

## REGIME CHANGE AND NATION BUILDING: CAN DONORS RESTORE GOVERNANCE IN POST-CONFLICT STATES?

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### SUMMARY

Foreign aid agencies and international assistance organisations are now heavily involved in nation building in post-conflict states. Their record of strengthening democratic governance in countries where civil war or military force replaced unpopular regimes is mixed. Experience suggests that a complex set of conditions must be created quickly in order to rebuild indigenous governance. Ensuring security, providing assistance through a transparent and coherent plan of action, coordinating donors' activities, establishing strong and legitimate national authority, strengthening democratic political processes, transferring responsibility and resources for development to a new government, stabilising the economy and strengthening social capital and human assets must all be done in quick succession. Achieving these goals requires a cadre of civilian and, sometimes, military personnel with expertise in post-conflict nation building. The frequency with which government aid programmes and international assistance organisations engage in post-conflict reconstruction also suggests the need for more explicit national and international policies and the creation of specialised nation-building agencies to undertake these difficult tasks. Copyright © 2005 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

### INTRODUCTION

Reconstruction of countries torn apart by invasion or civil war has become almost routine work for international development organisations and for the foreign aid agencies of the United States, Great Britain and many European countries. Recent interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have sparked new debates over the moral and legal justification of one or a coalition of countries removing governments that are considered threats to their own citizens or to those of neighbouring states. Interventions following regime change involving peacekeeping or peacebuilding operations, post-conflict reconstruction and nation building—although the latter is really aimed at restoring effective states and their governance systems rather than at creating new nations—have recurred frequently enough in recent years to raise fundamental questions about their purposes, objectives and results. Can foreign governments or international organisations effectively rebuild authoritarian states as peaceful political democracies? Past experience yields usable lessons that both illustrate the complexities of restoring governance following regime change and the essential components of policies needed to improve the chances of success.

History is replete with attempts by foreign governments either forcibly or through diplomatic pressure to impose governance institutions on other states (Owen, 2002). For centuries, European powers displaced indigenous governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America in the quest to build colonial empires. The U.S. military occupation of Japan and Germany and the Marshall Plan for Western Europe marked the beginning of the modern era of

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post-war reconstruction (Montgomery, 1957). In the wave of nation building following World War II, the United States led in the practice of military intervention in Latin America, Southeast Asia and Africa to overthrow unfriendly regimes and rebuild war-torn and conflict-ridden countries as democratic market economies (Schuller and Grant, 2003).

Nation building is now pursued not only by the United States and Western European governments, but also by international organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations. More than 40 countries in Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia, Central and South America and the Middle East were in or recovering from serious conflict requiring peacekeeping forces and post-conflict foreign assistance from 1988 to 1998 (Patrick, 1998). The World Bank, the United Nations and national governments launched significant reconstruction assistance programmes in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cambodia, the West Bank and Gaza, Lebanon, East Timor, Mozambique, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Rwanda and other countries recovering from military conflicts. The World Bank's lending for post-conflict reconstruction, alone, increased 800% between 1980 and 1998 to \$6.2 billion (Kreimer *et al.*, 1998). By 2002, it was committing 16% of its total lending for this purpose (World Bank, 2003).

Nation building following regime change by foreign invasion or indigenous rebellion has become so frequent in recent years that the United Nations now uses at least four approaches: diplomatic envoys to seek settlements in countries where conflicts still rage; peacekeeping forces and civil administration advisors; supervisory operations under a UN High Representative and UN Trusteeships (Caplan, 2002).

#### THE NATION BUILDING HERITAGE

Recent military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq continue a long history of actions by the governments of the United States and other countries forcibly to replace threatening foreign regimes (Pratt, 1955). Although much of the debate over foreign intervention for regime change centres on its moral and legal justification, more intense arguments have arisen over its efficacy. Roland Paris (1997), a strong critic of international peacekeeping and post-conflict nation building, argues that the fundamental model for peacebuilding used by Western governments and international organisations is often inappropriate and ineffective. After examining the experience in Rwanda, Angola, Bosnia, Mozambique, El Salvador, Cambodia, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala, Paris (1997: p. 56) concludes that the paradigm of liberal market democracy requires the imposition of an 'enormous experiment in social engineering—an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of social, political and economic organisation into war-shattered states in order to control civil conflict'. Imposition of the model, he and others argue, at best leads to unforeseen problems that undermine its success or at worst has a perverse effect of destabilising the societies in which it is imposed (Montgomery, 2004).

