

RETHINKING STATE FRAGILITY



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Rethinking State Fragility

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This publication has come out of two events the British Academy organised on Tuesday 4th and Wednesday 5th November 2014. The first was a conference on *Contested Approaches to Conflict, Stability, and Security: Rethinking State Fragility* that brought together academics, policymakers, officials and practitioners, some of whom are represented in this collection of essays. You can see more on the conference at www.britac.ac.uk/Rethinking-State-Fragility.

The second was a British Academy International Forum on *The UK's Approach to Conflict, Stability and Security: Rethinking the UK's Approach to Instability* which was organised in conjunction with the UK's Stabilisation Unit, and particularly focused on the recently published 'UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation (2014)'.

The publication has been peer-reviewed to ensure its academic quality. The views expressed in it are those of the authors, who include independent analysts and seasoned practitioners, and are not necessarily endorsed by the British Academy, but are commended as contributing to public debate.

About the Authors

PROFESSOR MATS BERDAL is Professor of Security and Development at King's College London where he directs the Conflict, Security and Development Research Programme. He is the author and editor of several books, including *The Political Economy of Peacebuilding: Power after Peace*; *The Peace in Between: Post-War Violence and Peacebuilding*; and, *Ending Wars, Consolidating Peace: Economic Perspectives*.

PROFESSOR SARAH BIRCH FBA is Professor of Comparative Politics at the University of Glasgow. She specialises in the study of ethics and misconduct. She has been involved in projects with a variety of intergovernmental organisations including the United Nations Development Programme and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

IVAN CAMPBELL is Senior Conflict Adviser at Saferworld. He has 20 years' experience of policy and programming in conflict-affected states. He currently leads Saferworld's research and policy dialogue on how the rise of new global actors impacts on conflict-affected states; and what the implications are for international peace-building and security.

PROFESSOR RICHARD CAPLAN is Professor of International Relations at the University of Oxford. His research on 'Measuring Peace Consolidation' is supported by the British Academy via its Mid-Career Fellowship Scheme.

RAHUL ROY-CHAUDHURY is the Senior Fellow for South Asia at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Before this he served in the Indian National Security Council Secretariat in the Prime Minister's Office. He organises several 'one-and-a-half' track meetings involving senior government and military officials in their private capacity, along with influential experts on a series of matters including Afghanistan and regional security.

SIR SHERARD COWPER-COLES KCMG LVO had a distinguished career in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office from 1977 until 2010 including as the British Ambassador to Israel from 2001 to 2003, followed by being Ambassador to Saudi Arabia until 2006. From 2007 to 2009 he was our Ambassador to Afghanistan after which he was the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. He is Senior Adviser to HSBC's Group Chairman and Group Chief Executive.

DR CHRISTIAN DENNY is a Conflict and Stabilisation Lessons Adviser in the UK Government's Stabilisation Unit. He writes here in a personal capacity.

SALLY HEALY OBE is a Trustee of the British Institute in Eastern Africa, Chair of the Africa Educational Trust, and a Fellow of the Rift Valley Institute. Formerly she was at both Chatham House and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and has significant expertise in the region over many years.

PHILIP LEWIS is an International Policy Adviser at the British Academy. He has previously worked in the European Parliament and the UK's House of Lords.

PROFESSOR SIR ADAM ROBERTS KCMG FBA is Senior Research Fellow in International Relations at the University of Oxford, and Emeritus Fellow of Balliol College. He was President of the British Academy from 2009–13. He is the author and editor of numerous articles and books. His latest book is *Democracy, Sovereignty and Terror: Lakshman Kadirgamar on the Foundations of International Order*, I.B.Tauris, London, 2012.

TOM RODWELL is a Conflict and Stabilisation Lessons Adviser in the UK Government's Stabilisation Unit. He writes here in a personal capacity.

PROFESSOR DAME HELEN WALLACE DBE CMG FBA is Foreign Secretary & Vice-President of the British Academy. Previously she was a Centennial Professor and then Emeritus Professor at the European Institute in the London School of Economics & Political Science. She has also held posts at the European University Institute, the University of Sussex, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Civil Service College and the University of Manchester. She is a leading expert on the politics of European integration, on which she has authored and co-authored numerous publications.

1. Introduction

Philip Lewis and Helen Wallace

Approaches to conflict, stability and security and the rethinking of state fragility are not straightforward, as we discovered at a recent conference at the British Academy.¹ As the following pages illustrate with the contributions of both independent analysts and seasoned practitioners, conflict, stability, security and fragility are immensely awkward notions and practices with which to work. That has not stopped, particularly those in the West, however from trying very hard and at considerable cost in the post-Cold War era to bring 'order' to 'chaos', 'democracy' to 'anarchy', and to spread the other benefits of their way of life. There have been 'successful' cases where outside involvement has made an important positive difference – Mats Berdal highlights Mozambique for example as one. However, the record of intervention has been mixed. Considering that the issues and problems facing policymakers in addressing conflict, stability and security are as pressing as ever, it is timely to reassess how the record might be improved in the future.

It is critical from the start to recognise when engaging with these issues that the meanings of conflict, stability and security, or of fragile states, peace-building and state-building for that matter, are not only contested. They also contain value-laden judgements that consciously or not, as Richard Caplan highlights, set the terms of engagement in ways that may well not acknowledge alternative views, as Ivan Campbell and Rahul Roy-Chaudhury ably illustrate. Often they fail to take account of the cultural and political context, a recurring theme in this set of essays.

¹ The British Academy held a conference on these issues this on Tuesday 4th November 2014. For more details see: www.britac.ac.uk/Rethinking-State-Fragility.

Those who are working in the policy world to operationalise concepts, such as stability and fragility, face a difficult and at times impossible task, as Adam Roberts explains. Of course they generally acknowledge the importance of context but they are also concerned by other factors – sometimes disastrously so. As Christian Dennys and Tom Rodwell argue, it is essential to develop a broad and deep understanding of the historic, cultural and political context of a locality, country and region on a case by case basis, no simple thing and not only just one factor.² Interventions in the areas of conflict, stability and security are aiming to carry out a transformative political exercise, whatever the mixture of developmental, diplomatic or military purposes. To re-orient the socio-economic, political and institutional characteristics of a place requires caution, sensitivity, and a depth of knowledge and understanding.

To neglect this is to risk failure.³ Or as Mats Berdal most ably states in his essay “when, for whatever reason, historical, political and cultural context is ignored, the unintended, perverse and conflict-generating effects of policies prescribed by the liberal script – e.g. introducing democracy through early competitive elections and opening up the economy through market liberalisation – cannot, and indeed have not, been fully anticipated or understood. As a result, the actual effect of many statebuilding efforts has been to entrench exploitative political economies and fuel violence.”

In understanding the context, as well as the value-laden and political nature of policy in these areas, it is vital to draw on a breadth and depth of expertise, not only academic, both so as to help shape as ably as possible any potential intervention and also to identify specific obstacles to potential effectiveness. Richard Caplan makes a plea for socioeconomic, demographic and philosophical perspectives in particular; Sarah Birch, Sherard Cowper-Coles and Adam Roberts highlight the fundamental importance of history; and Mats Berdal highlights the declining investment

2 House of Lords European Union Committee (2015), *The EU and Russia: before and beyond the crisis in Ukraine*, Sixth Report of Session 2014–15, pp.24–26, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldselect/ldeucom/115/115.pdf Accessed on 2 March 2015.

3 House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (2015), *The FCO's Performance and Finances in 2013–14*, Ninth Report of Session 2014–15, pp.15–18, www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmfaaff/605/605.pdf Accessed on 2 March 2015.

in language⁴ and area studies⁵ in the UK as having reduced the requisite pool of relevant expertise. Access to the deep knowledge of countries in conflict remains limited. This may sound like a self-interested call coming from the national academy for the humanities and social sciences, but it is self-interest motivated in the national interest. Long-term, steady investment in our cultural and academic assets is of profound importance for our ability to understand, to engage and to make a positive difference in this world.⁶

Context matters. The understanding of context does not simply mean talking to those who have been in a particular conflict zone in the last six months as only they will know what is going on. It requires thorough familiarity with local culture, history, languages, society, and politics coupled with multiple philosophical, economic, sociological, and demographic perspectives among others. And there will always be elements that a foreigner may never fully understand.

Bringing together this range of expertise and depth of understanding to assist operations has been something that the UK has managed to achieve in the past. For both the First and Second World Wars a range of academics were brought together on a variety of missions, projects and tasks. The popularly-known mathematical codebreakers of Bletchley Park existed alongside linguists and classicists, many of whom went on to or resumed successful academic careers after the war.⁷ J L Austin FBA, a philosopher at Oxford, worked for the supreme allied command and, it has been said, “he more than anybody was responsible for the life-saving accuracy of the D-Day Intelligence”.⁸ The Naval Intelligence Handbooks compiled by academics in both wars were considered so authoritative that they were published subsequently as textbooks that still have value today. It is worth considering how in our own times it

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- 4 The British Academy (2013), *Languages: The State of the Nation* (London: The British Academy); The British Academy (2013), *Lost for Words: The Need for Languages in UK Diplomacy and Security* (London: The British Academy).
 - 5 Antoni Kapcia and Linda A Newson, eds., (2014.), *Report on the state of UK-based research on Latin America and the Caribbean* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies).
 - 6 Christopher Hill and Sarah Beadle (2014), *The Art of Attraction: Soft Power and the UK's Role in the World*, (London: The British Academy).
 - 7 Humanities scholars who worked in military intelligence in the Second World War, www.britac.ac.uk/review/25/ww2intelligence/index.cfm Accessed on 19 March 2015.
 - 8 Nigel Vincent and Helen Wallace (2015), ‘Lost without translation: Why codebreaking is not just a numbers game’, *British Academy Review*, 25, p.45, www.britac.ac.uk/review/25/index.cfm Accessed on 19 March 2015.

may be possible to draw together equivalent expertise and knowledge that exists so that some of the mistakes of the recent past are not replicated if the decision is taken to intervene militarily, diplomatically or developmentally in areas of conflict and insecurity. It does indicate that there is a continuing need to ensure we invest in developing that depth of understanding of other countries and languages which British academics have proved so valuable in the past.

As Adam Roberts indicates, state fragility, its causes and its consequences are seen as one of the major challenges of our age. We have, however, major problems conceptualising and operationalising it in a meaningful and effective way. Often state fragility is viewed as a problem of low capacity and internal mechanics lending itself to the technical solutions that are suited to development funders, NGOs and so on. As Sarah Birch indicates, being considered fragile does not necessarily mean a lack of strength. She stresses, contrary to the popular understanding of Ukraine that it has done remarkably well, in comparison to its large neighbour Russia. As she states "Ukraine has tipped and teetered on the fringes of democracy for over two decades, while Russia has driven steadily toward authoritarianism, marked as it is by the absence of major ideological cleavages." A focus on the state and internal dynamics is also only one element, which forgoes analysing regional dimensions and wider foreign interventions as Sally Healy illustrates.

The tendency to see matters through one's own cultural lens lends itself to technical approaches, which obscures the effect of strategy and practice in these areas. As Sherard Cowper-Coles argues, careful discussions are always needed among the military, politicians and officials (both in the UK and with allies) on how to craft a joined-up strategy and constructive practice on the ground. As a maxim, however, all concerned should hold in their minds von Moltke's definition of victory – "the highest goal attainable with available means."⁹ Focus on available means and then realise that "no plan survived contact with the enemy" as von Moltke again put it.¹⁰ This requires an understanding that technical solutions and templates do not neatly fit an evolving local cultural, socioeconomic and political context. The plan, or the logframe for that matter, does not have to go out the window but it has to adapt to circumstances on the ground. This leads to the everyday practices,

9 Lawrence Freedman (2013), *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press), p.104.

10 Freedman, *Strategy*, p.104.

habits and narratives on the ground which influence the effectiveness of interventions of any kind.¹¹ Not only are clear and achievable goals required, and to understand the context of where these interventions take place, but it is necessary to engage appropriately with local partners in whose interests after all these interventions are happening. If these relationships are misjudged, neither their needs nor external actors' objectives will be met. Hence it is crucial to focus on developing a nuanced approach to relationships with local people, as Adam Roberts suggests.

All of this suggests that the more transformative aims of intervention are unlikely to succeed quickly. This publication emphasises the importance of in-depth and broad understanding of the historical, political, cultural and socioeconomic context, as well as the importance of perspectives from the philosophical to the demographic. It reiterates that not only must it be defined clearly what is wished to be achieved, and there be a chance of doing so, but it must also be learnt how to work closely and appropriately with local people. This requires flexibility, humility and a willingness to adapt in pursuit of long-term and sustainable outcomes.

11 Séverine Autesserre (2014), *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

2. Afghanistan and After – Reflections on Western Interventionism and State Fragility in the post-Cold War Era¹²

Mats Berdal

At the end of 2014 the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) formally completed its mission in Afghanistan. The occasion was marked by a host of minor ceremonies in Kabul and Western capitals, all of them accompanied by the release of suitably uplifting communiqués highlighting the progress made in making Afghanistan a “more stable and more prosperous” place.¹³ Neither the ceremonies nor the many official statements, however, have done much to dispel widespread scepticism – among the public, within the Western political class and in academia – about the quality, coherence and, above all, the long-term sustainability of international efforts to bring peace and political stability to Afghanistan. Indeed, the experience of Western-led state- and peace-building activities in the country, extending over a period of thirteen years and involving a coalition of some fifty countries, has resulted in what must, by *any* serious metric or benchmark of progress, be considered a

12 The article draws on remarks prepared for the British Academy’s *Contested Approaches to Conflict, Stability and Security: Rethinking State Fragility* conference and an International Forum organised by the British Academy on a similar topic on 4–5 November 2014. I am grateful for comments on the paper offered by Dominik Zaum.

13 ‘Remarks by NATO Secretary-General at NAC meeting’, 17 December 2014, NATO, www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_116104.htm Accessed on 12 March 2015.

decidedly mixed and highly tenuous record of achievements.¹⁴ To many, the experience provides yet more evidence of the hubris and futility of Western efforts to rebuild states and transform complex societies fractured by war and conflict in the post-Cold War era.

While hubris has undoubtedly been a striking feature of both Western practices and thinking about the possibilities and limitations of intervention after the Cold War, one must be wary of seeking to extract too many lessons from the Afghan case. Interventions in weak and fragile states over the past two decades have in fact assumed a variety of forms, and have involved different coalitions of actors and sources of legitimising authority. They have also differed sharply in terms of political context, in levels of commitment of personnel and money, and in the degree of intrusiveness into the governmental and societal structures of the target state, from “coercive socio-engineering”¹⁵ in Iraq at one end to operations with a much lighter external footprint at the other, as in parts of Central America in the 1990s. Crucially, the admixture of motives and interests that have spurred and animated the involvement of individual states in operations have also ranged far more widely than any reading of formally agreed ‘mission statements’ of multinational operations would appear to suggest, with significant implications for the nature and trajectory of the mission in question. These are all important reasons why the view that Western-led interventions and practices (taken to include the activities of the UN, International Financial Institutions and Western NGOs) amount to a ‘coherent liberal state-building project’ – a view found especially in the so-called ‘critical’ peace-building literature – is, in reality, problematic.¹⁶

Even so, it remains the case that post-Cold War interventions, notwithstanding the many differences they exhibit, share two broad and connected characteristics that distinguish them in a *qualitative* sense especially from UN field operations during the Cold War. The first of these lies in what might be described as their level of *transformative*

14 For two critical but also balanced and persuasive assessments, see Anand Gopal (2014), *No Good Men Among the Living: America, the Taliban and the War through Afghan Eyes* (New York: Metropolitan Books) and, in particular, Astri Suhrke (2011), *When More is Less: The International Project for Afghanistan* (London: Hurst & Co.).

15 Toby Dodge (2012), ‘Enemy Images, Coercive Socio-Engineering, and Civil War in Iraq’, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 19, No. 4, p.461.

16 Mats Berdal and Dominik Zaum (2012), ‘Power after Peace’, in Mats Berdal and Dominik Zaum, ed., *The Political Economy of Post-War State-building* (London: Routledge), pp.8–9.

ambition. The aim of involvement in a fragile state has been to effect, or facilitate, lasting socioeconomic, political and institutional change in order to tackle underlying or ‘root’ sources of conflict, violence and instability. Second, while the notion of a centrally-directed and “coherent liberal project” is misleading for reasons alluded to above, interventions in fragile states have still followed what may, more loosely and more broadly, be described as a “liberal democratic script.”¹⁷ It is a script that has included the commitment to create pluralist and representative political systems by means of elections, to the opening up of war-affected economies through liberalisation and greater reliance on market forces, and to the promotion of core liberal values with respect to human rights, rule of law and ‘good governance’. The overall ambition and long-term objective of interventions driven by these objectives is well captured in the UK Government’s most recent definition of ‘structural stability’, a condition said to obtain in “political systems which are representative and legitimate, capable of managing conflict and change peacefully, and societies in which human rights and the rule of law are respected, basic needs are met, security established and opportunities for social and economic development are open to all.”¹⁸

Looked at more broadly this way, this essay identifies five lessons from the post-Cold War history of Western-led efforts to assist in the stabilisation of war-torn societies and fragile states. These lessons, or better, these observations with a direct bearing on policy, are all closely connected.

Understanding the Impact of War and External Intervention on ‘State Fragility’

While always costly and destructive in human and material terms, war is also an agent of transformation that serves to reorder relationships of power and influence within state and society, often in decisive and, sometimes, unexpected ways. This is one reason why the idea that states subjected to protracted war and violence eventually collapse into ‘anarchy’, ‘chaos’ or ‘ungoverned space’ – all commonly used epithets to describe conditions in places where Western powers have engaged in state- and peace-building – conceals a much more complex reality.

17 Neil MacFarlane and Stina Torjesen (2007), ‘R before D: the case of post-conflict reintegration in Tadjikistan’, *Conflict, Security and Development*, Vol. 7, No.2, p.329.

18 Stabilisation Unit (2014), *The UK Government’s Approach to Stabilisation* (2014) (Stabilisation Unit: FCO, DFID and MOD).

As ethnographic and other studies of conflict zones have repeatedly shown, those who live within war-torn and fragile states – that is, those who live in conditions of persistent insecurity and endemic violence, and are directly affected by the social and economic dislocations attendant on such conditions, including the weakness, often extreme, of *formal* institutions of state and government – are never indifferent in relation to the circumstances in which they find themselves. Politico-military elites and power-brokers, economic interest groups and civil society actors (including traders, local businesses and women’s groups), ‘ordinary’ people concerned with coping and survival: *all* of them adapt and find ways of adjusting to the realities created by war and persistent state weakness.¹⁹

Strategies of adjustment can be primarily *predatory* in nature, geared towards personal enrichment through the capturing of criminal rent and/or through both systematic and opportunistic exploitation of vulnerable civilian populations through, for example, pillaging and various forms of illegal and violent taxation.²⁰ In some cases – the recent history of Guinea-Bissau provides a powerful example – the criminal interests and activities of the political-military elites in power actually come to depend on the continuation of state failure. Strategies of adjustment can also, however, be less about predation than about taking the necessary steps required to survive and cope in a world where the state no longer provides security, effective rule and basic life-sustaining services. Indeed, scholars have shown that the response of local communities to state failure and persistent insecurity has often been “to forge informal arrangements to provide some degree of predictability and security for themselves”;²¹ Over time, such developments may result in local, even regional, systems of “governance without government”;²² systems which in turn may provide the basis for more durable political settle-

19 For a rich study of these processes that focuses on the ways in which people in eastern Congo have, in the course of nearly two decades of war and violence, developed “strategies to survive, cope and in some cases even to profit from, the liminal socio-political environment in which they find themselves”; see Miles Larmer, Ann Lauditi and John F. Clark, ‘Neither war nor peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): profiting and coping amid violence and disorder’, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol.40, No. 135, 2013, p.1.

20 For a detailed discussion of the “economic benefits” that may accrue from civil war, see David Keen (1998), *The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars*, Adelphi Paper 320, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), chap.1.

21 Ken Menkhaus (2012), ‘Somalia’s 20-Year Experiment in Hybrid Government’, *World Politics Review*, p.3.

22 Ken Menkhaus (2010), ‘State Failure and Ungoverned Space’, in Mats Berdal and Achim Wennmann, eds., *Ending Wars, Consolidating Peace: Economic Perspectives* (London: Routledge for IISS), p.181.

ments owing to the greater legitimacy they enjoy and to their ability to meet (albeit to varying degrees) the needs of war-weary populations. Thus, considering the history of Somalia between the ignominious departure of UN forces in 1995 and 2006, when the Council of Somali Islamic Courts established (for what proved to be a brief period) control in Mogadishu, Ken Menkhaus has stressed how:

“a patchwork quilt of local political orders had emerged in neighbourhoods, towns and villages across much of the country. This assortment of local arrangements was hardly ideal – it was fluid, patchy, variable in capacity and legitimacy, chronically contested, vulnerable to armed spoilers and illiberal in the kind of justice it dispensed. But these local arrangements ... endured and evolved and in some cases ... provided local communities with better basic governance than exists in neighbouring states.”²³

Similarly, Timothy Raeymaekers has demonstrated how in the course of the civil wars that have engulfed parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo since the late 1990s, “farmers, transborder traders, street vendors, but also customs agents, administrators, rebels and commanders of foreign armies that occupied vast parts of Congo’s territory – continued to seek and find practical responses to the daily problems of political order under conditions of conflict and state ‘collapse’, a quest that sometimes produced elaborated systems of ‘governance’.”²⁴ A more recent set of studies has, similarly, stressed how the “violent borderland of eastern DRC ... is not an area devoid of governance.”²⁵

Neither Menkhaus nor Raeymaekers’ findings, however, support what is sometimes an overly romanticised conception of local processes and actors as a uniquely ‘authentic’ and thus naturally more promising basis for ‘organic’ or ‘bottom up’ peace-building. Plainly, local adaptations to state failure and insecurity can also be, and have often proved to be, exploitative, violent and illiberal. More often than not, the calculations

23 Menkhaus, ‘Somalia’s 20-Year Experiment’, p.3.

24 Timothy Raeymaekers (2007), ‘Sharing the spoils: the reinvigoration of Congo’s Political System’, *Politorbis*, No.42, p.28. In an extended review of recent writings on Eastern Congo, René Lemarchand, interestingly, observes: “Uneven as the results are ... informal forms of governance appear to hold considerably more promise than the frequently and largely corrupt ‘democratic’ institutions put in place through elections.” René Lemarchand (2013), ‘Reflections on the Recent Historiography of Eastern Congo’, *The Journal of African History*, Vol.54, No.3, p.436.

