed above and Fukuyama emphasizes, the aim is to reduce the scope of the state such as through early privatization of state assets and liberalization. Democracy-promotion programmes, “with their frequent emphasis on diffusing power and weakening the relative power of the executive branch” are also “more about the redistribution of state power than about state-building” (Carothers, 2002, p. 17).

The model of the state promoted by international policies may even work against the goal of peace. The priority on building democracy and a market-friendly government, Paris (2002) argues, is actually destabilizing because both democracy and markets presume and reinforce competition and conflict whereas peace-building requires the reverse. They inject more conflict when conflict reduction and management are needed if peace is to hold. Others argue through case studies that the constitutional design of the state proposed by outsiders frequently generates resistance and new violence (Call, 2008, pp. 374–375). The meritocratic principle of state-building may well be in conflict with the confidence-building goals of state-building (Call, 2008, p. 377). State-building may even be war in those cases where international intervention includes counterinsurgency, since the theory of current US doctrine of counterinsurgency is “competitive state-building” (Kalyvas, 2007).

STATE-BUILDING FOR PEACE-BUILDING

The evolution towards an international consensus that states are central and state-building the priority, this chapter has argued, has occurred within separate policy domains that remain separate in policies of international assistance and their particular goals. Although each is said to contribute to

peace, the reasoning is also particular to each domain and its theoretical framework, specifying laws and institutions which, if adopted, should have certain expected outcomes, but which is based, more often than not, on conditions unrelated to the transition from civil war to peace. Moreover, such state-building is an international activity, from policy to implementation and evaluation. Even the explanations for the overwhelmingly negative results, in terms of the expected outcomes of particular state-building policies and their contribution to peace, focus entirely on the theoretical frameworks of international policies, their operational methods, and lively debates about their role, power, policy sequence and coordination.

A more plausible explanation, however, for the failure of current state-building policies to contribute positively to peace and to the expected outcomes of a more effective and legitimate state in the transition from war to peace is a profound misunderstanding of the nature of the “post-conflict” period and the extent to which local actors and international actors have opposite, and conflicting, agendas.

Whatever the causes of a civil war, the war itself is a contest among rival parties over the state. For these warring rivals, state-building does not begin after a ceasefire agreement. It is what the war is about. Whose interests and power will be represented, protected and institutionalized in the authority and rules of the post-war state? All parties do state-building during the war and bring those wartime proto-states and their resources (constituents, administrations, skills and so forth) to the bargaining table when international actors intervene to seek a settlement. Their goal in negotiations and the period of implementation is to consolidate the gains of war through their institutionalization—or, for the less successful in war, to gain protections that evaded them through armed conflict.

Because definitive victories for one side are increasingly rare, due in large part since 1990 to international activism aimed at stopping the violence as soon as possible, the period which outsiders label post-conflict is a continuation of the war to define the new state and its political uncertainty. Only the means shift (if a peacekeeping deployment occurs) from military to political, economic and symbolic, while international actors and their resources, which may also have been significant in the war itself, become more legitimately a part of the domestic contest. Each specific “state-building” policy—the choices of a peacetime constitution, governmental institutions, laws, rules and policies—is a part of the ongoing contest over the future distribution of political and economic power in the country.

For international actors, in contrast, the immediate “post-conflict” period is not viewed as one of consolidation and institutionalization of the wartime political contest but as a rare opportunity to be seized for fundamental

transformation. The fluidity of the political moment and its heightened uncertainty about the future are conditions ripe to accomplish what cannot be achieved in more stable circumstances. For international actors as well, therefore, state-building is about interests and power and a contest to institutionalize their own policies and preferences through domestic laws and procedural rules, technical assistance, support for particular local leaders and direction of financial aid. Yet the consequence is most often to prolong the local political contest and insecurity when the bases of peace require the opposite.

“Post-conflict” state-building is currently, therefore, not about building peace but a major political struggle among multiple parties on the future distribution of political power in a country—between warring parties for international support and for domestic support, between those with economic power and those claiming political power in their mutual constitution of the state, between international preferences and local preferences. Until this political-economic contest reaches some domestic equilibrium, the war is not over—particularly for citizens who must continue to find ways to survive and who actually do most of the peace-building work and thus need to know who has authority and what rules will be enforced.

Whereas international debates on state-building tend to focus on particular institutions and human resources, together called capacity building, however, the crucial element of stabilized state-building is deference to the new authorities and compliance with their rules and decisions, in sum, the state’s authority. In this aspect of state-building, too, the period of transition from civil war to peace has particular characteristics unrelated to other state-building conditions—the required complement of nation-building. International policy tends to view this task of compliance in military terms, that a new state must re-establish a monopoly over the use of force in its territory, which is a misunderstanding of Weber’s definition of the modern state. No state survives on the resort to military force to obtain compliance domestically.

The creation of a new state’s authority in immediate post-war conditions is a symbolic contest of nation-building—to create a political community (who belongs, is included or excluded, on what criteria, on what bases of identity, political loyalty, and common interest to replace the divisions of war) and its implied obligations. It is a necessary component of state-building. Calling this reconciliation between warring parties, or confusing state-building and nation-building as if they are the same, or discounting the importance of this process (and thus the time needed for it and that only locals can do it)—all of which are common—repeats the outsiders’ misunderstanding of the

particular nature of state-building after civil war. In time, output legitimacy (government effectiveness in terms of, for example, service delivery) will matter to the stability of the new state, but in the short run, the more important issue is trust: to what extent and how does the new political leadership and its institutions rebuild the trust of the population through its own behaviour and that of public employees such as the police?

If state-building policies and assistance are aimed at building a sustainable peace, therefore, the particular characteristics of this period—the intense and as yet unsettled political contest to create a state and its local authority—need to define those international policies. There is much to be learned from the literature on peacekeeping operations which demonstrates that there are some significant roles that external parties can play that make peace more likely and more sustainable (Fortna, 2008). In contrast to the more common requirements of a separation of combatants, monitoring of demobilization, and confidence-building between armed parties through neutral information, however, the task of state-building, and thus the political bases of peace, are always specific to the country and conflict. No two civil wars are alike. This does not mean that outsiders cannot play an essential role in moving a country from war to peace. Quite the contrary, we do not yet know what those roles are, however. It is time that research focuses on local processes of post-war state-building and the ways that international assistance can promote or obstruct peace and political stabilization.

NOTES

- 1 Comment at Workshop on “Economic Strategy, Aid Policy, and the State in Countries Emerging from War”, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, 3–4 April 2008.
- 2 Even though the outcome would seem to depend on them; as Fortna adds, these “are the people who decide whether to maintain peace or return to war” (Fortna, 2008, p. 8).
- 3 The primary criticism is methodological, that the Burnside-Dollar results are shown to be extremely vulnerable to the specification of the econometric model, including definitions of aid and policy and the dataset used. For examples of this large literature, see Dalgaard and Hansen (2001), Dalgaard, *et al.* (2004), Easterly, Levine and Roodman (2004), and Hansen and Tarp (2001).
- 4 A Country Policy and Institutional Assessment, an in-house, confidential rating used for loan decisions that, under repeated public pressure on the World Bank for transparency, became public in 2006.
- 5 For the many labels and components of this evolution of peacekeeping operations, see Durch (2006), pp. 5–9.
- 6 The problem “is not that transitional administration is colonial in character; rather, the problem is that sometimes it is not colonial enough” (Chesterman, 2004, p. 12).

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