Pei and Kasper's (2003) review of 16 major U.S.-led nation-building efforts since 1900 concludes that in only four countries—West Germany, Japan, Grenada and Panama—did the types of democratic governance systems that the U.S. sought to build continue after 10 years. In only five cases were democratic regimes sustained for more than three years after the United States withdrew. In Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Cambodia and Vietnam dictatorships emerged quickly after U.S. military forces left the country. American forces were run out of Lebanon after regime change and nation-building efforts failed in the early 1980s and from Somalia under similar circumstances a decade later. The lessons of these and other nation-building ventures seem seldom to survive longer than a single presidential administration in the United States or among foreign decision-makers in international organisations pursuing fresh conquests (Cordesman, 2003).

Like bilateral attempts at reconstruction, UN interventions have also had mixed results. The UN Trusteeship in Kosovo during the 1990s has been widely criticised for failing to establish a strong, autonomous and sustainable state in the war's aftermath; the despatch of UN envoys to Sudan and Colombia failed to settle long-raging internal conflicts; and it took more than a decade for the Supervisory Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina to restore indigenous governance to that war-torn area. Some critics argue that after more than a decade under UN supervision, the 2002 elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina merely returned to power the ethnic nationalist political parties that helped create the original conflict (ICG, 2003a).

After a decade under United Nations supervision, democracy in Cambodia is far from institutionalised and elections are still riddled with corruption, violence and fraud (Roberts, 2003). United Nations peacekeeping and nation building operations in Somalia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone either failed to achieve their goals or encountered complex constraints that made even humanitarian relief efforts difficult (Thakur and Schnabel, 2001). Assessments of external assistance to Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador, the Palestinian Territories, South Africa and Bosnia-Herzegovina found serious problems undermining assistance efforts in all these countries during the post-conflict period (Patrick, 2000).

Many interventions to change regimes and rebuild national political and economic systems were *ad hoc* incursions undertaken with little regard for past experience that, seemingly, were not based on long-term policies. Perhaps the most successful attempts at interventions on behalf of better governance occurred in circumstances where conflicts in a host country were settled, at least temporarily, and when donor countries could find an organisational structure that allowed and supported strong initiatives by indigenous governing authorities. An extraordinarily successful example of this strategy that was adopted from the post-World War II occupation of Japan and transferred first to China and then to Taiwan was the Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR). The JCRR had been originally organised in 1948, shortly before the Chinese Nationalist Government had to abandon the Mainland and flee to Taiwan (Montgomery *et al.*, 1966). It consisted of five commissioners, three of whom were appointed by the President of the Republic of China (including the Chairman) and two by the President of the United States. They were empowered to administer a special fund that was sequestered from previous U.S. foreign aid appropriations.

JCRR's mission, as agreed by the two countries, was to advance the rural economy and society through special procedures which it would develop on its own. It was empowered to review and fund project proposals, initiate field activities, hire and discharge personnel and engage in contract relationships in the private sector as it saw fit. It was administratively 'extra-governmental' to both Chinese and American regulations. It could resolve unexpected staffing problems by off-loading or 'contracting out' specific projects and by adopting what it called the 'sponsoring agency' approach that permitted it to encourage and stimulate local organisations, since JCRR itself was not an 'operating agency' in the field. This arrangement lasted for a decade or so and its best practices were eventually absorbed in the government of Taiwan, where it made enormous contributions to the economic and social development of the country.

### NEW NATION-BUILDING ASPIRATIONS

Few nation-building efforts in the wake of foreign invasions or civil wars were as successful as the Marshall Plan in Europe or JCRR in Taiwan. In the heat of political conflict or military threat policy makers often seem to forget, and the public rarely recognises, how infrequently post-conflict nation building has succeeded (Dobbins *et al.*, 2003). The World Bank (2003) found in its experience that countries emerging from war had a 50% chance of relapsing into conflict within 5 years.