25 Larmer, Laudati and Clark, ‘Neither war nor peace in DRC’, p.5.

and motives of local actors are likely to be complex and mixed, reflecting their particular circumstances and thus resisting easy labelling – a reality that emerges clearly from several recent and important studies of the war in Afghanistan as viewed from the perspective of local Afghans.²⁶ The key point here – and also a key lesson for policymakers – is that violent conflict and continuing state weakness, rather than simply being viewed as manifestations of ‘chaos’ and ‘anarchy’, must also be understood as a distinctive political economy of war and peace; one given by the range of interests that apply and the functional utility that some see in their perpetuation.²⁷ In other words, what needs to be analysed and better understood by policymakers are the alternative systems of power, influence and economic activity that crystallise within conflict zones, and, more specifically, the interaction of local war economies with the political agendas of conflict actors.

This is no easy task, not least because political economies mutate and change, often rapidly in response to external and internal stimuli, including evolving regional and geopolitical circumstances. Moreover, while analytical capacity to engage and better understand the dynamics of war zones and fragile states has undoubtedly improved within the machinery of those governments responsible for planning and thinking about ‘stabilisation’ and ‘post-conflict’ issues, bureaucratic stove-piping and limited political attention span among senior decision-makers will always complicate the task of translating analysis into meaningful policy.²⁸ For all this, policy-makers wishing to assist in stabilisation and peace-building have no option but to engage with the political economy of conflict-affected states, societies and regions. Even if such analysis does not provide clear-cut or politically digestible answers in terms of how best, if at all, to intervene, it directs decision-makers towards the *kinds* of questions that must nonetheless be asked:

- In what ways have war and protracted violence contributed to the growth of informal networks and how resilient are these?
- Where does real power – that is, networks of privilege and patronage that have evolved during conflict – lie in ‘post-conflict’ states?

26 See in particular Mike Martin (2014), *An Intimate War – An Oral History of the Helmand Conflict* (London: Hurst & Co.), and Carter Malkasian (2013), *War Comes to Garmser – Thirty Years of Conflict on the Afghan Frontier* (London: Hurst & Co.).

27 Menkhaus, ‘State Failure and Ungoverned Space’, pp.176–181.

28 In the UK that includes, most notably, the Stabilisation Unit whose remit and cross-departmental character has provided a model for other donor countries.

- Which informal practices and actors can be recognised and formalised without threat to overall long-term political stability?
- What is the risk that the privileged role sometimes given to wartime elites in peace accords only entrench the power and influence of actors with a vested interest in weak states and continuing instability?

Prioritising Political Settlement over Capacity Building

There is a further and a vitally important policy implication that arises from the political economy perspective sketched above: the challenge of strengthening fragile and war-torn states is not primarily, and certainly should never be viewed simply, as one of building institutional capacity. The deeper challenge lies in finding and effectively supporting a political settlement that reflects and takes account of the formal as well as the informal distribution of power, influence and resources within society. The notion of a political settlement here must not be confused with the formal signing of a peace accord, even though such accords ideally should and, on occasion, have underpinned common, less formal, understandings of the rules forged among social groups, actors and, quite especially, among the elites that govern, organise and regulate access to power and resources within society.²⁹ Reaching a political settlement means agreement on those 'rules', and making the search for such settlement more central to the activities of external actors engaged in state- and peace-building means shifting focus away from institutional capacity *as such* to the underlying structures of power and influence in society.³⁰ This, in turn, necessarily entails a broader conception of the 'state' to include informal actors and networks that have prospered in the course of conflict and have benefited from persistent state weakness. This is essential because a functioning and inclusive political settlement – one in which key actors and elites see themselves as having a long-term stake – rather than just state capacity provides the key to building legitimacy across society for any new 'post-conflict' dispensation and for the avoidance of renewed violence and war. Focusing merely on formal institutions and the edifice of the state, in other words, can divert attention away from the importance of considering relationships between different actors and groups in society and

29 Mats Berdal (2009), *Building Peace after War* (London: Routledge), pp.31–38.

30 This understanding of what is encompassed by a true 'political settlement' corresponds broadly to that in Stabilisation Unit, 'The UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation (2014)', pp.1–3.

how these experience the state, including their sense of political and economic disenfranchisement, grievance and marginalisation.³¹

The post-Cold War history of state- and peace-building offers many examples in support of these conclusions. The Bonn Agreement of December 2001, meant to lay the foundations for the post-war transition in Afghanistan, was fundamentally flawed owing to its effective exclusion of much of the Pashtun community from the political arena. Likewise, neither the Bicesse Accords for Angola in 1991 nor the Lomé Peace Accord for Sierra Leone in 1999 embodied an inclusive and workable political settlement in the sense described above. In each of these cases, the task of reaching a political settlement and the role of external actors in facilitating that process faced distinctive and formidable problems. Mozambique, interestingly, offers a striking and instructive contrast, showing both that capacity building *per se* is less critical than building consensus around a workable political contract among erstwhile belligerents, and that, in the right circumstances, external actors, in this case the UN, can play an important role in arriving at a consensus.

Since its emergence in the early 1990s from a devastating and brutal civil war, fought over sixteen years between RENAMO and government forces, both supported by external patrons, Mozambique has continued to be plagued by institutional weakness, aid dependency and underdevelopment. Indeed, more than two decades after the end of the civil war, the country remains near the bottom of the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), its HDI value for 2014 placing it 178th out of 187 countries.³² And yet, Mozambique has not returned to war. Indeed, since 1994 six openly contested and peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections have been held and even the most recent political crisis, which in 2014 saw minor skirmishes between RENAMO and government forces, does not threaten fundamentally the stability of the underlying political settlement that has been in place since the mid-1990s.³³ The General Peace Agreement signed in Rome in 1992, which signalled the formal end of civil war, did involve detailed negotiations over an extended period time. Still, the accord was not itself a political settlement in the sense set out above. Its actual implementation was

31 Berdal and Zaum, 'Power after Peace', pp.10–13.

32 UNDP Human Development Report, 2014, www.hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-1-human-development-index-and-its-components Accessed on 19 March 2015.

33 Alex Vines (2013), 'RENAMO's Rise and Decline', *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 20, No.3.

fraught with difficulties and the original plan was heavily modified by the UN's mission leadership, which, to its credit, recognised that the key to success lay *not* in holding elections on time or in insisting on fulfilling the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration provisions of the Peace Accord, let alone (though this was not an issue at the time) in addressing the question of impunity and accountability for crimes committed during the war. Instead, the key lay in ensuring, by whatever means necessary, that RENAMO and especially its leader Afonso Dhlakama bought into the political process. This involved enlisting the Security Council in support of measures, including the innovative use of diplomatic and financial inducements, which would secure RENAMO's lasting commitment to a political settlement. The comparative success of the UN's operation was closely linked to the quality and political astuteness of its leadership in the field, specifically its head of mission, Aldo Ajello, who took full advantage of the support he enjoyed from a united Security Council in his dealings with both the government and RENAMO. While all operations differ in important respects, the case of Mozambique still offers valuable lessons regarding the precise role that external actors can play in helping to secure political settlements, assist peace-building and promote stabilisation.³⁴

Treating Complex Societies on their own Terms

Much of what has been said above, including the consequences of failing to take proper account of the distinctive political economies that emerge in response to the disintegration and weakness of formal institutions, has been compounded by another feature of Western involvement over the past two decades: the tendency of governments and decision-makers to abstract the challenges of state- and peace-building – including the deeper origins and manifestations of fragility – from their political, historical and cultural context. Put simply, there has been a failure to deal with societies on their own terms and, quite especially, to seek to acquire a deeper understanding of *local* context and local conflict dynamics. It is a failure whose consequences are now well documented in several fine-grained and sophisticated analyses of the war at provincial, district and village level in parts of the war in

34 Mats Berdal (2014), 'The UN Operation in Mozambique, 1992–1994', in Joachim Koops, Norrie Macqueen, Thierry Tardy and Paul Williams, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of UN Peacekeeping Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Afghanistan.³⁵ Too often, the preference of outsiders, whether intended or by default, has been to deal with war-torn societies as ‘clean slates’ and, accordingly, to approach state- and peace-building as exercises in social-engineering – an approach, incidentally, which the methodological techniques and preoccupations favoured by some social scientists are likely only to have reinforced. Declining interest and investment in Language and Area Studies, observable in the UK but also in other Western countries, though difficult to quantify in its effects, has added to the problem by ensuring that the pool of expertise and access to ‘deep’ knowledge about countries in conflict have become limited.

The failure of historical and cultural contextualisation has, of course, been more pronounced in some cases and some quarters than others. Iraq before the US-led invasion of 2003 provides the most egregious case of wilful neglect, with catastrophic and predictable consequences that are still with us. As Charles Tripp would later write of a meeting he attended with Tony Blair and Jack Straw, specially arranged in late 2002 to discuss the future of Iraq: the British Prime Minister “seemed wholly uninterested in Iraq as a complex and puzzling political society.”³⁶ If this remains the most extreme and clear-cut example, the wider point goes beyond it: when, for whatever reason, historical, political and cultural context is ignored, the unintended, perverse and conflict-generating effects of policies prescribed by the liberal script – e.g. introducing democracy through early competitive elections and opening up the economy through market liberalisation – cannot, and indeed have not, been fully anticipated or understood. As a result, the actual effect of many state-building efforts, including the generous provision of aid and development assistance, has been to entrench exploitative political economies and fuel violence.³⁷

Underestimating the innate hostility to a foreign presence

A further, and closely, related feature of Western interventionist practice since the early 1990s that merits separate mention is failure of Western

35 Martin, *An Intimate War*; Malkasian, *War Comes to Garmser*; and, Antonio Giustozzi (2009), *Decoding the New Taliban – Insights from the Afghan Field* (London: Hurst & Co.).

36 Charles Tripp (2007), ‘Militias, Vigilantes, Death Squads’, *London Review of Books*, 25 January, p.30.

37 On the perverse effects of development assistance stemming from a lack of “on-the-ground understanding by the internationals” in the Afghan province of Helmand, see Martin, *An Intimate War*, pp.138–144.

governments to gauge the complex effects of a foreign intrusion into, and an extended presence in, fragile and war-torn states. There are at least three aspects to this.

First, external interventions, especially where they involve a large and extended foreign presence, have frequently fuelled nationalisms and stimulated various forms of local resistance, however benign and well intentioned the motives of outsiders. Historical memories, suspicions about ulterior motives, feelings of humiliation and impotence; all of these have combined in a potent mix to produce complex and contradictory reactions among locals. This may be obvious enough in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan, yet even where outsiders were initially and overwhelmingly welcomed, attitudes can change rapidly and remain ambivalent beneath the surface. For example, while international intervention under UN auspices in East Timor was critical to securing independence and freedom after twenty-five years of oppressive colonial rule by Indonesia, it did not take long before the Timorese began to “view the UN as a second ‘occupier’”.³⁸

Second, and as noted above, an international presence is itself part of and feeds into the political economy of fragile and war-torn states; that is, external actors and their actions structure relations between different social groups and power-brokers in society and this, as noted above, can serve to further entrench illiberal and violent power structures.³⁹ This, too, has proved hard to grasp by interveners that see themselves as engaged in social-engineering and/or whose domestically-driven priorities (e.g. ‘fighting the war on terror’), especially if combined with ignorance of local politics, can make them easy prey to manipulation by local actors.

Finally, involvement by external actors in civil war-like situations where fundamental questions of who governs or rules remain contested, cannot forever remain above the political fray, that is, externals cannot escape becoming drawn into the politics of fragile states. Worse, the decisions and actions they take may themselves, and often have, served to fuel tensions and further expose fault-lines among former belligerents and conflict actors. In particular, attempts to impose solutions

38 Samantha Power (2008), *Chasing the Flame* (London: Penguin Books), p.323.

39 For this see the accounts of the relations that US forces entered into with local strongmen in the southern part of Afghanistan between 2001 and 2006 in Gopal, *No Good Men among the Living*, pp.107–110, and Martin, *An Intimate War*, pp.125–32.

through the use of force, especially if these run against the grain of local balances of power, often provoke a violent reaction.

Not all good things go together

It was observed at the outset that Western attempts at state- and peace-building, while hardly 'coherent', have followed a liberal script. Central elements of that script have been an oft-stated commitment to the importance of human rights, the creation of pluralistic, participatory political systems and good governance. The ease and cynicism with which these goals have sometimes been dismissed as disingenuous and hypocritical – by some as little more than a thinly-veiled cover for the re-assertion of neo-imperial control – do not justify their abandonment as a set of regulative ideas and long-term objectives. Still, insofar as the script rests on the assumption found in one influential strand of liberalism – to wit, that all good things go together – it is plainly problematic when it comes to analysing the choices and strategies that have confronted Western-led efforts to build 'structural stability'. This is because it inevitably underplays the need for priorities and choices to be made, especially when knowledge, resources and staying power are in short supply. There can be little doubt that long-term stability requires attention to 'post-conflict' justice issues, to measures that will ensure an effective monopoly of force in society (including, notably, Security Sector Reform), to respect for human rights, meaningful participation in politics and inclusive economic development. At the same time, in conflict-ridden, fragile and divided societies emerging from war, the need to identify actors and administrative structures that can provide a measure of governance and help meet the life-sustaining needs of local populations, including physical security, will often prove to be more immediate priorities. The post-Cold War era has shown that the relationship between long- and short-term objectives is rarely straightforward, that it is always context-specific and certain to present policymakers with difficult practical and moral judgements.

In the end, whatever form the assistance provided to fragile and war-affected states takes, it needs to work with the grain of and, through the difficult policy choices we make, encourage those local developments and actors that, in the long run, stand the greatest chance of producing inclusive political settlements and guaranteeing lasting stability. This requires an understanding both of the political economy of fragile states and the historical and cultural constraints that limit what externals

can do; that is to say, we need to engage with those societies on their own terms and be more conscious of the limitations of what we can accomplish. In short, after Afghanistan, both greater realism and greater modesty about the transformative potential of Western-led state- and peace-building are called for.

3. Reflections from Afghanistan⁴⁰

Sherard Cowper-Coles

Like politicians, diplomats can be divided into those who like *being* and those who like *doing*, as Jean Monnet said of statesmen. In truth today most British diplomats, at least those posted overseas, are more about *being* diplomats than actually *doing* anything real to change the world. So, when I was rung up in the autumn of 2006 by the Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office and told that he wanted to send “a really big hitter” to Kabul, that we were upgrading our operations there, and would I like to go as the Ambassador to head an embassy which was trebling in size, which would have some of the brightest and best of our young diplomats and intelligence officers working for it, of course I said yes, out of a mixture of vanity and ambition. But I accepted also out of a sense that working in Kabul with a real embassy alongside the British Army, which I thought I knew and admired, and the Americans, whom I thought I knew and admired, would be a real opportunity to make a difference in what I then believed was the good war. To *do* something as a diplomat, not just *be* one.

Before I went out to Kabul, I spent a lot of time reading and talking and thinking not only about Afghanistan, but also about countries that have experienced similar wars, going back to my childhood interest in campaigns such as those in Malaya, Vietnam and Ireland. I looked back and asked myself what were the lessons we needed to apply in the present war. I had, I confess, fewer doubts than I should have had as I read and thought about our latest Afghan war in advance.

40 An expanded version of this essay was delivered on the occasion of the Lee Knowles Lecture at Trinity College, Cambridge on Thursday 30th October 2014.

Gradually, however, in the months that followed, I began to realise that all the happy talk was what, when I studied philosophy, would have been called sense without reference. These were words which did not connect to real objects in the real world. I learnt, for example, that the Taliban had not been defeated when American and British Special Forces and intelligence officers had gone into Afghanistan in October 2001. The Taliban had done what guerrilla armies and, what insurgents have done, throughout human history, which is to pull back to fight on another day and in another way. They'd gone back into the deserts of the south, into the mountains of the east and across the Durand Line into the sanctuary areas of Pakistan, so they hadn't been defeated. Our real enemy, Al Qaeda, had effectively been defeated by January 2002. But we'd decided to fight an insurgency which was local, authentic, angry, conservative, and ignorant.

We went on, as I saw on my increasingly frequent visits to Helmand, to conduct a counter-insurgency campaign that ignored all the lessons of our imperial history. For a start, we were fighting on behalf of a government that enjoyed little or no credibility with the population in the great areas of the Pashtun Belt where the insurgency had broken out. We were fighting selectively by garrisoning only limited areas of the Pashtun Belt, those we and the Americans and the Australians and the Dutch and the Canadians had enough troops to garrison. So we did what Curzon quite rightly, when he'd been Viceroy of India, had stopped; we shut up our forces in forts scattered across enemy territory. All across Helmand, all across Kandahar, all across the provinces in the east that the Americans were occupying, these forts sprang up. We called them combat operating outposts, or forward operating bases, but they were forts. The soldiers, who were rotated every six months through Afghanistan, were aliens at sea in a world they did not understand. The Afghan Army was only 3% Southern Pashtun. Most of its officers were Soviet-trained, Russian-speaking Tajiks from the north who spoke hardly any Pashtu. When, at the training academies in Kabul, units were formed and sent out to the field, those being sent to Helmand could not be told where they were going because they would have mutinied or gone AWOL.

During my time in Afghanistan, I also realised that you cannot stabilise Afghanistan unless you engage the neighbours, every single one of whom has a dog in the fight. You cannot stabilise Afghanistan unless you are working with, not against, Pakistan, with, not against, India, with, not against, China, Iran, and Russia; and probably with the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, certainly with the lower tier of

'Stans' in central Asia. There was never, however, any serious effort by the Americans to enlist the neighbours and near neighbours in a collective effort to stabilise Afghanistan. All of them would have benefited from such an effort. All of them suffered from an unstable Afghanistan that was exporting refugees, drugs, and political violence.

I gradually realised that we were all living what had been called in another land war in Asia, which America had also lost, a bright, shining lie. What I found so depressing was that the man at the head of the United States Central Command directing this great effort had, between leaving Iraq and taking up his command at Tampa in Florida, spent a year at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas writing one of the most sensible books ever produced by the American or probably any other military, the United States Army and Marine Corps Field Manual of Counter Insurgency. In that manual General David Petraeus points out that counter-insurgency is mostly politics. Insurgents are almost always rebels with a cause, fighting for a political reason. You can suppress the symptoms of the disease by force but unless you also address the causes of the disease, you will never actually cure it. You may suppress the insurgency in parts of Helmand, you may drive the Taliban out of Lashkar Gah or out of Musa Qala, but they'll pop up elsewhere. So you're not actually dealing with the real problem, which in Afghanistan is that the Taliban were then, and are now, the authentic representatives of a real stream of thinking, of ethnicity, of belief, in Afghan political life. Unless and until they are somehow represented in a political settlement, the insurgency will not be definitively dealt with.

We were also ignoring lessons from our own imperial history. Palestine both before and after the Second World War, Kashmir following Partition, and Aden in 1967 to give just a few. I realised that we were ignoring all those lessons in Afghanistan. Above all we forgot the lessons of a counter-insurgency campaign that was too important, too close to home, for the British government to get wrong. In Ireland, in Operation Banner, we always had a political strategy running in parallel with a military strategy. As Seamus Mallon said about the Good Friday Agreement, it was Sunningdale for slow learners. We always had the offer of power sharing set out at the Sunningdale Conference in 1972 there for the nationalist insurgents, had they chosen to put down the gun. And in 1972 a courageous British Prime Minister had authorised the Secret Intelligence Service to do what the CIA should have done at the start of the campaign in Afghanistan. In 1972 an unarmed single officer of the SIS drove across Ireland to talk to the Provisional Army Council of the

IRA. And he said to them, on behalf of the Prime Minister, if you want to talk, this is the channel, if you want to make peace this is how you communicate with us. But unless and until you do, we're going to conduct a campaign that will show you that you can never win against us militarily. We will hit you hard in every way that we can, but there is this channel open. In Ireland in parallel with that we also had an economic strategy, we had a development strategy, we engaged the neighbours, and we had enough troops to cover the whole of the area infected by the insurgency. In Afghanistan we didn't; it was as if in Ireland we had decided to garrison Armagh and Tyrone, but left the other four counties of Northern Ireland entirely ungarrisoned. We worked with, not against, the government of the Irish Republic, with other outside players, above all with the government of the United States. We had the double decker strategy of the outside players looking in, and a willingness to talk to all the inside parties to the conflict. And in the end, we prevailed, after 30 years of great expenditure of blood and treasure, of great courage shown by British politicians like Margaret Thatcher, John Major, and Tony Blair, who recognised that you have to talk to insurgents if you're going to make peace. We convinced the IRA that they could not win militarily, and all the time in parallel there had been the political offer.

Now what puzzled me in Afghanistan, what puzzles me today about Afghanistan is that any of us who have thought at all about these things knew all that. Why, then, did Britain carry on for so long in Afghanistan, knowing in our bones that what we were doing couldn't possibly work?

It has much to do with two institutional factors, much hallowed in this United Kingdom. The first was our eagerness to please the Americans. We forget that this was largely an American war. I spent nearly 18 months as the British Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, trying to influence the Americans in how they conducted this war. I realised that my views, the views of the British Government, counted for virtually nothing in Washington. In part this was because the Americans knew that they could count on us to be there no matter what. The French, who contributed far less for far less time in Afghanistan than we did, seemed to matter more in Washington because the Americans knew that the French were prepared to walk away. But they knew that the British wouldn't dare. Even as British ministers were signalling to the Americans that it would be difficult to provide troops for this war in Afghanistan, the British Army, behind Ministers' backs, was signalling to the Pentagon that they could provide the troops, and that the Americans only had to put pressure on the British Prime Minister.

I saw the way the Americans spent almost as much energy fighting each other as they did fighting the Taliban. Back in Washington the State Department and the Pentagon were hardly on speaking terms, the CIA was following a parallel track, the Bush White House and then the Obama White House had no real control over the warring parties in the never ending Washington policy war. On the ground, in the field, the American commanding general once said to me that the United States Marines, who reported up to the United States Navy, and who would never take orders from the United States Army, were out of control. They were village hopping down the Helmand valley in their V22 Osprey Tilt Rotor Helicopters as though they were hopping from island to island across the Pacific in the Second World War, even landing near the border with Iran, and establishing an air strip. All of those villages are now back in the hands of the Taliban.

The other institution which was responsible for us continuing in this way while knowing in our hearts that it was wrong, that it wouldn't work, was the British military. For the British Army, as we withdrew from Ireland, Germany and Iraq, Afghanistan was a chance not just to engage the Taliban, but also to engage the Treasury, the Royal Navy, and the Royal Air Force. The Chief of the General Staff said that if he didn't use the battle groups coming out of Iraq in Afghanistan he'd lose them in a defence review after the election: it was use them or lose them. And if you're sitting in barracks on Salisbury Plain or at Catterick, or on ceremonial duties in London, what could be more fun for a professional soldier than to go out to Afghanistan for six months, with R&R after four months? What could be more rewarding for a professional soldier than to fight in that war? Some of them were a bit more thoughtful. A young officer once came up to me in Helmand and said "Sir, can I have a private word with you?" And I said "of course". He said I was at school with your son, and I just wanted you to know I'm responsible for training the Afghan Police. It's fine when I'm with them, they behave more or less, and I can get them to march in a straight line and clean their weapons and fire in the right direction; but he said that as soon as his back was turned, as soon as he left their base, they're back to smoking whatever they're smoking, and raping and pillaging, and carrying out their predatory behaviour towards the local population. You can't have an alien officer from the Grenadier Guards come to Helmand for six months and tell these guys to behave, and then be replaced by somebody else, and expect the effects to last. And he said, I've said this to my commanding officer, who says I'm being defeatist, and we're only here for six months, and that we've got to crack on and be positive. Again and again one would come up against that same attitude.

But it wasn't just the Americans and the Army, two institutions which I loved before I went to Afghanistan, and still love, although in both cases they played a large part in our defeat in Afghanistan. Two other actors complicit in that defeat were the British media and some of the British pseudo-academics who advise the Ministry of Defence. For the media it was too easy to agree to be embedded with a unit in a combat zone, to go out there and collect images from the front line. But in accepting the terms of such 'embeds', they did not do their duty as journalists in reporting objectively on the war. Of course the press commentators generally took a different and more objective view, of course there were individual journalists who courageously refused to be embedded, but for many of the media they became part of the machine, part of the propaganda effort. The same, I'm afraid, has to be said of some of the so-called academics who pronounce on military history, but love to go to Shrivenham or host a seminar funded by the Defence Ministry, who find it difficult, and I understand why, to bite the hand that feeds them.

In the end none of those groups is really responsible for what went wrong in Afghanistan. It is people like me who must bear the greatest share of responsibility, because we are public officials, we are paid to offer objective advice to ministers, we are paid to be honest, and we're expected by the taxpayer to serve up the kind of independent advice that you'd expect from your solicitor or your doctor. But time and again I would see officials, I'd see myself, tempering our advice in order not to upset either the Americans or the British Army. I remember when I reported from Afghanistan criticism from an American general that the British Army was out of its depth in Afghanistan. I sent an email back to six people in Whitehall, two in the MOD, two in the Cabinet Office, two in the Foreign Office; and a very senior Foreign Office official said you mustn't report this, because it upsets the MOD, and the Foreign Office needs good relations with the MOD. For him, good relations between the Foreign Office and the MOD were more important than the British national interest. Even before I left for Afghanistan, a senior Foreign Office official said to me that he knew deep down that we were just stirring up trouble by going to Helmand, but that it was what the MOD wanted, and it was impossible to resist. What we had was officials and ministers who knew that the advice they were giving was wrong or incomplete, who knew, from their study of history, from common sense, that this wasn't going to work. But we didn't have the guts to do the right thing.

Unlike the Chief of the Imperial General Staff for most of the Second World War, Alan Brooke, so many of us in my position didn't have the

guts to say: 'No, Prime Minister'. Alan Brooke had to deal with a Prime Minister who was a supreme tactical commander, a Prime Minister who'd charged with the 17th/21st Lancers at Omdurman, who'd been with the 4th Hussars in the Malakand Field Force, and who'd fought in the war in South Africa. Almost every other week of the war Churchill had some idea or other. We were going to go back into Sumatra, we were going to drive up into Norway, we were going to land at Salonica. Brooke knew that there was only one strategy that would win the war in the west for the Allies, and that was to land troops in enough strength on the coast of North West Europe in the spring or summer of 1944 to strike a mortal blow at the heart of the German Reich. Brooke stopped the Prime Minister doing some very stupid things, Brooke stuck to the strategy, and we won the War. Which is why the plinth of his statue outside the Ministry of Defence bears the legend "Master of Strategy".

In Afghanistan, neither the Americans nor we had anything approaching a serious strategy for victory in a campaign in which success had to be, as Petraeus's theory stated, "mainly political". All we had was a muddle of mainly military tactics.

In the preface to Thucydides' history of the war between the Athenians and their allies and the Spartans and their allies he writes that he wanted to record the mistakes that both sides had made as a *ktema es aei*, a possession for all time, so that men would read these lessons and learn them, and apply them. But then he added, rather disarmingly, that human nature didn't change, that men would read his history, nod wisely, and then go on to make the same mistakes again and again. That, I am afraid, is the human condition – and the main lesson of history.

4. Fragile States: A Concept with a History⁴¹

Adam Roberts

Introduction

This is a sobering time in the history of attempts to rebuild fragile states in all their distinct forms and nomenclatures. Such attempts have been the focus of a great deal of international activity, both civil and military, over the quarter century since the end of the Cold War. They have generally been based on liberal Western models of how states should relate to their citizens. They have encountered many problems.

In Iraq and Syria, the so-called 'Islamic State' (formerly Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIS) has captured major areas, just a few years after formal Western military involvement ended in Iraq. In Afghanistan, there is deep uncertainty about what will follow the completion of Western withdrawal. In Egypt, a country that has received remarkably high quantities of foreign military and civil aid, a military regime has assumed control, with strong electoral backing, and has not hesitated to use dubious trials, laws against demonstrations, and general repression including torture, as part of its armoury for restoring stability. In Ukraine, Western support for internal political change there was one of the factors cited by Russia in justification of its interventions in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. In Libya, NATO's involvement in the conflict in 2011 has been followed by state collapse.

41 This paper originated in a presentation at a conference on 'The Role of the Nation State in Addressing Global Challenges: Japan-UK Perspectives', Tokyo, 2-3 October 2014. I am grateful for critical comments received from Tom Rodwell, Conflict and Stabilisation Lessons Adviser in the UK Stabilisation Unit, and Richard Caplan of the University of Oxford. I alone am responsible for the contents of this paper.

A striking feature of these and many other situations is the apparently limited capacity of outside powers – especially those of the Western liberal persuasion – to do anything much about them. In all these countries, where there has been huge Western military involvement – including in Afghanistan, which has been host to the longest war in American history – the West’s role has at times looked uncomfortably like that of Shelley’s Ozymandias:

*“And on the pedestal these words appear:
‘My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!’
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”*

Of course the broader picture is far from being uniformly bleak. There have been involvements in fragile, and indeed potentially failing, states that have had significant success – including for example in Cambodia (1992–3), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2001), and Solomon Islands (2003–13).

Three questions are briefly addressed here:

1. How adequate is the lexicon of terms regarding state fragility, and what are the dangers in their use?
2. How central is the question of fragile states in the conduct of international relations?
3. What can be learned from past efforts to address the problem of fragile states?

1. The problematic lexicon

Some term is needed to describe the situation in states where several of the following symptoms add up to a serious breakdown of effective governance: loss of the state’s monopoly of the use of force within its borders; large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees; inability or unwillingness to prevent the activities of pirates, hostage-takers, drug barons, and movements involved in planning terrorist attacks elsewhere; failure to provide basic governmental services, for example in the fields of border control, law and order, water supply and public health; breakdown of systems of agriculture, food distribution,

and education; failure to observe key provisions of treaties with other states.

Numerous terms have been in common usage in the post-Cold War era to describe these and cognate problems: collapsed states; conflict-affected states; failed states; failing states; fragile states; mafia states; rogue states; war-torn states; countries at risk of instability. There is a bewildering variety of such terms, in which there are family resemblances but also individual differences. Each term has its own distinctive meaning, and refers to issues that have been central in the crises of the post-Cold War world. Yet the terms are also deeply problematic. Their tendency to go in and out of fashion is evidence not only of the conceptual complexity of the whole subject and the variety of factual situations encountered, but also of the fact that significant objections have been raised against each and every one of these terms.⁴² A particularly serious objection is that the designation of a country as in some way failing, or even merely as fragile, can only too easily be interpreted as a justification for military intervention and consequent military occupation. A second objection to at least some of these terms is that the language of 'collapse' or 'failure' seems total and finite, when many of the processes in question are cyclical or transitory. A third objection is that very often (for example, in Pakistan) the alleged failure is actually in specific areas, not in the country as a whole. A fourth objection is simply that any such designation is naturally seen as insulting.

Because such objections apply most clearly to the concept of 'failed states', the less objectionable term 'fragile states' is now increasingly preferred. For example, the UK Government uses the term 'fragile and conflict-affected states'. The emphasis on fragility has the merit that this term is not as dismissive or insulting as some of the others. Yet even the concept of state fragility has its problems.

One problem concerns how the term 'fragile states' is applied in practice to actual countries, sometimes even in the form of league tables. The Fragile States Index (formerly the Failed States Index), published since 2005 by the US-based Fund for Peace and the journal *Foreign Policy*, provides evidence for scepticism about the adequacy of either term as a category into which actual countries, with all their idiosyncra-

42 For a simple and spirited critique of the concept of a 'failed state', see 'Top 5 reasons why "failed state" is a failed concept', 13 January 2010 on the website of New York University's Development Research Institute, [http://aidwatchers.com/2010/01/top-5-reasons-why-"failed-state"-is-a-failed-concept/](http://aidwatchers.com/2010/01/top-5-reasons-why-) Accessed on 6 March 2015.

sies and complexities, can be forced. To illustrate the point, two examples from this annual list of the top fragile or failed states must suffice. North Korea was consistently listed in the top 20 from 2005 to 2010 (and was still hanging in there at 26th in 2014), despite being a monolithic state whose government has consistently maintained effective control of the use of force. Sri Lanka was 25th in 2007 and 20th in 2008, although in reality it was very far from being failed or even failing – and was fragile only in particular areas, not in the country as a whole. It was simply involved in a civil war between a powerful democratically elected government and state structure on the one hand, and a strong ethnically and regionally based opposition on the other.⁴³

Whatever term is used, it should be accompanied by explicit recognition that each country needs to be understood in light of its own history and belief-systems, and that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the problem of fragile states. The UK has learned some hard lessons in Afghanistan and Iraq about the limits of what can be achieved by force, but this does not appear to be leading to a general rejection of force: rather to a more cautious approach, and to a growing but still incomplete recognition of how critically important it is to understand the countries in which we are engaged. The UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office went through a period in the late 1990s and early 2000s when it placed less emphasis than before on understanding different countries, histories, cultures and languages. This defect has been partially addressed in the years since 2010, particularly during the tenure of William Hague as Foreign Secretary (2010–14), when there was renewed emphasis on language learning, but there is a long way to go.

2. How central is the question of fragile states in the conduct of international relations?

There is a long tradition of thought on international relations that has concentrated largely on relations between major powers, and has identified war between them as the major issue that needs to be addressed. This tradition has been especially strong in the West, where wars in the past century or more have been primarily international, and have involved great powers.

43 The Fragile States Index is on the website of the Washington-based NGO Foundation for Peace at <http://ffp.statesindex.org>.

Yet the problems of fragile and/or allegedly failing states have always influenced international relations, and specifically the conduct of great powers. Asian history provides no shortage of examples: fear of civil war, as distinct from international war, has for centuries been a deep concern in China, and has shaped China's relations with other major powers. From European history, one illustration must suffice. It relates to the notion of 'the sick man of Europe'. In January 1853 Tsar Nicholas I said to the British Ambassador:

*"Turkey seems to be falling to pieces, the fall will be a great misfortune. It is very important that England and Russia should come to a perfectly good understanding ... and that neither should take any decisive step of which the other is not apprized. ... We have a sick man on our hands, a man gravely ill, it will be a great misfortune if one of these days he slips through our hands, especially before the necessary arrangements are made."*⁴⁴

This belief that allegedly failing states can be addressed in a cooperative spirit by great powers persists today, but so too do the only-too-familiar factors that destroy such hopes. Nine months after the Tsar's statement, the Crimean War broke out, pitting Russia against Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire and Sardinia. In our own time we have seen fallings-out between major powers around activities that involve elements of state-building, not least in Crimea itself in 2014–5.

In the post-Cold War period there has been heavy emphasis on the problem of fragile and failing states. This was reinforced by the fact that the 2001 terrorist attacks on the US originated in a country – Afghanistan – that was widely viewed as failing. The US National Security Strategy of September 2002 stated: "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones."⁴⁵ This White House document was most noted for its advocacy of pre-emptive uses of force: it thus tended to reinforce the perceived link between the language of 'failing states' and the use of military force with or without the consent of the states concerned.

The proposition that failing, or potentially failing, states are indeed a central problem of international relations today is reinforced by the number and scope of efforts to reconstruct them. In the post-Cold War era, out-

44 Harold Temperley (1936), *England and the Near East: The Crimea* (London: Longmans, Green), p.272.

45 *2002 National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington DC: The White House), p.1.

side powers have become involved in societal reconstruction efforts in the Balkans, Central America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania. These activities have often been authorised by the UN Security Council. UN peacekeeping operations have routinely involved tasks relating to civil reconstruction, in some cases going so far as to establish new protectorates; and all of the many UN Security Council authorisations to states or coalitions to use force, at least since the initiation of the US-led Somalia operation of December 1992, have been about reconstructing failing or fragile states.⁴⁶

This focus of activity is the result of a significant development in contemporary international politics: the decline in the incidence of international war between major states, and continuing high number of wars with a strong element of civil war. This last development reflects a deep problem: the complex and paradoxical effects of the collapse of empires and the process of decolonisation. In the post-Soviet or post-Yugoslav republics, and in the post-colonial states in Africa and Asia, the difficulties of constructing a new political order out of an old empire are evident. Establishing legitimate systems of government, accepted borders, good relations with neighbours, and peace between different ethnic groups – all these post-colonial tasks and more are by nature difficult. They are especially so when many of the difficulties facing post-colonial states stem directly from colonial rule or exit strategies (partition in South Asia and the Middle East, and hastily drawn borders dividing ethnic groups in Africa).

It is therefore not surprising that the international military interventions of the post-1945 era have been primarily in post-colonial states. Sometimes, indeed, external armed help has actually been sought by post-colonial states, or else by particular groups within them. Yet outside intervention, whether resulting from invitation or imposition, can involve hazards, including for international order. The greatest hazard is that within many post-colonial states, outside involvement quickly comes to be seen as colonial interference, and results in a severe nationalist reaction – the underestimation of other people's nationalism being one of the gravest weaknesses of the foreign policies of major powers in the present epoch. The second hazard of external intervention is more directly international in character: outside involvement in a state is seen by some other powers as a threat to their interests or status. The

46 Adam Roberts and Dominik Zaum (2008), *Selective Security: War and the United Nations Security Council since 1945* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Adelphi Paper 395), pp.81–3.

Russian critique of NATO actions in Kosovo from 1999 onwards and in Libya in 2011 is a worrying example of how Western interventions may be perceived in a hostile light – and may then in turn provide a rhetorical justification for new military interventions, in the Russian case in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014. There is a continuing high incidence of proxy wars being fought within civil wars. Syria, Libya and Iraq are contemporary examples. The third hazard of external intervention results from the fact that external actors are often not sufficiently knowledgeable of local conditions to be able to intervene effectively. These three hazards add greatly to the difficulty of addressing problems of fragile and conflict-affected states, which are indeed central to the conduct of international relations today.

3. What can be learned from past efforts to address the problem of fragile states?

Addressing the problems of fragile states is inherently difficult. The capacity of outside powers and organisations to understand, and to take action regarding, conflicts within post-colonial states is distinctly limited. There are often disagreements between allies on the most basic issues, such as:

- Whether to collaborate with so-called ‘warlords’, or to build up new structures of decision-making: this issue was particularly difficult in Afghanistan, with the US and the UN-authorized International Security Assistance Force pursuing contradictory policies, as Kofi Annan noted with feeling.⁴⁷
- How to address the patterns of corruption which contributed to the failing of many states, but which may sometimes be exacerbated rather than cured by the sudden influx of donor aid aimed at reforming the country.⁴⁸
- Whether to get involved in policies, such as repressing the manufacture and trade of narcotics, which may or may not be central to the overall mission of achieving social and political stability. In particular, as experience in Afghanistan indicates, counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics agendas can be in conflict.⁴⁹

47 Kofi Annan (2014), *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace* (London: Allen Lane), p.343.

48 Dominik Zaum and Christine S. Cheng, eds., (2012), *Corruption and Post-conflict Peacebuilding: Selling the Peace?* (Abingdon: Routledge), pp.1–2.

49 Nigel Inkster and Virginia Comolli (2012), *Drugs, Security and Failed States: The Problems of Prohibition* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies), pp.83–4, p.131, p.136.

In official consideration of how to reform post-conflict societies, optimistic assumptions and simplistic analogies have abounded. A leading case is the belief that the post-1945 occupations of Japan and Germany offered a model that was likely to work even in the improbable case of post-Saddam Iraq. In their valuable study of *The New Protectorates*, James Mayall and Ricardo Soares de Oliveira have written of “the fleeting nature of the Western hegemonic moment”; and bemoaned “the lack of a US or Western grand strategy to make sense of the changed international system.”⁵⁰ Their overall view of liberal approaches is harsh:

“Historically, the building of states has been a violent, difficult and drawn-out process. In protectorates where the state has traditionally been very weak, it is unlikely that strong state institutions can be built in a way acceptable to Western sensibilities. Conversely, Iraq and the states of former Yugoslavia have had previous experiences of strong statehood but these were authoritarian: not the sort of state legacies that internationals want to cultivate.”⁵¹

There are also merits in some of the key components of modern state-building efforts. As an occasional international election supervisor/observer, I have witnessed genuine enthusiasm for electoral democracy in post-conflict societies in both Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The rights of women is another area in which external powers can make a major contribution that, in some cases at least, is valued locally. And health is a critically important issue that needs more attention than it has received: health crises are often a symptom of the fragility of a state, and a reason for external action. The Ebola crisis in West Africa in 2014–15 is the latest proof of this proposition. Yet anything to do with health needs to be handled with extreme sensitivity to local cultural norms.

The fact that state-building efforts have many merits does not in any way change the equally clear fact that there are certain similarities between contemporary attempts at addressing the problems of fragile states and the practices of European colonial powers in an earlier era. There is a tendency in many former colonial countries to deny any similarities, not least by perpetrating a caricature image of the motives and modus operandi of 19th century colonialists.

50 James Mayall and Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, eds., (2011), *The New Protectorates: International Tutelage and the Making of Liberal States* (London: Hurst), pp.1–2.

51 Mayall and Soares de Oliveira, *The New Protectorates*, pp.24–5.

A notable UN-based doctrinal development of the post-Cold War period, the concept of 'Responsibility to Protect', illustrates the continuing salience of concerns about latter-day colonialism. While this concept is very properly based on the responsibility of each state to protect its own citizens, it also encompasses a commitment to act when authorities within a state are failing to protect their populations; and it commits states to assist capacity building to protect populations.⁵² The resentment of interference that the doctrine has provoked in some government pronouncements (especially of course from dictatorial rulers) is evidence that popular fears of colonial interference still form a lens through which external involvements in post-colonial states are viewed.

There are undeniably some similarities between contemporary efforts at state-building and the colonialisms of earlier eras: the conviction of outsiders that they can improve governance and play a central role in the development of a society, their belief in modernity, the presence of foreign forces in cantonments, and so on.