Why have the results of post-war nation building been so mixed? The complexity of post-conflict political, economic and social conditions explains much of the difficulty, as does the fact that the success of external assistance itself seems to depend on the existence of a strong national government and its ability to enact and implement supporting policies. Studies done for the World Bank found that foreign assistance had positive impacts on economic growth only when governments could enact and implement 'good policy'—especially strong fiscal, monetary and trade policies—and that aid had no positive effect on economic growth and stability in countries that had weak governments or inappropriate policies (Burnside and Dollar, 2000).

The disappointing results of nation building can also be explained by the extraordinary complexity of attempting to rebuild war-torn countries with 'failed' or 'collapsed' states (Rotberg, 2002). In many of these countries external or indigenous efforts at regime change were stimulated in the first place by the government's disintegrating capacity to govern because of political and administrative weaknesses, general lawlessness and corruption, ethnic tensions and conflict, economic depression, financial crises or totalitarianism.

### THE NEED FOR NATION-BUILDING POLICIES

Whatever relationships are arranged among donors, experience suggests that the process of post-conflict reconstruction would be better served if it were viewed as a coherent *policy* whose elements are complete but separate from other governmental functions. In the absence of an explicit policy, national governments and international organisations are likely to ignore or fail to address important conditions for success in post-conflict nation building or to coordinate essential components of reconstruction. Former U.S. Ambassador to Mozambique, Dennis Jett (1999), blames the failures of peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction in several African countries on the inability of international organisations to recognise and plan for the different requirements of what he labelled the pre-deployment, deployment and post-deployment stages of regime change and nation building.

Other observers have noted the inability of United Nations operations in Cambodia to provide an integrated strategy and oversight for the military intervention and reconstruction phases of nation building in that country. The two related functions of peacekeeping and nation building were conducted as separate activities by different organisations. 'There was no strategic level headquarters in New York and no proper coordination headquarters in Cambodia', as Australian Army General John Sanderson (2002, p. 282) discovered. 'The military headquarters assumed most of the coordination role and managed the details until the conduct of the elections. Afterward there was little it could do to coordinate UN oversight of post-election issues such as writing the constitution or forming the government'. Pei and Kaspar (2003) drew similar conclusions from the 16 cases they examined in which the United States attempted nation building and in which critical variables—internal characteristics, convergence of geopolitical interests, commitment to economic development and the internal legitimacy of the interim administration—were often treated independently.

Based on its vast experience in development, the World Bank (1999) discovered that nation building in post-conflict situations is a specialised activity that has its own dynamics, requirements and costs. Effective reconstruction has to be comprehensive and include both short- and long-term activities using a multi-sector approach because reconstruction is psychological and social as well as economic and physical. Kane (1999) notes that even though reconstruction in post-war Eritrea eventually progressed more successfully than in many other post-conflict states the war left complex challenges that nation builders had to tackle all at once, including inadequate electric power, water and housing, devastated infrastructure, food shortages, poor transportation and other public services, scarcities of skilled workers and professionals, the lack of foreign exchange, displacement of refugees and integration of ex-fighters in the economy and society. The experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan showed clearly that political issues require priority attention because peace and security must be achieved before assistance funds can be used effectively. Suhrke, Harpiviken and Strand (2002, p. 875), after reviewing the post-Bonn Agreement situation in Afghanistan, pointed out that 'rebuilding the coercive capacity of the state is essential to overcome strong centrifugal tendencies, yet must be timed so as not to get ahead of the restoration of legitimate political authority'.

### LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE

A half-century of nation building in post-conflict states yields lessons from which more coherent policies could be formulated and implemented in the future. First, recent experiences with post-conflict reconstruction emphasise the importance of ensuring security and a peaceful settlement of conflict before progress can be made on establishing a strong national government, reconstructing infrastructure and creating the foundation for economic growth (Feil, 2002). In the aftermath of the American invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, continuing guerrilla warfare, terrorism, lawlessness and ethnic and political conflict slowed plans for nation building and undermined the legitimacy of the interim occupation organisations and of the fledgling transition authorities (Montgomery and Rondinelli, 2004). The International Crisis Group (2004, p. i) points out that in Iraq the 'lack of security has been important and will continue to hinder economic activity. Kidnappings, assassinations and travel restrictions discouraged reconstruction and investment and led many non-Iraqis to withdraw. Attacks on oil facilities further disrupted the economy'.