Yet contemporary efforts at state-building are, in certain respects, strikingly different from European colonialism. Racism and doctrines of racial superiority are explicitly rejected, as is the mercantilist idea that territorial acquisition is crucial for trade. Contemporary efforts are also very different from the caricature-image of colonialism. The common accusation that has long been levelled against outsiders in state-building operations is that their cynical concern is to 'divide and rule', as their colonial forbears allegedly did. Actually, the aim of outside states involved in state reconstruction in recent decades has generally been 'unite and depart', the quicker the better. However, such a definitive departure is seldom complete, granted the proclivity of interveners to leave behind battalions of corporate actors and technical advisers. In many countries, complete departure is very difficult to achieve, and risks creating new hazards.

A central feature of contemporary approaches to the problem of state fragility has been the involvement of international organizations. The UN, like the League of Nations before it, has from the start been deeply involved in the field, but in a different way. Whereas the League's system of mandates meant that it came to be seen as propping up certain forms of colonial rule in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, the UN has had an expressly anti-colonial role. Yet it has still found itself involved in

52 UN General Assembly, 2005 World Summit Outcome document, 24 October 2005, para. 139.

managing fragile societies, not least through peacekeeping and through post-conflict peace-building. These efforts have often been controversial, not so much because of any real or alleged similarity with colonialism, but because the roles of any outsiders tend to be difficult, and because the system of decision-making in the UN – especially the power of the veto in the UN Security Council – is widely perceived as unfair, and as leading to an excessively selective set of decisions about which crises to address and which not.

In December 2005 the UN Security Council and General Assembly jointly established the Peacebuilding Commission, an intergovernmental advisory body intended in part to contribute to institutional memory of how to deal with the complexities of reconstructing fragile and damaged societies. Those who have studied its activities have generally reached cautious judgements. One concluded: “it remains to be seen whether the member states and the UN Secretariat, with pressure from civil society and other external actors, will succeed in exploiting the full potential of the Peacebuilding Commission as a generator and disseminator of peace-building norms.”⁵³

Two caveats apply to operations in a UN framework. Firstly, the UN Security Council is not immune from the tendency, also evident in some of its Permanent Five states, to set extraordinarily ambitious goals for peace-building operations: the Council’s Resolution 1483 of May 2003 on Iraq is an example.⁵⁴ Secondly, rebuilding institutions in failing states is not only a long-term task, but also one requiring tough and fast decisions: multilateral institutions are not always brilliant at providing these.

There has also been much learning by states, whether individually or in collaboration with others. For example, Australia and its partners drew on earlier experiences when, in their involvement in Solomon Islands in 2003–13, they emphasised the importance of building up relations of trust with the inhabitants of areas where they were deployed: in this approach, peacekeeping and other forces need to pay more attention to local sources of legitimacy and local knowledge – i.e. in the society where the peace operation is deployed. Local legitimacy often counts

53 Richard Caplan and Richard Ponzio, ‘The Normative Underpinnings of the UN Peacebuilding Commission’, in Mayall and Soares de Oliveira, *The New Protectorates*, p.196.

54 UN Security Council Resolution 1483 of 22 May 2003 set out, in 27 operative paragraphs, a remarkably extensive set of goals for the international presence in Iraq following the US-led intervention there earlier in 2003.

for more than the remote and often contested international legitimacy conferred by the UN Security Council.⁵⁵

Conclusions

The term 'fragile states', though less objectionable than some of its near-synonyms, should be handled with extreme caution. No single term can adequately capture the nature of the set of problems connected with state weakness that is being addressed in contemporary international politics, and none can be immune from the criticism that it shoves disparate phenomena into a questionable conceptual straightjacket.

A common factor in many but not all of the problems addressed is their post-colonial character. In some cases, and in some contexts, it may actually be constructive to refer to them as post-colonial problems. This can be a reminder that the problems being addressed are the adverse long-term consequences of past outside involvements in divided societies; and that the creation of states from the fabric of fragile societies is an inherently difficult task.

The big question about all efforts to assist stabilisation processes is whether they are underpinned by an adequate understanding of the society concerned, including its history, culture and languages; and whether these efforts have been strengthened or weakened by liberal assumptions about the changes sought and the possibilities of achieving such changes. The human and other resources used have not always been equal to the challenges. A striking feature of many operations of the past two decades has been the rapid turnover of staff and their lack of command of local languages. 'Gap-year colonialism' is an apt description.

There is no simple answer to the question of whether efforts to assist fragile states are best conducted by states (whether acting individually or in coalitions) or by international bodies. It will always be the case that a state acting alone will be particularly vulnerable to the criticism that it is acting like a colonial power. Thus it is entirely natural that countries contemplating such activities have in most cases sought a degree of UN

55 Jeni Whalan (2013), *How Peace Operations Work: Power, Legitimacy, and Effectiveness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.6–9, pp.156–65.

or regional authorisation, and have operated as coalitions. On the other hand, states have certain advantages over international organisations, not least by being able to make fast decisions when necessary, including over matters relating to the use of force.

If there is one clear lesson from the attempts of the whole post-Cold War period, it is that not only is every fragile state different, but so too is every state addressing the problem.

5. Rising Powers in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States

Ivan Campbell – Saferworld

In this essay it is considered how four of the leading rising powers – China, India, Brazil and Turkey⁵⁶ – engage in fragile and conflict-affected states. This has important implications for international efforts to support peace and stability. The discourse and practice of such efforts has to date been largely defined by Western actors and based on the assumption that they are the major players in fragile and conflict-affected states. This essay argues that as rising powers become more influential actors in such contexts they too have a significant role to play, and should be engaged both in policy debates and practical approaches.

The global context for UK engagement on conflict and instability – indeed for the international community as a whole – has changed fundamentally in recent decades. In part, this reflects shifts in the balance of global economic power. IMF figures released in October 2014 revealed not only that China is now the world's largest economy (when measured at purchasing power parity – PPP), but also that the seven largest emerging markets – China, Brazil, Russia, India, Mexico, Indonesia and Turkey – are now bigger in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) than the long-established G7 group of industrialised nations (again when measured at PPP).

56 While referring to such countries as 'rising powers', it is acknowledged that it is a debatable term. In a longer historical perspective, countries such as China and Turkey could be seen as resurgent rather than rising for the first time. The term is used here to denote states which have had a significantly increased impact on the global economy and geopolitics in recent decades.

The rise of these countries as global economic actors has changed the development landscape, including in countries affected by conflict and instability. To sustain high levels of economic growth, rising powers need access to resources from a range of developing countries. Increasing overseas engagement is driven by other factors too, including the need to secure supply lanes, the search for new export markets, and, in their own neighbourhoods, concerns over territorial integrity and national security. One consequence is the growing presence of rising powers – both as state and private actors – in fragile and conflict-affected states, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.

The engagement of rising powers in fragile and conflict-affected states takes various forms. Their economic reach can be seen in growing trade flows and investment, particularly in the extractive industries, in infrastructure and agricultural development. As the range and volume of their economic activities expands, countries such as China, Turkey and Brazil are also increasing their diplomatic reach by opening new embassies and expanding their development cooperation, whether through official agencies or NGOs. In sum, the economic and diplomatic engagement of rising powers in fragile and conflict-affected states has grown considerably over the course of the past decade. It follows that international efforts to address conflict and instability can no longer be viewed as the preserve of OECD states.

The growing role and influence of rising powers in fragile and conflict-affected states inevitably alters the balance of power and leverage exerted by international actors over host governments. This may come at the expense of the country's traditional donors, since host governments now have more choice when it comes to the 'market' place for donor assistance. Various considerations will inform their choice, including: the extent to which the aid offered matches the government's stated needs, the speed of delivery and whether there are conditions attached regarding issues such as governance or human rights. This in turn may impact on conflict dynamics; for instance, the Sri Lankan government's access to substantial Chinese assistance in the second half of the 2000s was regarded by some as influencing the course of Sri Lanka's conflict and its ultimate resolution. In addition, rising powers may offer alternative security cooperation and arms supplies, as well as diplomatic backing and support in multilateral fora.

The increasing engagement of rising powers in fragile and conflict-affected states may affect prospects for peace and stability. There is often a percep-

tion in the West that these states will become less stable and more prone to conflict because the engagement of rising powers is driven primarily by economic interests, and not underpinned by a normative vision of peace and stability. This assumption about the different motivations of external actors is questionable at best. Moreover, research into the role and impact of China – the pre-eminent rising power – on conflict dynamics in a range of countries – including South Sudan, Sri Lanka and Nepal – reveals a much more nuanced picture, with important implications for Western policy-makers concerned with addressing conflict and instability.⁵⁷

China certainly puts a premium on stability in terms of its overseas engagements. Beijing conceives stability in terms of the national government's capacity to control its territory and maintain order within society. It follows that it tends to support a state-led, top-down model of stability. This partly reflects China's own security interests, as in the case of Nepal, where Beijing's priority is to prevent the secession of Tibet, seen as an integral part of Chinese territory. However, stability is also important for China as the basis for advancing its own economic interests in Nepal and beyond into South Asia. The concern to manage domestic instability also shapes China's engagement further to the West in the Central Asian states. Beijing's massive investment in Central Asia in recent years is motivated in part by the aim of stabilising the region so that it does not reinforce Uighur nationalism in China's restive Xinjiang province. This illustrates that China's support for stability overseas reflects a mix of domestic concerns and strategic interests, much as it does for Western powers.

China regards the state as the central actor in terms of addressing the causes of conflict, and Beijing is extremely cautious about engaging with non-state actors or civil society on such issues. During the civil war in Sudan, Beijing maintained a strong partnership with the Khartoum government, while it similarly supported regime stability during the civil war in Sri Lanka. This illustrates that in some ways China's role may well have a stabilising influence on fragile and conflict-affected states; however, insofar as this reinforces governments whose legitimacy is contested and which are themselves parties to the conflict, this approach may work against the evolution of a more inclusive and sustainable peace and stability based on strengthened state-society relations.

57 Ivan Campbell, Thomas Wheeler, Larry Attree, Dell Marie Butler, Bernardo Mariani, *China and conflict-affected states – between principle and pragmatism*, (London: Saferworld), www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/612-china-and-conflict-affected-states Accessed on 14 March 2015.

China presents itself as an impartial and apolitical actor, referring to its policy of support for state sovereignty and non-interference. However, the state itself can rarely be regarded as playing a neutral role in fragile and conflict-affected states. In contexts such as Sri Lanka, Sudan and South Sudan, the state was a central party to the conflict. Since China prioritises stable relations with the host government and matches its financial assistance closely to the government's requests, it is effectively strengthening the state relative to other parties to the conflict. And when such an approach is combined with economic, diplomatic and military assistance, this can reinforce conflict dynamics, undermining prospects for sustainable peace. China's approach may not be so dissimilar from that of Western powers; the difference being that, unlike China, the latter will often push for political reforms as part of their state-building approach.

At the same time, recent research suggests that the growing engagement of rising powers in fragile and conflict-affected states offers opportunities for resolving conflicts.⁵⁸ China has historically avoided the role of conflict manager, invoking the principles of 'state sovereignty' and 'non-interference' to justify its reluctance to express views on, or actively seek to address, issues of internal conflict. Over the past five years, however, there have been a number of instances where China has directly engaged on conflict issues. In Sudan and South Sudan, for instance, China has on several occasions used its pre-eminent economic leverage to influence the governments in Khartoum and Juba to pursue peaceful options.⁵⁹ More recently, China hosted talks between competing factions in South Sudan's conflict, and it made clear to the government that future development assistance was conditional on an end to the fighting. This demonstrates how China's leverage over host governments can put it in a position to broker negotiations to resolve conflicts.

There are a growing number of other examples of China's direct engagement on conflict issues. In Mali, China has proved willing to go further than in previous peacekeeping operations and actually deploy security forces in support of UN operations. In Myanmar, it has hosted peace talks between the Myanmar government and the Kachin Independence Organisation. Most recent – and perhaps most notable – was China's

58 Campbell et al, *China and conflict-affected states*.

59 China's Role in International Conflict-management, *Global Review*, Winter 2012, Saferworld, www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/719-chinas-role-in-international-conflict-management-sudan-and-south-sudan—global-review Accessed on 19 February 2015.

involvement in Afghanistan's conflict dynamics. In late November 2014 a group of Taliban representatives, including a former minister in the Taliban government, travelled to China to discuss the possibility of opening negotiations with the Afghan government. This came just after the new Afghan President Ashraf Ghani made an official visit to China. During Ghani's visit China proposed a 'peace and reconciliation forum' that Afghan officials said would gather representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the Taliban leadership. This marks the first time Beijing has become directly involved in the Afghanistan peace process.

As noted above, the motivations for China's interventions in these diverse contexts vary, but they include a growing concern to be seen as a responsible global player.⁶⁰ It also highlights that as China penetrates ever more deeply into the economies of conflict-affected states it cannot disassociate itself from the impact it is having on the ground, and it is de facto a political actor. The rhetoric of non-interference and respect for state sovereignty increasingly diverges from the reality of having to protect Chinese interests in fragile and conflict-affected states.

India's engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states reflects a mix of long-standing foreign policy principles, economic drivers and geopolitical concerns. The main concern that has underpinned India's foreign policy over the past two decades has been to protect and sustain the country's economic growth. Several of India's neighbours are characterised by chronic political instability, which in some cases overlap with India's own security concerns. One Indian analyst distinguishes between countries neighbouring India that have generally been seen as 'sources of risk' to economic growth, and those further afield that are seen as 'sources of opportunity'.⁶¹

Another factor shaping India's engagement in conflict-affected states is geopolitics. India has long been vying with China for influence in South and South-East Asia, and this has intensified with the economic rise of both countries in recent decades. Indian concerns about China's growing influence in countries like Myanmar – in particular, that this influence may be used to 'contain' India – are seen to shape New Delhi's approach.

60 *The Guardian*, 'China Denies Building Empire in Africa', 12 January 2015, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jan/12/china-denies-building-empire-africa-colonialism Accessed on 19 February 2015.

61 N Pai (2011), *The Paradox of Proximity: India's approach to fragility in the neighbourhood* (New York: New York University Center on International Cooperation), p.4.

The India-China dynamic interacts with another critical relationship in the region – that between India and Pakistan. This in turn influences how India engages in conflict-affected states in Asia, notably Afghanistan.

India is the largest donor to Afghanistan in the region, and the fifth largest bilateral donor overall. It is helping to develop infrastructure, such as roads, and human capacities through training of Afghan civil servants, as well as supporting community development projects. India is seen to be taking a 'strategic approach' in Afghanistan that combines development assistance with the promotion of security interests – notably to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a base for terrorist activities against India – at the same time as generating commercial opportunities for Indian companies.⁶²

Beyond Asia, India's presence in fragile and conflict-affected states is primarily motivated by commercial opportunities and energy security, and it is largely driven by the private sector. The past two decades have seen rapid growth in India's international trade and outward investment. Key to this expansion is the quest for oil and natural gas to fuel continued economic growth.⁶³ This has led to increased engagement with a number of conflict-affected states: trade between India and Sudan tripled between 2005 and 2009;⁶⁴ and India is now a leading export destination for Nigeria.

It is also important to note the influence of domestic politics in shaping New Delhi's policy towards conflict-affected states in South Asia. This can be seen in the leverage of state-level political actors over the central government, with the shaping of India's policy towards Sri Lanka by the politics of Tamil Nadu often cited as an example. Lastly, India's contribution to addressing conflict and instability is often associated with its substantial contribution to UN peacekeeping. It has provided almost 100,000 troops to 40 different UN missions, and is currently the third largest contributor in the world, deploying troops to countries like the DRC and South Sudan.⁶⁵

62 Saferworld Interviews in Delhi, June and September 2012.

63 In 2012 India sourced 71% of its oil consumption from abroad: U.S. Energy Information Agency, 'India', Country Analysis Brief, 26 June 2014, p.9, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/analysisbriefs/India/india.pdf> Accessed on 19 March 2015.

64 D. Large, L. Patey, 'Caught in the Middle: China and India in Sudan's transition', Danish Institute for International Studies Working Paper 2010, 36, p.8.

65 United Nations, 'Ranking of military and police contributions', 31 August 2012, available at www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2012/august12_2.pdf Accessed on 19 February 2015.

Turning attention to another rising power, Brazil, we find similarities and differences with the positions of China and India when it comes to addressing conflict and instability. Brazil's diplomatic corps have a deeply-ingrained respect for sovereignty and a lengthy tradition of support for non-intervention extending back over a century. At the same time, Brazil is motivated by strong multilateral instincts and has demonstrated an inclination to engage internationally in peace and stability operations, both in its own neighbourhood and further afield.

Although invested in the concept of peace-building in the context of United Nations activities, Brazil does not publicly endorse the terminology or discourse of 'fragile states' and its corollary 'state-building'. Instead, its diplomats emphasise the interrelationships between 'security' and 'development', and, more importantly, the ways in which entrenched inequality and poverty give rise to crime and violence. This is manifest in an approach to fragile and conflict-affected states formulated in terms of technical cooperation to alleviate 'vulnerabilities'. 'Vulnerabilities' are linked to 'inequalities', which in turn are described as giving rise to crime, extremism, and terrorism.⁶⁶ So the focus is on alleviating social and economic inequalities which are believed to generate the enabling conditions for criminal and political violence. In other words, it is through redressing social and economic inequalities, Brazilian policymakers contend, that conflict and instability should be addressed.

Brazil has sought to translate this twin focus on security and development into operational activities in a number of contexts, including Haiti and Guinea-Bissau. Brazil's engagement in Haiti is by far its largest overseas operation. Since 2004, Brazil has supported multilateral efforts, effectively leading the peacekeeping arm of the UN Mission in Haiti, while also providing bilateral and trilateral assistance through technical cooperation projects. The role of the Brazilian battalion in the UN Mission demonstrates the joined-up security and development approach, which is supported by Brazil's technical cooperation agency. The Brazilian battalion takes part in well-building, road construction, and housing infrastructure along with conducting more assertive military operations. While Brazilian peacekeepers are trained in community relations and pursue an array of relief and community-outreach interventions, they are reportedly disconnected from Brazil's wider development engagement

66 Statement by H.E. Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti – Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, 'Informal interactive dialogue on the Responsibility to Protect', 2010.

in Haiti, and Brazilian diplomats accept that these two approaches are still not fully integrated.⁶⁷

Firmly within the ranks of the G20, Turkey has become a much more visible global actor over the past decade, and its growing aid budget – which made it the world’s third largest humanitarian donor in 2013 – is increasingly focused on fragile and conflict-affected states. As with most other powers, national security, commercial interests and notions of global responsibility underpin Turkey’s engagement in such contexts. However, Turkey stands in contrast to the other rising powers considered because, although reluctant to be seen to promote a political model, Ankara does not put so much store on the principle of non-interference. Turkey has shown itself willing to engage proactively in conflict resolution and peace-building in its wider neighbourhood, spanning from North Africa to Central Asia.

Ankara’s attempts to promote peace and stability in its wider region have not always proved successful. The case of Syria stands out, and the Arab Spring more generally has revealed the limitations of Turkey’s influence. These setbacks have not, however, dented Ankara’s promotion of the concept of ‘humanitarian diplomacy’, which has been used to frame Turkey’s recent foreign policy and determine its future direction. While still an evolving concept ‘humanitarian diplomacy’ seeks to embrace humanitarian modes of engagement, accentuating the human aspect of international relations while rejecting the hard power logic of *realpolitik*. Peace mediation has been an important aspect of this humanitarian diplomacy, with Ankara for example promoting Sunni-Shiite reconciliation in Iraq and hosting talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan. More traditional forms of security assistance have also been used, for example through providing troops for peacekeeping missions in unstable countries or training for their police forces. Turkey’s growing aid budget is also seen as part of humanitarian diplomacy in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan.

Somalia provides a revealing case study of Turkey’s approach to conflict and stability. Since 2011, through the deployment of large numbers of aid workers to Mogadishu, the Turkish government and Turkish NGOs have markedly expanded aid operations in Somalia. Somalia is one of

67 Robert Muggah, Ivan Campbell, Eduarda Hamann, Gustavo Diniz, Marina Motta (2013), *Promoting peace in the post-2015 framework: Brazil* (London: Saferworld), www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/720-promoting-peace-in-the-post-2015-framework-brazil Accessed on 19 February 2015.

the top five recipients of official assistance from Turkey and, after Syria, is the biggest beneficiary of aid from Turkish NGOs. In 2012, Turkey was Somalia's third largest bilateral donor. An array of Turkish state agencies and NGOs have played significant roles in the relationship with Somalia, and Turkey's leaders have pointed to Somalia as a clear example of humanitarian diplomacy in action.

Recent Saferworld research in Somalia reveals that many Somalis view Turkey's growing engagement in their country in a positive light – especially when compared to traditional Western donors.⁶⁸ This may be explained in part by the shared religion and relative cultural proximity of the two countries. However, Turkish aid – such as humanitarian relief and hospital-building – was also perceived to be more practical and tangible than aid provided by other donors.⁶⁹ In addition, it was regarded as more effective in reaching beneficiaries because it is directly delivered by Turkish aid workers on the ground rather than remotely through Somali NGOs. The visible presence of Turks in Mogadishu was particularly welcomed.⁷⁰

In contrast to this positive reception, some interviewees expressed concern that Turkey's engagement in Somalia may inadvertently reinforce conflict dynamics, potentially undermining peace and stability. Various reasons were advanced for how Turkish aid could have a destabilising effect. One of the major initial challenges for Turkish aid agencies was their limited knowledge and experience of Somalia's conflict dynamics, a fact acknowledged by Turkish officials and NGO workers.⁷¹ The rush to provide assistance combined with an inadequate understanding of the extremely complex Somali political and security context may have increased the risks of Turkish aid fuelling conflict.