The difficulties of establishing security were not unique to Iraq and Afghanistan; they were just as complex in the Balkans. The United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) continually struggled to establish public order, rebuild the judicial system and demilitarise competing political and ethnic groups (Caplan, 2002). It took more than a decade of nation-building assistance for the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) to create a police force that could protect security and enforce laws at least minimally (ICG, 2002). Afghanistan's post-Taliban experience suggests that a strong but politically neutral army is especially important where existing military power is divided with independent local warlords and dissident elements. Institutional devices as well as training programmes should be established to keep military organisations out of the hands of ambitious political aggressors. Ensuring security involves not only building effective military and police forces that act neutrally toward former conflicting factions on behalf of new national government, but also on demobilising former combatants and reintegrating them into society by providing them the opportunity to earn a decent livelihood in the civilian economy (Specht, 2000; Rondinelli, 2004b).

A second lesson emerging from experience is that nation building is more likely to achieve desired social and political purposes if donors' long-term goals are openly and officially acknowledged rather than obscured in a hidden agenda. Making goals and objectives for post-conflict reconstruction clear is especially important when the process is carried out by international organisations or a coalition of countries. The World Bank learned from its experience in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1990s of the need to respond early and comprehensively to immediate reconstruction and recovery needs and to provide a coherent framework for guiding donors' activities (Kreimer *et al.*, 1998). Factors it found to be important in implementing economic recovery included ensuring a wide dispersion of benefits geographically and among different population groups, involving a wide range of stakeholders in planning and implementation, including early in the process a balanced set of social sector projects to rebuild social capital and human resources, and contributing to local implementation capacity.

A clear and coherent framework is especially important in post-war reconstruction efforts where relationships among multilateral donors are complex and contentious. Carl Bildt (2003), the first United Nations High Representative to Bosnia and the UN Envoy to the Balkans, concluded that a coherent policy would have helped in creating a stronger coalition of international support and in planning for the longer time horizon and the vastly larger amounts of resources than were initially estimated for the complex process of nation building in the former Yugoslavia.

Third, even with a comprehensive and transparent plan for redevelopment however, if donors lack strong coordinating mechanisms for carrying it out, their interests will produce conflicting results. Barakat (2002, p. 809) points out that in Afghanistan 'the UN's characteristic sectoral approach (entailing separate programmes of activities with separate budgets, allocated to separate UN agencies) . . . shows serious evidence of fragmentation and contradiction'. This conclusion is supported by an assessment of initial assistance efforts by the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACA, 2002, p. 3) indicating that few of the nation-building organisations were integrating their efforts to achieve the objectives stated in the donors' framework for reconstruction. The United Nations-sponsored organisation found that 'assistance agencies (both international and Afghan) are most often "doing their own thing", with very little advance consultation with local authorities or even with each other'.

Fourth, post-conflict nation building requires programmes to create a strong state quickly and in such fashion as to strengthen the capability of the governing regime not only to provide security, eliminate violent conflict and find ways to reconcile conflicting ethnic or religious factions, but also to protect human rights, generate economic opportunities, provide basic services, control corruption, respond effectively to emergencies and combat poverty and inequality. One problem in Cambodia, for example was that although external aid was crucial in preventing a weak government from collapsing entirely, donor efforts to generate economic growth during the post-conflict period were undermined by the State's weak absorptive capacity (Peou and Yamada, 2000). Especially constraining were the weaknesses in infrastructure, human resources, domestic financial resources and administrative capability. A failed state pervaded by corruption and an unstable political system ridden with factional tensions made initiating economic growth difficult.

Similar problems plagued nation building in Afghanistan. Because the administration of even modest reconstruction programmes required the participation of existing bureaucracies and contract services, donors had to

provide funding to maintain adequate levels of compensation for displaced managers of public activities (Rondinelli, 2004a). Arranging to do so without reinforcing their previous ideological commitments requires sensitivity in aligning their purposes with those of the post-war government. At the same time, the composition of these bureaucracies may have to change to incorporate ethnic, religious or tribal groups that were neglected or excluded from public service by previous governments.