In addition, some observers note that Turkish aid agencies were regarded as being too closely associated with specific elites within the top echelons of the Federal Government.⁷² The close relations between the Turkish government and Somali political elites fuelled a perception that

68 Saferworld (2015), *Turkish Aid Agencies in Somalia: Risks and Opportunities for Building Peace*.

69 Saferworld interview, Hargeisa, 10 February, 2014.

70 International Crisis Group, *Assessing Turkey's Role in Somalia*, 8 October 2012, p 9, www.crisisgroup.org/-/media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/b092-assessing-turkeys-role-in-somalia.pdf Accessed on 19 February 2015.

71 Saferworld workshop, Istanbul, 28 May 2014.

72 Saferworld interviews, Garowe, 15 February 2014; Nairobi, 7 February 2014; Mogadishu, 24 February 2014.

aid is being directed to specific areas based on clan interests. Furthermore, the geographic concentration of Turkish aid on Mogadishu – as opposed to other Somali regions – risks exacerbating tensions given the highly contested regional political dynamics. This applies not only to Somaliland, but also to Puntland and other regions within south central Somalia.⁷³

It should be clear from the foregoing analysis that rising powers are increasingly engaged in fragile and conflict-affected states, both as state actors and non-governmental organisations, through official assistance and commercial activities. The four countries examined share a number of characteristics in their approaches that set them apart from OECD actors. Nonetheless, their approaches also differ in significant respects, so grouping them together does not imply a common approach. With their own set of interests, identities and ideological frameworks, it is evident that rising powers engage in distinct ways and under different modalities both from one another and from traditional donors.

Most of the rising powers we have considered are developing countries themselves, and face their own domestic challenges from internal conflict or insecurity. Regarding themselves as still developing countries, they share an outlook that favours South-South co-operation and that resists discourses and agendas seen to serve the interests of the global North. This applies particularly to the discourse around 'fragile states' and 'state-building'. Many policy-makers in rising powers regard the label of 'fragile state' as being based on peculiarly Western norms and assumptions that they reject, not least because they are associated with a neo-colonial world-view. Moreover, insofar as 'state fragility' legitimises and justifies the response of 'state-building' – the term is even more contentious for most rising powers; for 'state-building' implies some form of intervention in the politics of a country which is at odds with the stated commitment to state sovereignty and non-interference in internal politics.

Nevertheless, the concerns of rising powers in conflict-affected states are not necessarily at odds with those of traditional powers, especially where stability is concerned. Nor in some cases are their practices very different from those of established donors. Indeed it could be seen that Western powers are increasingly moving towards a model of 'develop-

73 International Crisis Group, *Assessing Turkey's Role*.

ment cooperation' with a focus on mutual prosperity that is similar to the approach of rising powers. Examination of the various cases also shows how rising powers' deepening engagement in conflict-affected states – and their growing stake in stability – is leading in some cases to greater involvement in conflict management and peace-building.

What is clear is that the expanding cast of external actors engaged in fragile and conflict-affected states is substantially altering the dynamics of conflict and fragility. As international policy-makers grapple with the multi-faceted challenge of building peace and stability, it is imperative that they factor in the role of rising powers. At a minimum this requires a deeper understanding of the perspectives, policies and practices of these new actors. A more strategic approach is to engage proactively with rising powers to foster mutual understanding and over time develop more complementary approaches to building peace and stability.

6. India and the Responsibility to Protect

Rahul Roy-Chaudhury

Introduction

As the third largest economy in Asia with high growth rates India is an emerging great power. This provides increased influence on the world stage with an important voice on matters of international security. India also seeks reform and membership of the United Nations Security Council on the basis that it should be representative of the new world order not the old. The recent decisive electoral mandate of Prime Minister Narendra Modi makes for a potentially strong and bold foreign policy. For these reasons it is important to understand India's perspective towards issues of conflict, intervention and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Could an 'Indian Model' or at least a comprehensive and robust policy statement on India's role in this area be articulated by Modi's government? If so, what would be its key features?

India's historical colonial experience and emergence as an independent sovereign state less than seven decades ago ensured the importance of the principle of territorial sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states. 'Humanitarian intervention' was therefore seen as an infringement of sovereignty and the utility of the use of force in international affairs viewed with considerable scepticism.

Yet, India's practical record on this was mixed. When it saw its own interests in the neighbourhood threatened, it did not hesitate to use force to intervene militarily. This was the case in December 1971 when India sent troops into then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) on the basis of 'humanitarian intervention' to stop the killing of Bengali Pakistani Muslims by Pakistani troops and militias in the ongoing civil war. Subsequently, India

justified its intervention in terms of 'self-defence' in view of the millions of refugees entering Indian territory. Clearly, this also served to divide Pakistan with the creation of Bangladesh as an independent state in December 1971. Also, in June 1987 India carried out a forcible 'humanitarian assistance' airdrop in Sri Lanka to protect the Tamil population from an economic blockade against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) terrorists. This also served to bring to a temporary halt the Sri Lankan offensive against the Tamils. During the Cold War years, India tended to criticise Western interventions but remained ambivalent over Soviet interventions in Eastern Europe, including in Hungary in 1956.

India supports Responsibility to Protect principal elements

In view of its focus on territorial sovereignty, India was highly sceptical of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) during its negotiations at the World Summit in 2005. But, at the same time, India did not dispute the validity of the concept of R2P. Indeed, it supported action on the principal elements of R2P even prior to the 1994 Rwanda and 1995 Srebrenica mass killings – against genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.⁷⁴

On genocide, India was one of three states (the other two being Cuba and Panama) that proposed the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide, and therefore considers itself one of the architects of the UN legal framework on this issue. This Convention considers genocide as a crime against humanity. On war crimes, India perceives that the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 cover the basic war crimes, and India has signed and ratified these four treaties. These treaties drew heavily on the 1907 Hague Conventions, which the League of Nations attempted to update (India was also involved in the League of Nations legal discussions). On crimes against humanity, India actively participated in the negotiation and signing of the December 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

R2P is also focused on the International Criminal Court (ICC). India was a member of the UN War Crimes Commission which recommended an International War Crimes Court. Subsequently, India participated in the negotiations on the ICC, but opted out of the final Rome Statute for

74 Interview with senior Indian diplomat who wishes to remain anonymous, 14 November 2014.

three reasons. First, the power given by the Treaty to the UN Security Council to refer cases to the ICC was considered to be a violation of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. Secondly, India does not accept the concept of universal jurisdiction. Thirdly, the statute did not outlaw the use of nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction as a war crime. Moreover, India is an active member of the Human Rights Council (HRC) of the United Nations, an empowered and visible body to deal with core R2P issues. India has, most recently, been re-elected to another three year term in the HRC (for 2015–2017), receiving the highest number of votes in the Asia-Pacific group. It seeks to make the UN human rights system more effective and to address issues through a ‘constructive’ approach.

Change of Indian Policy towards R2P

With the appointment of Ambassador Nirupam Sen as India’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York for a five year term from 2004–2009, India remained critical of R2P. This was due largely to Sen’s personality and left-leaning ideology. His seniority in the Foreign Service meant that he had sufficient clout with the Foreign Secretary (the head of the Indian Foreign Service) to ensure that his view on R2P prevailed, especially with leftist parties being members of the ruling coalition government in New Delhi.

It was only with the arrival of Sen’s successor to the United Nations, Ambassador Hardeep Puri, in 2009 that this policy changed. This was due to the different ideological make-up of Puri as well as the withdrawal of the leftist parties from the ruling coalition government by then. At the first UN General Assembly debate in July 2009 India, for the first time, formally recognised the notion of ‘sovereignty as responsibility’, with Puri stating that “it has been its (India’s) consistent view that the responsibility to protect its population is one of the foremost responsibilities of every state.”⁷⁵ But, at the same time, Puri insisted on “extra vigilance” in the application of R2P exclusively through the UN Security Council.⁷⁶ Subsequently, in August 2010, India for the first time accepted that a “state could fail or be ‘unable to protect’ its population ‘for

75 Madhan Mohan Jaganathan and Gerrit Kurtz (2014), ‘Singing the tune of sovereignty? India and the responsibility to protect’, *Conflict, Security and Development*, Vol. 14, No. 4, p.473.

76 Jaganathan and Kurtz, p.473.

whatever reason” and that the international community “does not want to be an innocent bystander.”⁷⁷

India and UN Resolutions on Libya

Within weeks of taking over as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, India voted in favour of UN Security Council Resolution 1970 on Libya on 26 February 2011 calling for an arms embargo, travel ban, asset freeze and referral of Libyan leaders to the International Criminal Court.

With the sudden raising of the ante against Libya just over two weeks later however – with the international community seeking a no-fly zone and the use of force to counter Gaddafi’s advance on the rebel stronghold of Benghazi – India abstained from UN Security Council Resolution 1973 along with China, Russia, Brazil and Germany. The resolution, adopted on 17 March 2011, authorised the use of force in Libya: “all necessary measures...to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas.”⁷⁸ India’s official statement on this occasion “deplored the use of force, which was totally unacceptable’ and stressed ‘the importance of political efforts’ to address the situation.”⁷⁹ India subsequently stated that “we find several member states all too willing to expend considerable resources for regime change in the name of protection of civilians.”⁸⁰ It maintained that “almost all aspects of Resolution 1973, namely pursuit of ceasefire, arms embargo, and no-fly zone, were violated not to protect civilians [...] but to change the regime.”⁸¹

In effect, India had no problem with Pillar One of R2P that “each individual State has the responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” or Pillar Two that emphasises the commitment of states to assist, through capacity building, other states that are willing, but weak and unable, to

77 Jaganathan and Kurtz, p.473.

78 Ramesh Thakur (2013), ‘R2P after Libya and Syria: Engaging Emerging Powers’, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.36, No.2, p.69.

79 Jaganathan and Kurtz, pp.474–45.

80 Jaganathan and Kurtz, p.475.

81 Jaganathan and Kurtz, p.475.

uphold their Pillar One responsibilities.⁸² But, India opposed the interpretation and application of the ‘response’ aspect under Pillar Three of R2P, defined as “the responsibility of Member States to respond collectively in a timely and decisive manner when a State is manifestly failing to provide ... protection.”⁸³

An alternative view, however, is that the real reason for India abstaining from UN Resolution 1973 was domestic politics; that with India’s large Muslim minority population, the second-largest in the world after Indonesia, India was loathe to support western military intervention in Libya for fear of domestic ‘blowback’ in the form of increased domestic radicalisation or sectarianism. At the same time, India’s initial primary concern during the conflict was the presence and evacuation of 18,000 of its nationals resident in Libya. India also had strong diplomatic and political relations with Libya, including Libya’s opposition to any anti-India resolution on the Kashmir dispute in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). While domestic politics and the presence of Indian nationals may have influenced India’s policy towards Libya, it is unlikely to have directed it.

Whereas subsequently Libya was seen by the West as a “triumph for R2P”,⁸⁴ Puri stated instead that it gave it “a bad name.”⁸⁵ Speaking at the International Institute for Strategic Studies Global Strategic Review conference in September 2011, Puri stated, “seen from our perspective, the Security Council [...] appears to intervene selectively on the basis of political expediency and strategic opportunism rather than genuine humanitarian need. We agree that democracy and human rights need to be supported. This cannot however be done selectively. This selective application of the ‘rules’ in fact weakens the uniform application of norms that creates just, and therefore enduring, legal regimes.”⁸⁶

82 Hardeep Singh Puri, ‘Crises, Conflict and Intervention: Global Perspectives’, *IISS Global Strategic Review*, Third Plenary Session, 10 September 2011, <http://www.iiss.org/en/events/gsr/sections/global-strategic-review-2011-1677/third-plenary-session-97d8/ambassador-hardeep-singh-puri-1db1> Accessed on 12 March 2015.

83 Thakur, p.61.

84 Thakur, p.69.

85 Puri, ‘Crises, Conflict and Intervention’.

86 Puri, ‘Crises, Conflict and Intervention’.

India and UN Resolutions on Syria

India's policy on Syria is contained in the unanimous UN Security Council presidential statement of 3 August 2011 adopted under India's presidency. Its thrust is that both sides should abjure violence and enter into a ceasefire and begin an inclusive process which will be Syria-led and allow the Syrian people to determine their own destiny as suggested by Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's statement in the UN General Assembly in September 2011 "that societies cannot be reordered from the outside through using military force."⁸⁷

Arab and Western nations introduced draft resolutions in October 2011 as well as February 2012 and July 2012, calling for Syrian president Bashar al-Assad to step down. China and Russia vetoed all three. India notably abstained from the first draft resolution. When its objections against the October 2011 resolution were removed however – including reference to the threat of military measures and selectivity in the renouncement of violence – it shifted its position and voted in favour of the draft resolution of 4 February 2012.⁸⁸ An alternative explanation is that this change in policy may have had more to do with pressure from Saudi Arabia and concern over antagonising the six Gulf Arab states host to India's largest expatriate population of seven million Indian nationals.⁸⁹

In July 2012, India again voted in the Security Council for a motion sponsored by the West. Nonetheless, India abstained from voting on a harsher resolution in July 2013, with India's new Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji, arguing that certain provisions of the resolution "can be interpreted as effecting regime change by sleight of hand."⁹⁰

87 Hardeep Singh Puri, 'Matters of Self-respect', *The Telegraph* (Calcutta), 2 March 2013, at www.telegraphindia.com/1130302/jsp/opinion/story_16620797.jsp#.VMYqoKNFCP8 Accessed on 12 March 2015.

88 Jaganathan and Kurtz, p.476.

89 Thakur, p.71.

90 Permanent Mission of India to the UN, "India's explanation of vote delivered by Ambassador Asoke Kumar Mukerji, Permanent Representative at the United Nations General Assembly – Resolution on Syria on May 15, 2013," pp.1–2, www.pminewyork.org/adminpart/uploadpdf/52393pmi36.pdf Accessed on 12 March 2015.

Conclusion: an 'Indian Model' towards conflict, intervention and R2P?

The decisive election victory of Narendra Modi, the leader of the centre-right Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), as Prime Minister in May 2014 makes for a potentially strong and bold foreign policy. Modi's majority in the lower house of parliament (the Lok Sabha), the first time for any single party in 30 years, guarantees political stability in the central government for a full five-year term. The absence of dependence on parliamentary allies for political survival ensures far fewer political compromises on foreign policy decisions. This provides a unique opportunity for the articulation of an 'Indian Model' or at least a comprehensive and robust policy statement on India's role towards issues of conflict, intervention and R2P. This could include the following features.

Firstly, India's stance on R2P will continue to be "cautious and calibrated";⁹¹ keeping in view its support to Pillars One and Two of R2P, but concern over the response aspect under Pillar Three that includes coercive measures. India's emphasis on the authorisation of the UN Security Council for applying R2P and undertaking intervention makes it clear that legitimacy is fundamental. India therefore supported the Brazilian proposal of a 'responsibility while protecting' (RwP) in 2012, which demanded greater attention to the implementation of UN Security Council mandates and added criteria for the use of force by the Council.

Secondly, India's view is that 'humanitarian intervention' has several aspects which have to be assessed in terms of sovereignty. At issue is not the good government versus bad government concept, but the more essential concept of equality and independence, and the core responsibility of a national government for its citizens. R2P is therefore essentially seen as a national obligation for member states in the UN. As a result, India has consistently offered to assist those member states that ask for help in strengthening their governance institutions as part of their sovereign functioning. And, it will continue to do so. In this respect, India sees the UN as well placed to provide the resources to bring this about. And, therefore, India is the single largest contributor after the U.S. to the UN Democracy Fund.⁹²

91 Jaganathan and Kurtz, p.479.

92 Interview with senior Indian diplomat who wishes to remain anonymous, 14 November 2014.

Thirdly, India will continue to be a dominant player in terms of contribution of troops to UN-mandated peacekeeping operations. In addition, it has played an active role in counter-piracy missions off the Somalian coast since October 2008, by deploying a naval ship in patrolling the waters between the Gulf of Aden and the Bab-el Mandeb straits. Although India does not take part in the combined maritime forces counter-piracy operations based in Bahrain, it carries out coordinated patrols with Chinese, Russian and Korean warships in the area.

Fourthly, the recent establishment of the Indian Foreign Ministry's Development Partnership Administration (DPA) as an organisation for foreign aid and development support is key. Afghanistan is the largest recipient of Indian aid, amounting to \$2 billion in the last ten years. Other recipients of Indian aid include Nepal and Sri Lanka, and this is taking place alongside the expansion of Indian business and commercial interests in these countries.

Fifthly, younger and 'fast track' Indian diplomats are being posted as heads of diplomatic missions in developing countries in Africa and South America, in a significant shift in India's developmental priorities. With India's growing influence in these countries, alongside burgeoning economic and commercial interests, these new Ambassadors and High Commissioners can play an influential role in these countries, not any more sidelined by their Western counterparts.

Finally, a key lesson is that India will pursue its own interpretation of conflict, intervention and R2P – and not fall into either the western pro-interventionism or Russia-China anti-interventionism camps. India was publicly criticised by the U.S. government for not taking a stronger stance on Libya or Syria, and at the same time, by influential domestic constituents for not taking a stronger stand against the U.S.

7. Ukraine: Strength out of Conflict

Sarah Birch

On Friday 12 December 2014, President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine announced that his country had just experienced its first day in seven months without military or civilian casualties. The area of eastern Ukraine seized in the spring of 2014 by pro-Russian rebels contains approximately three million of Ukraine's 45 million people – seven per cent of population – and a slightly smaller proportion of the country's total territory. By the end that year, the conflict between the rebels and government forces had cost more than 4,300 lives and displaced an estimated 1.5 million people.

A casual observer could easily see this threat to Ukrainian sovereignty as a sign of the young state's weakness. In many ways, this would be an accurate characterisation. Certainly Ukraine's military was shown, especially at the start of the fighting, to be in lamentable shape. The country's economy has also taken a tremendous blow since the beginning of the unrest, shrinking by approximately ten per cent, while the hryvnia, the country's currency, fell by over 50 per cent against the dollar, and inflation rose to nearly 20 per cent in 2014.⁹³ And Ukraine has since the spring of 2014 been experiencing a humanitarian crisis of colossal proportions. Yet in certain key respects, Ukraine is in a much better economic and political situation than it was at the outset of the crisis, and in certain respects the turbulent events of 2014 have placed it in a better position to deal with its many problems. Out of state fragility has come a form of resilience.

93 The Economist, 'Ukraine's Economy: Worse to Come', 15 November 2014.

Looking to history, it is possible to see why. In the famous words of Charles Tilly “war made the state.”⁹⁴ National identity is typically born in the crucible of conflict, be it the French Revolution, the American War of Independence or the Hundred Years’ War. Though many of the states that have been created in recent years have emerged peacefully, there are also plenty of others – Bosnia and Herzegovina, East Timor, Eritrea, Kosovo, South Sudan – where this process has been marked by violent strife. The break-up of the former Soviet Union into 15 states was initially relatively orderly. Yet the post-Soviet period has been punctuated by a series of significant conflicts that have affected nearly half their number: Moldova (over Transnistria, 1992) Tajikistan (1992–1997), Armenia and Azerbaijan (over Nagorno-Karabakh, 1992–1994), Russia (over Chechnya, 1994–present); Georgia (over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, 1991–93 and 2008) and now Ukraine.

Ukraine lies at the geographic heart of Europe; the country also sits astride one of the continent’s major geopolitical fault lines, a fact that generates both opportunities and challenges. Throughout much of the period since Ukraine gained independence in 1991, commentators have predicted its demise. It had become almost a truism of journalism that Ukraine was sharply divided into a pro-Russian east and a pro-European west, and that eventually this fault-line would threaten its viability as a state. But for over 20 years, this did not happen. Instead Ukraine gradually established the structures of independent statehood, a fragile but more-or-less viable economy and institutions of basic democratic accountability.

Media characterisations of Ukraine as being cloven along ethnic lines often miss the key point about ethnicity in Ukraine: it is a continuum with no clear dividing line, and the ‘swing ethnics’ in the centre have for the past 25 years been swing voters. This is what has to date prevented Ukraine from being seriously threatened with division.

Moreover, as Lucan Way has pointed out, Ukraine’s geopolitical divide has actually served democracy quite well, as it has created the basis for alternation in government, and it has prevented any political force from gaining absolute control over the levers of power.⁹⁵ Thus Ukraine has tipped and teetered on the fringes of democracy for over two decades,

94 Charles Tilly (1975), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), p.42.

95 Lucan L Way (2005), ‘Rapacious Individualism and Political Competition in Ukraine, 1992–2004’, *Communist and Post-Communist Politics*, Vol. 38, pp.191–205.

while Russia has driven steadily toward authoritarianism, marked as it is by the absence of major ideological cleavages. Developments during the course of 2014 profoundly shook Ukraine's post-Soviet trajectory, however. One of the most important questions that arises in this context is how the nature of the Ukrainian polity has changed as a result of the Maidan protests, the subsequent flight of President Viktor Yanukovich and his replacement by pro-European leaders, Russia's invasion and occupation of Crimea, and the Russian-fuelled insurgency in the eastern portion of the Donbas region.

Analysis of these events yields three tentative conclusions: Ukraine was at the start of 2015 stronger in some ways than it was a year previously; the balance of economic power in Ukraine is shifting rapidly westwards; and in addition to the conflict, one of Ukraine's most pressing problem is – and has been since 1991 – corruption. These conclusions suggest that Ukraine is in no way predestined by its geographic location or its history to be a weak state, and that its weaknesses lie mainly within its own institutions.

Ukraine is stronger at the start of 2015 than it was at the start of 2014

As in so many of the cases analysed by Tilly, conflict with Russia and Russian-backed forces has finally 'made' Ukrainian national identity. Twenty years of independence had left Ukraine with a sense of itself, but many people still had ambivalent feelings about what it meant to be a citizen of the poor, corruption-riddled, in-between place. Popular mobilisation, sacrifice, and Russian aggression have served as a rallying call and brought the Ukrainian citizenry together.

The turmoil kicked off on 21 November 2013 when journalist Mustafa Nayyem invited his Facebook friends to join him in protesting against President Yanukovich's decision not to move forward with an Association Agreement with the European Union. Three months later, following brutally violent attempts to quell the demonstrations, the kleptocratic president fled with his tail between his legs.

The success of popular protest in toppling a corrupt leader lent many ordinary people a new sense of political efficacy and strengthened popular resolve to continue pressing for good governance. This tumultuous series of events also brought about a surge of patriotism. Contrary

to the accounts of many news outlets, the vast majority of this new-found national pride was not based on ethnicity. The protestors and their supporters spoke Russian, Ukrainian and combinations of the two, and their demands had relatively little ethnic content to them, accounting for the negligible support afforded the far-right in the presidential and parliamentary elections held in 2014. The patriots who have come to the fore in recent times are united instead behind by a common purpose and a sense of their common destiny.

The situation is rather different in that portion of eastern Ukraine controlled by pro-Russian rebels. A large proportion of eastern residents who are sympathetic to Kiev have vacated the region, leaving behind those most resolutely opposed to the new administration. The extended conflict, in which both sides have been accused of war crimes, has also greatly exacerbated animosity toward Kiev on the part of many who have remained in the region.

The context of Russian-occupied Crimea is different again. Crimea has always been problematic for Ukraine, due to its complex history. Formerly settled by Greeks, Persians, Romans, Goths, Armenians, Scythians, Bulgars, Huns, Ottomans, Russians and many other groups, Crimea divided its Soviet time more or less equally between Soviet Russia (1922–1954) and Soviet Ukraine (1954–1991). Prior to the recent upheaval, the peninsula had an ethnic Russian population of about 60 per cent, whereas ethnic Ukrainians made up about a quarter and Crimean Tatars approximately a tenth of the population (many of the latter having been deported to Siberia by Stalin following the Second World War). Given this fraught history, Crimeans have long felt distant from both Kiev and Moscow. Survey research carried out in early 2014 showed virtually no identification with Russia as a homeland on the part of Crimean residents, though most wanted Ukraine to have a pro-Russian geopolitical orientation.⁹⁶ The Maidan protests polarised opinion on the peninsula, however, and it is clear that the Russian occupation was welcomed by a significant proportion of local residents.

Yet these two regions together constitute only slightly over a tenth of the population of Ukraine (as a legal territory). The results of the parliamentary elections of October 2014 give some indication of support

96 Grigore Pop-Eleches and Graeme Robertson, 'Do Crimeans Actually Want to Join Russia?', Monkey Cage blog post, *Washington Post*, 6 March 2014, www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/06/do-crimeans-actually-want-to-join-russia/ Accessed on 6 March 2015.

for a pro-Russian stance among the residents of those areas still under the full control of Kiev: votes for the Opposition Bloc, made up mainly of former adherents of Yanukovich, reached only nine per cent. The vast majority of the electorate was by the close of the year firmly united around pro-democratic and pro-European political forces. In this sense the conflicts of 2014 have finally 'made' Ukrainian national identity. The fights against Yanukovich and Russian aggression have served to unite the vast majority of Ukrainians for the first time around a shared sense of who they are. Commentators present at the Maidan demonstrations report a phrase often heard there which sums up the import of the year's events: 'We came to the Maidan looking for Europe, but instead we found Ukraine'.⁹⁷

The balance of economic power in Ukraine is shifting westwards, away from the rustbelt east

During the Soviet period, the east of Ukraine was one of the major industrial powerhouses of the USSR, known for its coal, steel and chemical industries, as well as for the manufacture of weapons and heavy machinery. The oblasts (administrative regions) of Donetsk and Luhansk which together make up the Donbas area were at the heart of Soviet industrial production. This is where famous miner Alexey Stakhanov achieved his alleged coal-hewing feats, and the area has for decades been a byword for industrial heft. In recent years, this eastern region has generated nearly a quarter of Ukraine's industrial output.

But as in many developed states, heavy industry has declined in relative importance with the rise of the service sector and the knowledge economy, which have got going faster and more successfully in those areas of Ukraine with closer connections to the West. The Donbas has suffered as a result; the region lost approximately a sixth of its population between 2001 and 2010, largely to out-migration, and prior to the recent disturbances it contributed only seven per cent of the national budget, despite being home to thirteen per cent of the population.⁹⁸ The fighting in the Donbas has served dramatically to hasten this change. With approximately a third of the area under rebel control, the impact

97 Nadia Diuk (2014), 'Finding Ukraine', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.25, No.3, pp.83–9.

98 Andrew Wilson (2014), *Ukraine Crisis: What it Means for the West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), p.122.

on industry has been stark. As of September 2014, industrial production had fallen by 85 per cent in Luhansk, compared the previous September, and by 60 per cent in Donetsk.⁹⁹ By the end of 2014 the region was in a state of extreme economic crisis.

It is not clear what will happen if and when the conflict is resolved; the threat of instability is likely to prove a huge deterrent for investment for some time to come. It is also unclear how many of those who have left the region – making up approximately a third of its population – will eventually return. All this bodes ill for the future of Ukraine's far east. Geopolitical factors also play a large role in reinforcing these trends. Western sanctions against Russia have taken their toll, as have falling oil prices, and the Russian economic situation is looking exceedingly grim, reducing opportunities to export to Russia and reducing the availability of Russian capital that might be invested in Ukraine. Meanwhile Ukraine has finally signed the EU Association Agreement that triggered the turbulent events of 2014, and though trade barriers are not to be fully lifted until the end of 2015, the agreement will open the door to a dramatic increase in trade across Ukraine's western border.

Already in 2013, Ukraine exported more to the European Union (27 per cent of all exports) than to Russia (24 per cent), and this trend looks set to accelerate in the wake of the new agreement.¹⁰⁰ Ukrainian exports to Asian and African countries have been also been growing rapidly, making economic ties with Russia far less important than they were a decade ago.¹⁰¹ As Russia becomes less economically intertwined with Ukraine, so Ukraine becomes better able to resist efforts by its eastern neighbour to bully and blackmail it in the political sphere. This also adds to Ukraine's strength.

One of Ukraine's most serious problems is and always has been corruption

Corruption is the soft underbelly of many democracies, and Ukraine is no exception. The most prominent challenge for the new leadership is

99 The Economist, 'Worse to Come'.

100 European Commission, 'European Union, Trade in Goods with Ukraine', 2014, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113459.pdf Accessed 6 March 2015.

101 Oleksandr Kramar, 'Seeking Their Place in the Sun', UkrainianWeek, 21 August 2014, <http://ukrainian-week.com/Economics/117413> Accessed 6 March 2015.

undoubtedly how to deal with the problem of the abuse of public office for private gain that has bedevilled it since long before it emerged into the world of independent states. In 2014, the corruption watchdog group Transparency International ranked Ukraine 142nd of 175 states on their indicator of perceptions of administrative corruption, down from 134th place in 2010.¹⁰²

Though a long-standing problem, corruption was dramatically ramped up during the Yanukovich presidency. It was also centralised, as the president and his 'family' (relatives and inner circle) took control of huge swathes of the economy and extracted immense wealth from it via procurement scams, embezzlement, extortion, tax fraud, arbitrage and other means.¹⁰³ According to one estimate, the Yanukovich 'family' managed to pilfer a staggering \$100 billion in four years.¹⁰⁴

One consequence of the rise in corruption was a huge spike in inequality. In terms of wealth (as opposed to income), Ukraine had the highest level of inequality of any country in the world in 2014.¹⁰⁵ Another consequence was an increase in the number of relatively affluent businesspeople who felt hard-pressed by the regime. Restriction of benefits to an inner circle of cronies reduced the size of the political 'winning coalition' to dangerous levels. When a leader's support base shrinks, benefit to individual members of that base rises, but over-zealous efforts to drive up benefits in this way can make the leader vulnerable.¹⁰⁶ As Serhiy Kudelia says, "by turning to familism, Yanukovich had swollen the ranks of his foes."¹⁰⁷ Indeed, a survey conducted at the time of the protests found that over a quarter of voters who joined them had voted for Yanukovich or his party at some point over the previous decade.¹⁰⁸

102 Transparency International, 'Corruption Perceptions Index 2014', www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results Accessed on 6 March 2015.

103 Anders Aslund (2014), 'Oligarchs, Corruption and European Integration', *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 25, No.2, pp.64–73; Serhiy Kudelia (2014), 'The House that Yanukovich Built', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.25, No.3, pp.19–34; Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*.

104 Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, p.53.

105 The Economist, 'Ukraine's Economy: It is really that Bad', 20 November, 2014.

106 Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph M. Siverson and James D. Morrow (2003), *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press).

107 Kudelia, 'The House that Yanukovich Built', p.29.

108 Onuch, 'Who Were the Protesters?', p.49.

Anti-corruption sentiment has been behind a number of protest movements during the post-Soviet period, including the movement that culminated in the so-called Orange Revolution of 2004, when egregious electoral corruption sparked mass popular demonstrations which led eventually to the election being re-run. The eventual loser was Yanukovich, who rallied to win a relatively fair election in 2010. In 2014 many of the veteran 'orange' protesters returned to the streets. One of the key facts about the protest that unfurled on Kiev's central Maidan square was that as the months wore on grievances focussed increasingly on corruption and the abuse of power.¹⁰⁹ The confrontation between people and regime that has since been dubbed 'revolution of dignity' was a reaction against the excesses of the Yanukovich administration and their impact on society at large. In the words of Andrew Wilson, the protests were the result of "a sense of opportunity closing, of hope for change being lost, of individual life-chances disappearing".¹¹⁰

By no means did the subsequent change of government eliminate corruption in Ukraine, but it has quite possibly strengthened the leadership's resolve when it comes to dealing with this insidious problem. It will undoubtedly be some time before we are able to evaluate the sincerity of the stated desire of Ukraine's new leaders to change the way things are done there; certainly the upheavals of 2014 have created an opportunity in which a step change in attitudes and behaviours might conceivably be possible.

Conclusion

Ukraine's resilience lies in its common sense of purpose and common values that include political competition, freedom of expression, rule of law and resilience. Though these values are not always reflected in the country's political practice, the tumultuous events of 2014 have caused the vast majority of Ukrainian citizens to rally round them. This 'nation-building' process has yielded normative and symbolic benefits that will be of lasting value to the country. At times of stress, symbolic resources can be very important, as they provide people with a sense of direction and hope in the face of adversity.

109 Onuch, 'Who Were the Protesters?'

110 Wilson, *Ukraine Crisis*, p.67.

That said, Ukraine is currently in a state of war, as well as being in the midst of profound economic and humanitarian crises. The young state's leadership will need all the resources it can muster to deal with these challenges effectively. It remains to be seen whether Ukraine's new national confidence will help enable its leaders to address the profound problems of the state they have inherited.

8. Rethinking State Fragility: Somalia's Neighbours – a Help or a Hindrance?

Sally Healy

Introduction

In 2011 when the UK began to take a serious interest in Somalia's stabilisation, that country had reached a mature state of fragility. Two decades without a functional central government had produced multiple power centres that offered a range of home grown models of stability to meet the challenges of survival. The emergence of Al Shabaab militants in 2006 – largely in response to external intervention – had added a new layer of complexity, posing an explicit threat to Somalia's neighbours and prompting a concerted military and diplomatic regional response.

Al Shabaab's radicalisation amongst Somali diaspora communities abroad pushed Somalia's state failure up the policy agenda in the UK. Piracy off the Somali coastline, a humanitarian crisis in southern Somalia and attacks against Western tourists in East Africa were added factors. A step change in UK policy occurred in 2012 with the London Somalia conference. Stabilisation in Somalia did not require a UK military component: that aspect had already been taken care of by AMISOM, the African Union led force that was fighting Al Shabaab. The London Conference represented a concerted diplomatic and development effort to inject momentum into the political process – excluding Al Shabaab – to provide more and better development assistance as part of a coherent stabilisation process.

To develop a successful policy, however, requires an understanding of the causes of Somalia's contemporary failure and the factors that have sus-

tained it for so long. In large part, this can be traced back to the damage done to state institutions, and the state's legitimacy, by the Siad Barre regime (1969–1991). But to focus on the state as the sole unit of analysis has limitations. This paper seeks to highlight instead the degree to which external relations and Somalia's place in the region has precipitated and aggravated state failure. It is a perspective that is rarely explored in existing academic literature and is largely absent from policy prescriptions. Yet regional dynamics are critically important in the Horn of Africa and should lie at the heart of the analysis.¹¹¹ By the same token, any strategy in support of stabilisation in Somalia must appreciate that Somalia's neighbours are part of the problem and not just part of the solution.

Somalia's neighbours: part of the problem

(i) Historical legacy

The roots of Somalia's difficult relationship with its neighbours stem from a problematic legacy of colonial partition. From its foundations in 1960, the Somali Republic excluded some parts of a wider ethnic Somali community in the Horn of Africa and has antagonised its neighbours by efforts to reunite that community. This put independent Somalia on an unsettled trajectory in relation to neighbouring states who feared, with some justification, that Mogadishu would support the irredentist claims of Somalis living under their jurisdictions. The 1960 constitution of the Somali Republic pledged to 'promote by legal and peaceful means the union of the Somali territories'.¹¹² Somalia's first post-independence governments tried to pursue this objective throughout the 1960s. But the means they employed were not always peaceful and included providing support to Somali secessionist groups operating inside the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and in Kenya's Northern Frontier District.

The Somali state's founding approach to state-building was inherently expansionist and set Somalia on a collision course with neighbours Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti that had no intention of surrendering the Somali inhabited territories that fell within their sovereignty. Yet managing this combination of contested territorial space and an overarching Somali cultural identity remains a key area of contestation in contem-

111 This analysis draws partly upon a longer piece under preparation with Jonathan Fisher (University of Birmingham) provisionally entitled: 'Regionalisation of the Somali Conflict: Historical Continuities and Institutional Innovation'.

112 1960 Constitution, Article 6(4).

porary political discourse. It continues to inform all manner of debates over how to reconstruct the Somali state, ranging from the legitimacy of Somaliland's bid for independence to the management of clan differences under federalism.

(ii) Impact of regional war on pre-collapse Somalia

In the mid-1970s, the Ethiopian revolution gave Siad Barre an opportunity to pursue Somalia's irredentist goals by military means. Ethiopia's historically marginalised Somali population had mounted an armed rebellion calling for independence. On the back of this uprising, the Somali National Army invaded and occupied the Ethiopia's Ogaden region in 1977. Through a dramatic and rapid realignment of its Cold War external alliances, the revolutionary government in Ethiopia was able to restore control the following year. But Somalia's defeat in the Ogaden War and its repercussions, both domestically and regionally, put the Somali state on a road to decline from which it never successfully recovered.

Defeat in the Ogaden set in train processes that were pivotal in undermining and weakening the Somali state. First, a group of disaffected Mijjerteyn military officers tried to mount a military coup against Siad Barre in 1978. The coup failed, but the survivors went on to form the Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia (SSDF) and waged a rebellion in Mijjerteynia (now Puntland) for the remainder of Siad Barre's rule. The second consequence of the war was a massive influx of Ogadeni¹¹³ refugees into the north west of the country, profoundly upsetting the existing clan balance. The favoured treatment of the Ogadenis sowed the seeds of alienation and disaffection that found expression in 1981 as the Somali National Movement (SNM), a second rebel group seeking to depose the Barre regime.

Regional dynamics quickly played into these discontents. Ethiopia had every interest in helping to undermine Siad Barre's government and weaken the Somali state. Recent research on Ethiopia's Foreign Ministry archives for this period have confirmed that Ethiopian policy at the time was not to replace Siad Barre but to destabilise and incapacitate the Somali Republic.¹¹⁴ With a deep legacy of suspicion from the war, and no peace settlement, Ethiopia had no hesitation in bolstering

113 Ogaden is the name of one of the major Somali clans as well as a colloquial name for Ethiopia's Somali region.

114 Belete Belachew Yihun (2014), 'Ethiopian Foreign Policy and the Ogaden War: the shift from "containment" to "de-stabilisation" 1977–1991', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol.8, No.4.

the SSDF and SNM rebels with covert military assistance. As discontent spread to other parts of Somalia, Ethiopia identified new allies in the South, backing Aideed's United Somali Congress and Omar Jess's Somali Patriotic Front. By the time Siad Barre was finally ousted in January 1991, the political, economic and institutional fragmentation of the Somali state was well advanced. Multiple opposition forces, mobilised along clan lines, had already started to carve-out clan fiefdoms in different parts of the country. It is a legacy that continues to confound the stabilisation project in Somalia.

For much of the 1990s, external actors adopted an approach to mediation that favoured men with militias (warlords). This distorted the participation in peace talks and encouraged the proliferation of clan factions competing around the spoils of peace talks. External mediation was tilted firmly in favour of Mogadishu (where warlords continued to accumulate and prosper) on the presumption that the capital city remained the centre of national power. The rest of the country was largely neglected both by the rival warlords in Mogadishu and by the wider international community. By the mid-1990s communities in many parts of the country were getting on with local dispute resolution and peace-building using traditional mechanisms. To date, these have proved more enduring than the attempts to broker an equitable power-sharing agreement at national level.

(iii) Regional Rivalries in post-collapse Somalia

A new set of conflict dynamics cut through the region after 1998, when Ethiopia and Eritrea went to war and started to back competing sides in Somalia. By 2002 the search for a political settlement was taking place under the aegis of the Horn of Africa's regional organisation, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Negotiations in Kenya produced the first Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), headed by Abdullahi Yusuf. Although strongly backed by Ethiopia and most other IGAD members, the TFG had limited support inside Somalia and very little support in the capital. Eritrea cultivated a relationship with some individuals in the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) who were hostile to the TFG and opposed its installation in Mogadishu. Eritrea's purpose – given a distinct lack of sympathy with Islamist political ideals – appeared to be to undermine Ethiopia's efforts to establish a friendly regime in Somalia. However, as the influence of the ICU grew in Mogadishu in 2004–5 and the TFG continued to founder, it began to look as if Eritrea might have picked the winning side.

A key turning point for Somalia was Ethiopia's military intervention in December 2006 to wrest Mogadishu from control of the ICU. In the process it destroyed the first institutional arrangement in Mogadishu to show any promise of re-establishing services to the public. Among the reasons for Ethiopia's anxiety about the emergence of an Islamist government in Somalia was real concern at the prospect of a growing relationship between Eritrea and leading figures in the Courts' leadership. Amongst the unintended consequences of their intervention was the emergence of a much more militant Islamist grouping, Al Shabaab, with ambitions far beyond the parochial clan rivalries that had dominated the politics of Somali reconciliation to date.

Somalia's neighbours: part of the solution

(i) Collective intervention and containment

Ethiopia's 2006 intervention changed not only the internal conflict dynamics but also proved a watershed for regional approaches to Somalia. Military intervention evolved rapidly from individual Ethiopian action to collective regional action. The main institutional forum for this has been the grouping of IGAD member states, minus Eritrea.¹¹⁵ The key operational vehicle has been the AU peace support operation – AMISOM – dispatched, in haste, to Mogadishu in 2007. Initially manned by 1,700 Ugandan troops with a small component of Burundians, AMISOM had increased ten-fold by 2012 and now exceeds 22,000. The costs have soared as the mission increased in size and scope and are funded by a combination of external donors. The EU has spent more than €575 million since 2007, mainly to pay troops. The UN has partly funded the operation since 2009, at a cost of \$787 million. The US has contributed a further \$500 million. AMISOM now incorporates Kenyan and Ethiopian forces that have carved out independent zones of operation inside Somalia, operating with local Somali allies. Notwithstanding the involvement of so many 'interested' regional parties in the same mission, AMISOM contingents have managed to retain operational and political cohesion in pursuit of the mission's objectives.

The *ad hoc* evolution of a collective security approach to Somalia through AMISOM has been driven by pragmatic considerations for the

¹¹⁵ Eritrea suspended its membership of IGAD in 2006 in protest over the organisation's endorsement of Ethiopia's intervention in Mogadishu. Its request to resume active membership is under consideration.

states concerned. The move towards a collective regional approach has been inspired by a growing consensus across East African administrations of a common regional threat posed by Al Shabaab as a political and military foe. Regional states' joint success in ejecting Al Shabaab from Mogadishu and protecting the current Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has not yet, however, translated into recognisable success in peace-building or state-building.

(ii) Military over Political stabilisation

AMISOM has not demonstrated particular commitment to augmenting the reach and independence of the Somali state, which remains virtually irrelevant as a provider of services or security in most of the country. Their efforts have done little to promote a Somali polity that could deliver security or services or which enjoyed even minimal levels of legitimacy among its supposed citizens. Indeed, the direct involvement of neighbouring governments – both politically and militarily – may have exacerbated Somalia's frailty by prioritising (and externalising) security over peace-making and establishing frameworks of external rather than domestic accountability.

Like external security operations elsewhere, AMISOM has absorbed a large proportion of the external resources directed to the country's stabilisation. Troop contributing countries receive supplementary payments to their forces and replacements for military equipment that benefits them at least as much as the Somali state itself. AMISOM currently contains troops from all three of Somalia's neighbours, with important implications for the country's sovereignty. In practice, AMISOM troop contributors have won a guaranteed 'seat at the table' in any forum where Somalia's political future is up for debate, including the discussions that led to the creation of the FGS during 2012.