Fifth, beyond ensuring security, strengthening democracy is often the professed purpose of nation-building programmes (Richmond, 2004). But it may be self-deceiving to substitute intermediate goals like elections or political parties for desired ends like stable, responsible government and the rule of law. Sometimes, in a foreshortened perception of their ultimate goals, nation-builders support procedures that seem 'democratic', like elections and partisan competition, without concern for their consequences. Experience suggests that these devices introduced too soon can abort stable growth of democratic institutions and competitive market systems. Pushing for premature elections in Cambodia and Liberia in the wake of devastating conflicts merely restored to power former combatant leaders and in Bosnia legitimised polarised contests between long-conflicting ethnic factions (Ottaway and Carothers, 2003). A disconcerting fact of development is that even the positive elements of the ideal 'donors' model' can produce contrary results (Montgomery, 2004).

Past experience suggests that what may be needed most is some degree of political stability and legitimacy and respect for law, which is heightened by the presence of a stable judicial system that produces consistent resolutions of perceived problems. The difficulties of restoring governance in Somalia, for example, arose from the deep mistrust among the Somalis, after years of conflict, of any government institution (Stiefel, 1999).

Sixth, an important requirement in nation building is quickly sharing and later transferring the major decisions regarding future development with the host government and people. In reviewing its reconstruction efforts in Uganda during the late 1980s and early 1990s, for example, the World Bank (1998a) concluded that its economic rebuilding efforts could have been improved by giving more attention to consensus building. It found that reconstruction policies must take into consideration the dynamics in surrounding countries and the need for cooperation with neighbouring governments. Where ethnic, religious or other identities were factors leading to conflict, donors must consider the impact of their post-conflict relationships on reconstruction.

Deliberately or inadvertently ignoring any important segment of society can easily undermine nation building and the restoration of effective governance. The alienation of Pashtun ethnic groups from the first interim government in Afghanistan, despite the fact that President Hamid Karzai was himself a Pashtun, weakened its legitimacy and authority outside of Kabul. The perception of their lack of representation in the Cabinet provided Pashtun regional warlords with further motivation to consolidate power in their provinces and pursue their own interests, ignoring the central government (ICG, 2003b). After reviewing the experiences of the War-torn Societies Project in Eritrea, Mozambique, Guatemala and Somalia, Stiefel (1999) points out that successful nation building must go beyond participation to transferring control over programmes from donors to recipients, shifting the role of external assistance organisations from directing reconstruction to facilitating it, providing back-up support and advice and accepting collective social control by recipients.

Seventh, although there may be no standard sequence of development among the various elements of nation-building, a competitive economy is a precondition for progress. In Bosnia, Kosovo and the Balkans it was essential to create an economic framework for currency, customs and taxation systems, debt restructuring, accessing international capital markets, strengthening commercial law and the banking system to achieve economic growth (Bildt, 2003). Strong economic growth in El Salvador in the post-conflict period contributed significantly to the government's ability to implement the Peace Accords during the 1990s (Rosa and Foley, 2000). Inflows of foreign aid and private capital along with some international debt forgiveness and exchange rate reforms helped to stabilise El Salvador's economy and mobilise resources for rapid reconstruction. Economic growth policies in Central America focussed on comprehensive macroeconomic adjustment and structural reforms that reduced hyperinflation in Nicaragua in the late 1980s and early 1990s and lowered inflation in other countries in the region, including El Salvador and Guatemala, from an average of 27% in 1991 to about 6% in 1999 (Cardemil *et al.*, 2000).

Experience in Afghanistan underlines the importance of assistance in dealing with all aspects of the economy, including such dysfunctional elements as the warlord economy, the black-market, smuggling, drugs and the

subsistence sector (Pain and Goodhand, 2002). General economic progress is retarded by the proclivity for violence and proneness to plunder and looting in closed systems that can inhibit production and destabilise livelihoods and entrepreneurial opportunities. Export and other foreign trade opportunities and tariff reform are often more important than other forms of assistance to the private sector (Rondinelli, 2004b). Economic assistance programmes that encourage local entrepreneurship are more likely to avoid the charge of neo-colonialism than those that are dominated by public or private organisations of donors.