The Somali governments created through IGAD-led peace processes continue to rely heavily on AMISOM to guarantee their security while the Somali National Army remains weak, divided and under-resourced. Few doubt that an AMISOM withdrawal would lead to a rapid collapse of the nascent FGS state. Lacking sufficient domestic legitimacy to establish themselves as credible leaders among Somalis, the FGS and its predecessor have the appearance of foreign caretakers. Al Shabaab characterises AMISOM as 'African Crusaders' against Islam and plays upon domestic perceptions of the Somali government as a regional proxy serving the security interests of its neighbours and the West.

(iii) External over Domestic accountability

Increasingly, the endorsement of IGAD and AMISOM has been required to unlock international funds for successive Somali governments. This has rendered the quest for domestic accountability virtually irrelevant for many aspiring Somali politicians. This domestic legitimacy deficit has been exacerbated by regional states' and other external actors' attempts to manage government composition and transition exercises. As much as today's FGS is enjoined by its external sponsors to make the government more inclusive, the international proscription of some Somali organisations and individuals gives external actors the authority to determine who can be involved in a political settlement.¹¹⁶

A regional and wider international consensus in 2012 resulted in the election of a newcomer, Mohamed Sheikh Mahmoud, as President of the FGS. On paper, international action in Somalia is now better resourced and more clearly focused on fragile state principles than ever before. Somalia's nascent government is party to the New Deal framework, a state-of-the-art package of stabilisation measures, based on the principles of mutual accountability and backed by an aid package of \$2.4 billion for 2012–16.¹¹⁷ But the problem of external accountability lingers on. Like Somalia's transitional governments, backed by AMISOM, the FGS enjoys external legitimacy but seems unable to translate this into a more enduring political settlement.

Against a set of clear and unambiguous benchmarks, political progress inside Somalia remains painfully slow.¹¹⁸ There are many unanswered questions about the acceptability and feasibility of the federal structures prescribed in the draft constitution. Notwithstanding international commitment to the implementation of federalism, much of the external focus has remained on who controls Mogadishu. This heightens competition there and alienates from the broader state-building process the majority of citizens who long ago fled the capital and made peace in their own areas. However, regional powers are taking an increasingly keen interest in the leadership of Somalia's emerging federal units,

116 Apart from Al Shabaab, which is designated as an international terrorist organisation, other Somali political figures listed as being associated in some way with terrorist activities are effectively excluded from the political process, Hassan Dahir Aweys, being a prominent example.

117 The name derives from 'The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States' agreed in December 2011 at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea.

118 The FGS is committed to finalising the draft constitution, establishing a federal system and holding elections by 2016.

some of which are clearly viewed as buffer states by neighbouring powers.

Meanwhile, Al Shabaab continues attacks on FGS and AMISOM targets inside Somalia and has expanded the scale and scope of its operations in Kenya. UK advice on approaches to stabilisation, however well grounded in best practice and experience, will struggle to be heard in a regional security environment characterised by deep anxiety about the spread of Al Shabaab's violence within the region.

Conclusions and policy implications

Regional intervention is increasingly the norm in the Horn of Africa and has gained a level of legitimacy. But the structure and nature of regional engagement with Somalia has militated against the construction of a legitimate or effective polity. AMISOM's top priorities focus on military action against Al Shabaab, an emphasis that has been largely deleterious to the wider goal of re-building a functioning and credible set of governing institutions.

Other international actors have sought to complement the narrow security and political agenda set by the region. Since 2012, the UK has played a lead role in ramping up stabilisation efforts in support of political reform, institution building and longer term social and economic recovery. As a first step, this focused on improving the quality and coordination of the various strands of international intervention that had accumulated over preceding years. But the hoped for 'inclusive political process' remains highly tenuous.

In practice, the strong international political and financial support to AMISOM provides endorsement of an approach that gives priority to security. However, the UK's new stabilisation policy document¹¹⁹ puts legitimate politics and a workable political settlement at the heart of the stabilisation process. The new approach is one in which ambitions have been scaled down, with less emphasis on security arrangements, less confidence in rapid institution building and more focus on peace-building at community and local level. The ambition of Somalia's New Deal

119 Stabilisation Unit (2014), *The UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation (2014)* (Stabilisation Unit: FCO, DFID and MOD).

Framework appears to be sharply at odds with the lessons that the UK's Stabilisation Unit has drawn from its experience of stabilisation over the last five years.

While the new document is characteristically silent on the role of regional actors in stabilisation and de-stabilisation, one of its conclusions has considerable bearing on Somalia. It suggests "the withdrawal of external stabilisation actors can sometimes be necessary to allow local actors to recalibrate the balance of power and thereby begin to agree on and develop systems of governance for a more sustainable and inclusive political settlement"¹²⁰ A sound state-centric analysis may indeed suggest that the withdrawal of external intervention is a necessary step in stabilisation. But harsh regional realities may make this impossible to achieve in practice.

The UK has very limited room for manoeuvre in a case like Somalia, where neighbouring powers are already deeply embedded and regional engagement is directly related to security interests. Before considering withdrawal, the intervening powers will seek to retain control though their allies and their own interests will determine who can take part and who can be trusted in government. The effect of this may be to prevent the emergence of an enduring political settlement of the kind needed for long-term stabilisation in Somalia. Indeed the continuation of a fragmented, non-functional Somali state in which regional players have freedom of action may, from the perspective of Ethiopia and Kenya, be the least bad (most manageable) option in the medium term.

The regional security imperatives that underpin AMISOM's presence in Somalia impose limitations on how the UK and others could engage more effectively in Somalia's stabilisation. Within that framework, however, the UK should encourage more to be done to speed the development of Somali national forces and to develop a plausible longer term exit strategy for AMISOM. The work on institution building and political processes will similarly be compromised by the FGS's dependence on external security and the limitations this implies on political action. Within these limitations, the UK should maintain support for local and community peace-building initiatives that have been the outstanding success story to emerge from Somalia's state failure.

120 Stabilisation Unit, *The UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation*.

On the wider international stage, the UK could play a helpful role in starting to articulate the limitations of collective regional military action. Somalia's protracted crisis may have resulted in new practices, beyond old-fashioned sovereignty, and new norms of regional action. But there is room for a reasoned debate to be had about where the regional role should end and the sovereignty of domestic actors should be reasserted.

9. Measuring Peace Consolidation

Richard Caplan

How can we know if the peace that has been established following a civil war is a stable peace?

Each year, multilateral organisations, donor governments and non-governmental organisations spend billions of dollars and deploy tens of thousands of personnel in support of efforts to build peace in countries emerging from violent conflict. The United Nations alone as of January 2015 had more than 104,000 uniformed personnel in the field and was slated to spend some \$8.5 billion on peacekeeping in the current financial year.¹²¹ Yet despite this considerable commitment of resources, as well as the accumulation of extensive knowledge and experience in the course of the past two decades, efforts to consolidate peace in conflict-affected countries have not always been successful.

The re-eruption of violence in the Central African Republic (CAR) in late 2012 is a case in point. CAR is one of six countries on the agenda of the UN's Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which has a mandate to support recovery efforts in countries emerging from violent conflict. Civil war raged in CAR from 2004 to 2007 until a peace agreement, an amnesty, and the formation of a national unity government appeared to lay the foundations for a durable peace, which the UN took measures to reinforce. The fact that CAR suffered renewed armed hostilities on the UN's watch underscores the volatility of so-called post-conflict countries and the need to understand why peace may fail to consolidate despite substantial international engagement.

121 United Nations (2015), UN Peacekeeping Operations Fact Sheet, 31 January 2015. www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml Accessed on 12 March 2015.

CAR is not an isolated case. Between 1945 and 2009, 103 countries suffered civil wars of various magnitude. Of these, more than half (59 countries) experienced a relapse into violent conflict – in some cases more than once – after peace had been established.¹²² Indeed, on average 40 percent of countries emerging from civil war are likely to revert to violent conflict within a decade of the cessation of hostilities.¹²³ According to the World Bank, 90 percent of all civil wars that erupted in the 21st century have been in countries that had previously had a civil war (see Table 1).

Table 1: Civil War Onset and Recurrence¹²⁴

Decade	Onset in countries with no previous conflicts (%)	Onset in countries with previous conflicts (%)	Number of onsets
1960s	57	43	35
1970s	43	57	44
1980s	38	62	39
1990s	33	67	81
2000s	10	90	39

Peace may fail for a variety of reasons. Just as there is no scholarly consensus on the causes of civil war, so is there no agreement among scholars as to the causes of civil war recurrence. In his survey of the literature on the subject, Charles Call finds that scholars emphasise factors as varied as the 'quality of life' (poverty, infant mortality), prior war experience (duration, severity), security guarantees (peacekeeping deployments, disarmament), and post-war political arrangements (power-sharing, power-dividing), among numerous other considerations.¹²⁵ One often salient factor – inadequate external support for states in the aftermath of violent conflict – is the reason why the UN Peacebuilding Commission was established in 2005. But recognition of the need for external assistance is one thing; identifying precisely how

122 Barbara F. Walter (2010), 'Conflict Relapse and the Sustainability of Post-Conflict Peace', Background paper to World Bank, *World Development Report 2011*.

123 Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Måns Söderbom (2008), 'Post-Conflict Risks', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.45, No.4, pp.461–478.

124 World Bank (2011), *World Development Report 2011* (Washington, DC: World Bank).

125 Charles T. Call (2012), *Why Peace Fails: The Causes and Prevention of Civil War Recurrence* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press). Call's own analysis stresses the factor of political exclusion in explaining civil war recurrence.

third parties can intervene effectively to promote the establishment of a self-sustaining peace is something else.

Third-party efforts to build peace have arguably been hampered in at least one respect: by the lack of effective means of assessing progress towards the achievement of a consolidated peace. International organisations and donor governments routinely conduct monitoring and evaluation of the specific programmes that they support in countries recovering from violent conflict; rarely if ever, however, do they undertake broader, strategic assessments to ascertain the quality of the peace that they are helping to build and the contribution that their engagement is making (or not) to the consolidation of peace.

This is not to suggest that peace-building actors fail to take the measure of peace at all. To the contrary, there are periodic reports from the field by High Representatives and their equivalents, briefings to organisations' member states and government ministers, and expert independent analysis, among other barometers. While these assessments can be very insightful, they are often ad hoc, impressionistic or devised on the basis of either inexplicit criteria or stated criteria, such as mandate fulfilment, that are not necessarily suitable for determining how well a peace-building operation may be helping to meet the requirements for a stable peace.

The principal reason why third parties are not more systematic in their measures of peace is because it is an inherently difficult thing to do. There are no 'hard' measures or indicators of a consolidated peace in contrast, say, to the indicators of a prosperous economy or a healthy population, contentious though these latter indicators may be. And reliable data pertinent to measuring peace stability are often not available in conflict-affected countries. The ultimate test of a sustainable peace, in cases where third parties have intervened, necessarily comes after the fact – that is, only when the international community has drawn down significantly or exited. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that the continued presence of international personnel, even just a token military presence, can buoy a peace artificially. One measure of sustainability, therefore, is the survival of a peace following the first election *after* peacekeeping forces have departed. Yet while this is conceivably a reasonable measure, it is obviously not a practical one for transitional planning purposes. Third parties want to know that a peace is stable *before* they exit.

Another difficulty is a more fundamental one: what is meant by peace? This is not, as it might seem, a pedantic question; rather, it is a question

of prime practical significance. Embedded within every peace-building strategy, stated or otherwise, is a particular conception of peace. It may be as basic as the absence of armed conflict – what is often referred to as a ‘negative peace’.¹²⁶ A negative or ‘cold’ peace may exist between adversaries – as with the United States and the Soviet Union historically – or between formerly warring states – as with Egypt and Israel today – and it can be a stable peace.¹²⁷ Within conflict-affected states, however, it is more commonly thought that a transformation of relations between the parties to the conflict – a ‘positive peace’ – is required, as might be achieved, for instance, through processes of reconciliation. While a negative peace may suffice in a post-civil war state, a positive peace affords greater resilience to violent conflict.¹²⁸ Other conceptions of peace have been proposed by scholars, as reflected in such varied terminology as stable peace, sovereign peace vs. participatory peace, peace vs. stability/stabilisation and peace and resilience.¹²⁹

Different conceptions of peace have different implications for devising strategies of peace-building and peace maintenance. What it takes to achieve a negative peace is very different from what is required to achieve a positive peace. There is a danger in all of this, however, of conflating notions of what is necessary with notions of what is desirable. Take democratisation. All major peace-building organisations promote the establishment of liberal democracies in countries emerging from armed conflict in the belief that liberal political regimes are more likely to respect human rights and favour the peaceful resolution of internal conflicts. That is certainly the case in well-established democracies. Recent scholarship, however, finds reason to question the contribution that the degree of democracy makes to the consolidation of peace. As Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom observe in a recent study, “severe autocracy appears to be highly successful in maintaining the post-conflict peace ... If the polity is highly autocratic, the risk [of reversion to conflict]

126 Johan Galtung (1964), ‘Editorial’, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.1, No.1, pp.1–4.

127 Kenneth N. Waltz (1964), ‘The Stability of a Bipolar World’, *Daedalus*, Vol.93, No.3, pp.881–909.

128 Johan Galtung (1985), ‘Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some Responses’, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.22, No.2, pp.141–158.

129 Kenneth Boulding (1978), *Stable Peace* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press); Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis (2006), *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Philipp Rotmann and Léa Steinacker (2013), *Stabilization: Doctrine, Organisation and Practice* (Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute); James Putzel and Jonathan Di John (2012), *Meeting the Challenges of Crisis States* (London: Crisis States Research Centre Report, London School of Economics and Political Science); World Bank (2011), *World Development Report 2011* (Washington, DC: World Bank).

is only 24.6 percent; whereas if it is not highly autocratic the risk more than doubles to 62 percent.”¹³⁰ Liberal democratic development may be desirable for all kinds of reasons but, if this assessment is correct, it should not be viewed as a prescription for enhancing the durability of a post-conflict peace.

Recent innovations

Notwithstanding the difficulties associated with measuring peace consolidation outlined above, there have been significant developments recently as part of broad efforts within security organisations to introduce more rigour into assessments of the robustness of peace in conflict-affected countries. Among the most noteworthy has been the adoption of benchmarking by the UN in relation to its peacekeeping operations. Benchmarking is a type of monitoring that uses points of reference (benchmarks) as measures against which progress towards or retreat from stated goals can be observed. Benchmarking is not new to UN peacekeeping operations. UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone (1999–2005) was the first UN peacekeeping operation to employ benchmarking to inform decision-making about troop drawdown. The withdrawal of the peacekeeping troops, it was decided in mid-2002, should be based on the government’s capacity to maintain external and internal security without international assistance and to avoid creating a security vacuum.¹³¹ The UN Secretary-General in turn identified benchmarks to guide the envisaged drawdown of UNAMSIL that corresponded to issues identified in the Lomé and Abuja peace agreements as crucial for the success of the peace process. The key benchmarks identified were:

- building up the capacity of the Sierra Leone police and army;
- reintegrating former combatants;
- restoring effective government control over diamond mining and trading, which had played a major role in fuelling the war;
- consolidating the state’s authority throughout the country;
- making significant progress towards the resolution of the conflict in neighbouring Liberia.

¹³⁰ Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom, ‘Post-Conflict Risks’, p.470.

¹³¹ United Nations (2002), Fifteenth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, UN Doc. S/2002/987, 5 September 2002.

The Security Council announced in July 2003 that it would “monitor closely the key benchmarks for drawdown” and requested the Secretary-General to report on “the progress made with respect to the benchmarks,” which he did on the basis of rigorous monitoring of the conditions on the ground and evaluation of potential risk factors.¹³² In December 2005, the Council “noted with satisfaction” the innovations in UNAMSIL’s methods of operation “that may prove useful best practice in making other United Nations peacekeeping operations more effective and efficient, including an exit strategy based on specific benchmarks for drawdown.”¹³³ Security Council benchmarks have since been an integral part of numerous peacekeeping operations and special political missions.¹³⁴

Instructive though benchmarking can be, it has not always been employed to best effect. Benchmarks have sometimes been too vague and general to offer very much utility. There has also been a tendency to focus on what is measurable rather than on what is meaningful. It is far easier to measure the number of police officers trained in human rights, for instance, than it is to assess how well police behaviour conforms to international human rights standards but it is the latter that matters most for the purpose of measuring peace consolidation. The lack of common monitoring methods, moreover, means that different governments or agencies sometimes operate on the basis of different assumptions about how fragile or robust a peace may be at any given moment. Reporting on progress is also susceptible to political and other pressures. There may be a temptation to proclaim success prematurely in the face of demands from donors and troop-contributing countries to redeploy their assets. There is also a temptation for peace-building bodies that report on their own progress to provide especially favourable evaluations. In the absence of independent evaluation, it can be difficult to ensure that monitoring and assessment do not fall prey to politicisation.

There is an important related issue: whose assessment of progress should count? Increasingly multilateral agencies have been adopting joint approaches (national-international) to the design and implementation of peace-building strategies in recognition of the importance

132 UN Security Council (2003), Resolution 1492, UN Doc. S/RES/1492 (2003), 18 July 2003.

133 UN Security Council (2005), Presidential Statement, UN Doc. S/PRST/2005/63, 20 December 2005.

134 Recent peacekeeping missions employing benchmarks include: Liberia (UNMIL), Sudan (UNMISS), South Sudan (UNMISS), Chad/Central African Republic (MINURCAT), Haiti (MINUSTAH), Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI), and Timor-Leste (UNMIT) as well as the special political missions of Afghanistan (UNAMA) and Burundi (BNUB).

of promoting national ownership and in response to pressures from conflict-affected countries for the assumption of greater responsibility for their national destiny. The drafting of World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, for instance, is a more consultative process than had been the case with Structural Adjustment Loans in the 1980s. Similarly, the Peacebuilding Commission has worked jointly with national governments on the production and evaluation of peace-building strategies.

These efforts are admirable in their attempt to marry the norms of local ownership and accountability, and in some respects they have pushed at the boundaries of inclusiveness, which historically have been limited to the participation of national government representatives. In the case of Burundi, for instance, the Peacebuilding Commission created a formal role for civil society organisations, women's associations, journalists, church groups, the private sector and opposition political parties alongside the national government in the evaluation of progress towards meeting the challenges of peace-building. The broader participation has helped to ensure that politically sensitive issues relevant to peace consolidation, which the government would prefer to keep off the agenda, have not been ignored – notably corruption, politically motivated violence, human rights abuses and land reform. To date the process of joint evaluation in Burundi has been a fairly consensual one but it remains to be seen how major differences in assessments of progress would be reconciled if they were to arise between international and national parties or among different parties within states.

There have been other innovations in measuring peace consolidation although they have not been as widely diffused. There have been attempts to develop and incorporate formal conflict analysis in strategic assessment and planning. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which has a conflict prevention mandate, has recently developed a list of early warning indicators to assist OSCE officers with the monitoring of current, emerging and re-emerging conflict settings.¹³⁵ The list comprises eight 'cross-dimensional' categories of indicators: the political system, the military and security structures, the internal security setting, socioeconomic development, the environment, ethnic and religious minority groups, justice and human rights, and the geopolitical (notably regional) situation. The list is not exhaustive but it is compre-

135 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2012), Internal OSCE Open-Ended List of Early Warning Indicators, OSCE Doc. SEC/CPC/OS/221/12, 23 November 2012, p.14.

hensive. It is meant to be complemented by conflict analysis, for which the OSCE has also developed a template that has particular relevance to post-conflict peace-building.¹³⁶ As these are very recent innovations, it remains to be seen how widely and how well the OSCE will succeed in incorporating these analytical tools into its peace-building work.

The value of sound conflict analysis can be appreciated by considering the consequences of its absence. East Timor offers a useful example in this regard. East Timor came under UN executive authority from October 1999 until it achieved independence in May 2002. However, even after independence the United Nations maintained significant peace-building engagement in the island-state for several years, including through a brief but quite damaging episode of internal conflict in 2006 that caught the United Nations unawares. The crisis arose as a result of various divisions in East Timor – geographical, generational and intra-elite. Yet at no point, as Olav Ofstad observes in his study of UN post-conflict peace- and state-building in East Timor, did the United Nations undertake a conflict analysis and, as a consequence, it was not aware of these divisions until after they had manifested themselves in violence. The lesson Ofstad draws from this experience is that “any peace operation should start with an adequate conflict analysis to ensure understanding of the conflict landscape.” What would such an analysis have entailed according to Ofstad?

“[a] mapping of all existing conflicts and stakeholders, the threats they represented, the potential for new or changing conflicts and the need for reconciliation and conflict resolution. To provide this, a profound understanding of East Timor’s history was required, and of the connections between past and present conflicts. A thorough analysis of relations between different ethnic groups should have been a requirement, along with analysis of the relationship between political actors and different groups and actors in the informal sector, including the martial groups and gangs. The analysis would have needed to include socio-economic, demographic and psychological perspectives. A relevant conflict analysis must also take into account the likely effects of the peacebuilding process as well as other trends and developments in society.”¹³⁷

136 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2014), Conflict Analysis Toolkit, 4 July 2014.

137 Olav Ofstad (2012), *Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution in East Timor: Lessons for Future Peace Operations* (Oxford: Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict), p. 14.

This may appear to be a daunting task but Ofstad cites a number of scholarly and other pre-crisis analyses of the situation in East Timor that had identified many if not all of the underlying tensions. There is no reason to think that a security organisation cannot incorporate conflict analysis into its strategic planning and assessment, although of course even sound conflict analysis will not lead necessarily to the elaboration of measures that can ensure the peace.

While progress in this area has been limited, the UN's capacity for and expertise in conflict analysis arguably increased with the establishment of its 24-hour Peacekeeping Situation Centre and Research and Liaison Unit at UN headquarters in New York. In addition, the creation of the Joint Mission Analysis Centre (JMAC) is meant to give the UN the capacity to collect and analyse information that will provide the mission with "improved understanding of issues and trends, their implications and political developments, as well as assessments of cross-cutting issues and threats that may affect the mission".¹³⁸

Conclusion

Better assessments of the quality of peace are not a panacea for conflict recurrence. At the end of the day, decisions about whether and how to re-calibrate international engagement in a conflict-affected country will be taken on the basis of political, budgetary and other considerations, often with insufficient regard for the strategic implications, which can be adverse as a consequence. However, to the extent that sound analysis can inform policy deliberations, more rigorous assessments of the robustness of peace have the potential to make a substantial contribution to conflict prevention. Benchmarking, conflict analysis and greater sensitivity to local perceptions all have a role to play in this regard. As donor governments, inter-governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations reassess the nature of their engagement in any given conflict-affected country, they would benefit from greater effort to ascertain the quality of the peace that they have helped to build and its capacity to withstand the pressures to undermine it.

138 United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (2006), 'Joint Operations Centres and Joint Mission Analysis Centres', DPKO Policy Directive, Ref. POL/2006/3000/04, 1 July 2006.

10. A Theory of Stabilisation

Christian Dennys and Tom Rodwell¹³⁹

Whilst there is a broad understanding of the factors that make a society prone to instability, they are not necessarily the same issues that need to be addressed in an initial response to create the necessary conditions for a return to stability. This paper explains the difference between maintenance and creation of stability and explains a theory of stabilisation by introducing the key actors (the state, elites and the population) and their relationships to the creation of stability. It goes on to outline the aims and objectives of stabilisation ending with reflections upon the inherently challenging nature of such interventions and the need to accept a loss of agency in an environment where local politics and political settlements are paramount.

Before launching in to the discussion it is worth recalling how significant stabilisation is. Since 1945, there have been at least 16 multilateral missions mandated by the United Nations Security Council to undertake stabilisation activities; a further 29 missions have been mandated to promote stability with substantial increases since 2000.¹⁴⁰ This means that thousands of people are delivering stabilisation activities globally; at a cost of billions of dollars trying to influence the lives of millions of

139 The authors are writing in a personal capacity and the views expressed here do not represent government policy. The paper is drawn from a range of sources including the process for agreeing the UK Approach to Stabilisation (2014) available at the Stabilisation Unit website and a recently convened conference at Wilton Park.

140 Siân Herbert (2013), *Stability and stabilisation approaches in multinational interventions*, GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 966.

people. Whilst there is a growing body of empirical research emerging from the ground, this paper seeks to fill a conceptual and theoretical gap in our conceptions of stabilisation.¹⁴¹

The difference between maintaining and creating stability

The UK has a declared interest in maintaining international stability, one that is mirrored by other states. However, there are significant differences of opinion about what 'stability' means, and particularly under what circumstances interventions should be approved to maintain stability. For the UK, "the stability we are seeking to support can be characterised in terms of political systems which are representative and legitimate, capable of managing conflict and change peacefully, and societies in which human rights and rule of law are respected, basic needs are met, security established and opportunities for social and economic development are open to all. This type of 'structural stability', which is built on the consent of the population, is resilient and flexible in the face of shocks, and can evolve over time as the context changes."¹⁴² The key term in this definition is how we understand what are 'legitimate' political systems.

This 'structural stability' is obviously connected to the UK's values, and it should also be clear that the long-term structural stability that the UK seeks is both multifaceted and takes significant time to address adequately. Not least because the primary factors of fragility take significant time to resolve.¹⁴³ Whilst the key drivers of instability may be clear (though their relative importance is contested) and the end point of structural stability understandable there is insufficient evidence to suggest that effective governance, security provision and reducing poverty are all both the creators of stability as well as its maintainers.

141 For further reading see Disasters, October 2010 Special Issue: 'States of fragility: stabilisation and its implications for humanitarian action', Vol. 34, Issue Supplement s3, pp.275–463; Paul Fishstein (2012), *Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan* (Medford: Feinstein International Center Tufts University); Christian Dennys (2014), *Military intervention, stabilisation and peace: The search for stability* (Routledge: London); Robert Muggah, ed., (2014) *Stabilization Operations, Security and Development: States of Fragility* (Routledge: London). And many of the articles published through *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* in the last two years.

142 Her Majesty's Government (2011), *Building Stability Overseas Strategy* (London: DfID, FCO and MoD), p.5.

143 High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2013), *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development* (New York: United Nations); World Bank (2011), *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security, and Development* (Washington DC: World Bank), p.109.

Although UK strategies stress that the maintenance of stability is linked to effective states, the provision of security and justice and economic growth, there is no prioritisation within or across these areas. It is not clear whether they all can create stability, or what the relative importance of each component is. Nor is it clear *how* they contribute to stability and the ways in which external actors can (and cannot) promote stability. As a result it is important to differentiate between maintaining and creating stability. The maintenance of stability is focused on promoting 'structural stability' in states and societies so that they can adapt, evolve, respond to crises and hopefully thrive as they meet the needs of their people. The range of pressures on all states is vast and many states may require support, advice and at times financial input to help them cope with, for example, climate change or changes in financial regulatory frameworks. Addressing these important issues is one of the mainstays of international co-operation.

However, the creation of stability is distinct from the maintenance of stability because many of the key processes and actors involved in the maintenance of stability are either absent or constrained in their action because of violent political conflict. It is for this reason that normal relationships and interactions by the international community, which can help maintain stability, struggle to achieve any impact in unstable contexts. Therefore, the key aspect in our understanding of structural stability is the role of legitimate political systems. It is recognised that the development of a legitimate domestic government is a key issue in resolving conflict, what is less understood is the manner in which external action can support the development of popular legitimacy to create stability. Whilst we must recognise that further conceptual analysis is required and in some areas this has already begun, the following paragraphs outline some of the general limitations of some forms of international intervention in the creation of stability, some of which are recognised within the fields of governance, development, security sector and justice reform.

The international focus on governance reform is particularly challenging in contexts struggling to create stability for three reasons. Firstly, reforms are often focused at a central level and can take years to be realised yet the threats they face are immediate. Secondly reforms often do not take adequate account of local dynamics which is where many of the threats manifest themselves. Thirdly, the state itself may be deliberately promoting instability for its own reasons meaning that the international community does not have a viable interlocutor with which

to promote stability. External development also has a limited range of potential impacts in creating stability. At a macro level, aid can modestly add to economic growth but can also have adverse effects on the local political economy and state legitimacy if aid provision is too high, as has been witnessed in Afghanistan.¹⁴⁴ This can manifest in particular through aid dependency and the creation of rentier states.¹⁴⁵ At a local level there is evidence that high levels of aid and development provision can have limited effects on reducing violent insurgencies.¹⁴⁶

Further, experience in Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq and elsewhere suggests that it is simply not possible to address some long-term threats to stability, such as poverty, in a context of on-going political violence, not least because violent conflict actively harms economic growth and development. Not only is it not possible to effectively programme interventions, but the high associated risks of corruption and the de-legitimisation of the state, democratic governance and development in general suggest that extensive programming may need to be reduced until a stabilisation approach fosters more appropriate conditions. Nonetheless, security and justice reform processes may be necessary in any society, but they are by their very nature often contested. Attempting these reforms during conflict rather than in a post-conflict context has often led to mixed or ineffective results. In these environments the potential for reforms to receive the buy-in required to ensure they are successful is significantly constrained by a lack of political cohesion amongst state actors and their very real pre-occupation with more pressing issues.

In both the maintenance and creation of stability it is essential for the actors to remain legitimate. For the purpose of this essay, legitimacy is something which induces voluntary support and lowers the operating costs of governing so that it can essentially be defined as the popular perception of a government's 'worthiness of support'. In practical terms this means that the more legitimacy a regime possesses the more willing the populace and their elites are to participate in its activities and comply with its demands. It is, however, more challenging to foster that legitimacy in the context of violent political conflict. It is the widespread acceptance of the government and its role as being legitimate by the

144 Anke Hoeffler (2012), *Growth, aid and policies in countries recovering from war* (Paris: OECD Publishing).

145 Astri Suhrke (2006), *When More is Less: Aiding Statebuilding in Afghanistan* (Madrid: FRIDE).

146 Paul Fishstein and Andrew Wilder (2012), *Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan* (Medford: Feinstein International Center Tufts University).

population and the elites which represent them, which is the primary determinant of stability. Technical interventions in governance, security or to address poverty or inequality are only relevant to stability to the extent that they affect it, but they each have significant constraints in creating stability during violent political conflict.

Current approaches focus primarily on maintaining stability over the long-term, however, this does not indicate whether immediate stabilisation requires a different set of priorities or modalities of intervention. This leaves a space where interventions to address immediate threats may need to be recalibrated. The space in which stabilisation is applied is, however, not empty and activities and reforms do occur whether they are humanitarian, development, and/or security focused. However, global experience in fragile contexts suggests that these activities are often carried out with contradictory aims or simply disconnected from political realities on the ground. Therefore, we would suggest that stabilisation should focus on the creation of legitimacy to allow other activities to begin to address longer term threats to stability and maintain structural stability.

Key actors in stabilisation

In the context of violent political conflict it is, therefore, useful to re-consider who are the key actors and their relative strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis the creation of stability. The key actors are the elites, the population and states. These groups are not discrete entities; individuals can be part of more than one group though they do represent useful blocs through which to understand societies. Equally the groups are not homogenous and cross gender, age, ethnic and social identities. There may be several competing and adversarial components within them and each group in each country has differing roles, capabilities, strengths and weaknesses.¹⁴⁷ For example, in Nepal the issues relating to caste will predominate and understanding the nature of the caste system is essential in order to calibrate external support to the specific nature of Nepali society. Specific consideration should be given to understanding the actors social, economic and political context. This should include understanding the varying positions of women. This dif-

¹⁴⁷ Frances Stewart (2010), *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies* (London: Macmillan).

fers across countries significantly and specific attention should be paid to how they are linked in to and represented by these three groups.

In order to simplify the inter-relations and the various roles and labels used by individuals, in their varying roles in the state, the elite or the population, it is useful to consider the creation of stability as a function of the connections within and between the key actors. These connections are defined as the degree to which the various groups in the population within the elites and population confer legitimacy on the regime and state institutions to govern their lives. That is not to say creating those connections is easy, but that it is these connections that create, support and ultimately maintain stability.

The elite in any society may comprise of a range of individuals who hold either local or national leadership positions on the basis of wealth and/or social identity. The elites may be varied and individual groups in the population within a heterogeneous society will have leaders, though they may be discriminated against by leaders of other groups. The elites play a significant role in the maintenance of order and stability through the use of their resources and power which may be both positive and negative. Critically in the context of violent political conflict they are often leaders in, or targets of, armed groups. For issues of stabilisation, and indeed of peace, elites are also a critical component of securing political agreements to move from a situation of armed conflict to non-violent political competition. The exclusion of elites will be unlikely to produce a political process that could move an environment to a post-conflict context implying that in-conflict engagement should recognise the importance of a range of elites, who will have their own specific interests and normative values, some of which may not be aligned with those underpinning UK foreign policy.

The population comprises the range of social groups within a geographic area and is likely to be heterogeneous. It comprises various castes, ethnicities, tribes, social and interest groups and varied viewpoints, perspectives and contributions to stabilisation of men, women, children and the elderly, which all need to be carefully considered and understood. The population is a key component of stability; not least because its consent to be governed is a requirement without which there will be endemic problems with public order. However, the manner in which the population consents is critical to understanding the nature of the stability that a country experiences.

It is possible to provide 'enforced stability' through the extensive use of social and state or non-state armed group control. This can be particularly dangerous because it means that expressions of discontent with the status quo are often quashed. Examples of this would include authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and the Arab Spring. The approaches employed in those states led to widespread social and political repression which provided a veneer of stability that was not structurally very strong. When the status quo was challenged it became clear to the population that collectively they were able to revolt, both violently and non-violently, against the state.

The state contains parts of the elite that have a degree of control and influence over the state apparatus. The state is not simply the institutions that comprise the state, often because the actual degree of control by the state over the institutions varies significantly across countries and governments and can be particularly complex in fragile and conflict-affected states. The capture of the state is also likely to be a goal for belligerents to engage in violent political conflict. The critical element of the state is the way in which belligerents use government institutions to legitimate their control, and whether this is legitimised by the (other) elites and the population. The state presents a particular issue for UK engagement. This is because regimes can pursue political agendas which are not compatible with international standards or UK interests. For example, the Syrian regime and supporting elements of the elite have declared an interest in preserving 'stability' whilst employing the indiscriminate use of violence against significant portions of its population in the last two years. However, the UK recognises that the state system is integral to international stability, and the absence of regimes, such as in Somalia, has allowed some states to fail. Therefore the creation of stability in the absence of a broader political system, and a state structure, is likely to be only temporary, though it may be a worthy short-term goal.

In other contexts the state that the UK is attempting to support will display tendencies which are both positive and negative for stability. For example, whilst the Afghan central government has called for International Security Assistance Force support (strategically, operationally and tactically) in several provinces at the same time governors have undermined the credibility of the state and international actors have found themselves to be working around the state in order to implement stabilisation activities. This illustrates that the potential for stabilisation activities to directly support the maintenance of long-term stability will

be constrained because the regime itself can undermine short-term stability or longer-term state-building.

In different contexts the degree of relevance of each group in creating stability changes. For example, considerations about the overriding need for elite deals in Helmand, Afghanistan, over broad-based consent of the population may or may not be applicable to Egypt. As a result it is not possible to argue that all activities that have a stabilisation approach should have an exclusively population-centric, state-centric or elite-centric focus. This is partly because environments affected by violent conflict are exceptionally varied and they change over time. A valid stabilisation activity may focus on intra-actor relations (for example between elites) or across actors, for example the representation of a particular group in state institutions. A stabilisation approach would have to reflect this variation, along with the different UK priorities, in order to formulate a coherent set of responses.

A theory of stabilisation

The preceding sections have, firstly, argued that the UK seeks to enhance international stability and serve its own national security priorities through a range of diplomatic, defence, development and other specialised interventions. Secondly, the UK believes that the best way of maintaining 'structural stability' in the international system is for states to provide sufficient security and access to justice for their citizens, govern in a positive manner and address poverty through economic growth. Thirdly, the UK will almost always seek to act with partners and allies through bilateral and multilateral relationships. Fourthly, this orientation in the UK response does not adequately describe what is required to create stability, rather than simply to maintain it. Now we describe how stabilisation focuses on the creation of stability through building legitimate relations – as defined previously – and connections between the key actors in stabilisation. In particular it emphasises the need to ensure that relevant groups from all the main actors are sufficiently connected to one another to promote non-violent political engagement between them. For structural stability to emerge there must be mutually reinforcing relationships and connections within and across the main actors. Failure to build those relationships, or a breakdown in them, can lead to fault lines in societies that can be used to organise violent political conflict. The core element of this theory of stabilisation is that improving the linkages within and between the key stabilisation

actors, so that they can continue their engagements and relationships, will produce inclusive legitimate political arrangements that will lead to structural stability.

It is important, however, to add the caveat that not all interventions are necessarily helpful for supporting these relationships. Within states it is also important to ensure that interventions remain relevant to the socio-political context and are not driven by either ideological strictures (of for example the pace of economic reform) or by exporting practice from one context to another without significant modification.

A key piece of learning on international political missions has been the need to ensure engagement and that support is not disconnected from the socio-political realities of the context. If interventions occur outside of the boundaries of action acceptable to the key actors there is a risk that either interventions will pull actors and groups further apart or will damage their relationships. Examples of this could be the support for elections to be held quickly in order to demonstrate political process. Elections in fragile environments can often spark violence and entrench political divides rather than be a process for promoting relationships between key groups. This is similar to the principle of Do No Harm¹⁴⁸ though requires a new level of analysis if we are to understand how interventions are affecting key relationships.

The aim of stabilisation activities is to help build the relationships between these actors and lay the foundations for longer term recovery and structural stability. When external support remains relevant to the socio-cultural and political boundaries of a country it is feasible to shape and foster connections within and between groups and actors. This is not necessarily confined to a specific sector or modality of intervention, primarily because the countries that are affected by instability are exceptionally diverse. This provides stabilisation with its *raison d'être* that it holds no sector above another when trying to identify what activities could help support, foster and create stability.

The ultimate goal of stabilisation is to support countries to achieve structural stability recognising that stabilisation focuses on immedi-

148 The principle, developed by the aid community in the late 1990s, which stipulates that all aid activities will not knowingly contribute to further conflict or harm/endanger the recipient population and that all donors should prevent, to the best of their ability, any unintended negative consequences of their actions to affected populations.

ate short-term requirements which can set the conditions for other activities to foster longer-term stability. Stabilisation is about providing 'sufficient stability' to transition contexts from those affected by political violence to one where political contestation without recourse to physical violence or the threat of physical violence can take place and national and local actors reflect the wishes of those they govern. This does not mean that planning for reform processes cannot begin during conflict, but the limitations of their effectiveness in implementation must be recognised. Stabilisation activities would then be focused on moving an environment to where stability can be maintained by the state with a lesser degree of international support through long-term diplomatic, defence and development relationships.

Stabilisation aims to reduce violent political competition by creating an enabling environment for legitimate political settlements at national and local levels that can create stability. This means the activities of stabilisation seek to improve the connections within and between key actors to foster relations upon which structural stability can emerge. This emphasises the importance of an integrated response which involves a range of diplomatic, military and development actions. Different environments will require varying intensities of action in each of the objectives and may also include broader engagement by other UK government departments. The degree of integration will vary at strategic, operational and tactical levels. The requirement for an integrated approach lies in the fact that stabilisation does not hold one sector above another in terms of their effectiveness in achieving the goal because it recognises that the range of environments is so diverse that very different responses and methods of implementation may be required.

In summary, stabilisation needs to focus on the creation of stability through preparing the key stakeholders (elites, the population and state) to engage in their own processes to maintain stability in the long-term.

Having said all this we have to recognise that stabilisation has the potential to be an inherently destabilising process. The concept of doing no harm in a stabilisation environment is arguably unhelpful. It is likely that we are going to do some harm. The question is how much more harm we are likely to prevent. However, we must situate stabilisation as a process which moves political constructs from being limited access orders to more open and enduringly stable ones, which are willing to engage with the international community and engage fairly with all sections of

their own population.¹⁴⁹ The challenge implicit within this analysis is that whilst stabilisation activities have been, and will continue to be challenging, there is little scope or appetite within the international community to abandon them. It does not appear to be an option because of the structure of the international system and the proactive role that a number of states play in supporting peace and stability globally. Equally, in an increasingly unstable world, with broader pressures from globalisation, development itself, climate change and geopolitical shifts there is likely to be more, not less, demand for stabilisation. It is also not an option because stabilisation activities are driven by our, the interveners, own political priorities and – at times – security imperatives.

Stabilisation is fundamentally a political process centred on the need to establish and support enduring political settlements. The reality of the political nature of stabilisation raises a number of issues, notably that politics is a messy and protracted process, often involving compromise and periodic outbreaks of violence during rearrangements of existing political accommodations. For the international community the challenge lies in accepting the implications of its political nature, not least the need to accept a degree of humility and loss of agency – ultimately it is down to the country or region in conflict to reach a political settlement rather than having it imposed externally. Furthermore, the UK and its principal partners need to be realistic in what stabilisation missions we choose to participate in both in respect of the resources and time commitment we are willing to make and in respect of what we can achieve, the degree of risk we can tolerate and the issue of who will own the eventual outcome.

There are no magic bullets in this process, it is difficult and prone to recurrent failure and reversion to violence. The contexts we operate in are radically different and understanding them is paramount and the crises require bespoke responses and solutions. While it is desirable to improve our own systems, cross-government integration and coordination and coherence in the international community, we should avoid the trap of falling into the mechanical metaphor of state failure, which tends to treat failed states much “like broken machines, [which] can be repaired by good mechanics.”¹⁵⁰ This metaphor is inherently attractive to us as it

149 Douglass C. North, John Joseph Wallis, Steven B. Webb, and Barry R. Weingast (2007), ‘Limited Access Orders in the Developing World: A New Approach in the Problems of Development’, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4359, (Washington DC: World Bank).

150 Stephen Ellis (2005), ‘How to rebuild Africa’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.84, No.5, pp.135–148.

suggests that with the right tools, policies and technocratic approaches solutions can be found to state failure. This ignores the primacy of local politics, the political economy and vested interests of local elites and how in some instances a failed state serves the interest of many within and without the country. Ultimately the mechanical metaphor of state-building – and by extension, stabilisation – overlooks the central role of informal networks of power and authority supported by wartime economies and political networks along with the coping strategies of the wider populace. It is essential, therefore, to develop the necessary level of understanding of the historic, cultural and political context on a case by case basis. Better tools or structures will not lead to better outcomes and in some instances we need to accept that stabilisation is sometimes about the least bad option rather than a positive outcome contrary to the western tendency to believe there is a good solution for every situation.

Approaches to conflict, stability and security and the rethinking of state fragility are not straightforward. In understanding the importance of context, as well as the value-laden and political nature of policy in these areas, it is vital to draw on a breadth and depth of expertise both so as to help shape as ably as possible any potential intervention and also to identify specific obstacles to potential effectiveness. This collection of essays from independent analysts and seasoned practitioners illustrates some of the challenges and contestation in working in areas of conflict and insecurity, and offers insights for future practice and policy.

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THE BRITISH ACADEMY

10–11 Carlton House Terrace

London SW1Y 5AH

+44 (0)207 969 5200

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