Yet, the imposition of economic policies that are purely ideologically motivated or that are premature for post-conflict societies can do more harm than good. The International Crisis Groups' (2004, p. 6) assessment of U.S. nation-building programmes in Iraq point out that the Coalition Provisional Authority's (CPA) insistence in 2003 on privatising 190 state-owned companies that employed nearly 650,000 people was 'both unrealistic and ill-advised given Iraq's conditions'. The ICG points out that 'aside from oil-related industries, virtually none was deemed viable, some were basically insolvent either due to depleted assets or the wave of looting that followed the Baathist regime's fall. Nor were potential buyers likely to be interested until security conditions improved'. The programme, the ICG concluded, merely fed Iraqis' insecurity, fuelled political unrest among the unemployed and, although it could not be implemented, it delayed alternative plans for restructuring state-owned enterprises that might have put more Iraqis back to work more quickly.

Eighth, experience suggests that in order to succeed, nation-building programmes to restore governance also have to focus on the long-term goals of developing human capital, reducing poverty, promoting social equity and alleviating social problems while at the same time strengthening the economy and rebuilding the state. In its post-conflict macroeconomic reform programme for El Salvador, the World Bank (1998b) more clearly recognised the need to address the requirements of the health and education sectors in order to develop human resources and support economic growth policies. The Asian Development Bank's (2002) experience suggests that when economies begin to grow, governments must adopt social protection programmes to reduce poverty and vulnerability among segments of the population that may not be able to benefit immediately.

Of all the specific reforms introduced in transitional countries, those relating to the rights of women are likely to be the most far-reaching. In the case of Afghanistan, the Taliban's denial of opportunities to half the population was especially serious because of the relatively low supply of human and social capital in the country (Montgomery and Rondinelli, 2004). Gender-based programmes of assistance in most countries have been especially beneficial to the rural sector, the poorest elements of the population, because in helping organise women's groups they have provided support to micro-finance services that have improved conditions for a local population, opened educational opportunities for females of all ages and supported 'equal opportunity' standards in employment and promotion in both public and private sectors.

## CONCLUSION

The frequency of military incursion and post-conflict reconstruction in recent years argues for governments and international organisations to adopt standing policies to improve their sometimes-stumbling performance in nation building. Although regime change and nation building in post-conflict states will always be a complex and somewhat unique experience, explicit, coherent and transparent policies can draw on lessons from the past, help establish priorities and guide the coordination and integration of activities during times of chaos and confusion. At the same time, they must be applied with due regard for the unique circumstances shaped by different cultural, political and economic conditions in each country that requires reconstruction. Conventional relationships are awkward during nation building. The 'host governments' themselves are often incompletely integrated into their own societies and in any case are imperfectly structured to carry out their new functions. They are as likely to resent as they are to welcome offers of assistance.

The experience of dealing with new, or failed or reconstructed states is therefore likely to call for unusual degrees of innovation and improvisation. A recurrent issue in such interventions is how best to navigate between the gentility of diplomatic relations and the brutality of military coercion. To be effective, nation-builders have to deal with unfamiliar societies and to identify and respond to little-known institutional needs.

These uncertainties have often led the field offices of nation-builders to concentrate on static, fail-safe, all-purpose organisational remedies and physical infrastructure and to avoid tampering with contending social or political factors.

Explicit policies and specialised post-conflict reconstruction agencies that draw on both military and civil administrative expertise are essential because peacekeeping, nation building and restoring governance are inextricably interdependent long-term activities. Regime-changing military incursions, no matter how strong their moral justifications, can no longer be seen as ends in themselves. And more coherent policies may provide better guidance, based on experience, about when foreign intervention should not be undertaken at all. After reviewing the complexities of restoring effective governance in Afghanistan following the Bonn Agreement, for example, Suhrke and Strand (2004)—noting that the US intervention removed the Taliban regime without a feasible plan for succession and with a successor authority that has yet to achieve broad legitimacy or power throughout the country—concluded that ‘the resulting conflictual peacebuilding appears to have no easy outcomes, nor are they always necessarily peaceful’. They suggest that ‘the most basic lesson, therefore, is not to intervene to create a situation like this in the first place’.

Sorting out whether and when the conditions are conducive to regime change, in the event that such a revolutionary outcome is seriously contemplated, requires experienced analysts who can ponder the implications before rash decisions are made on ideological or emotional grounds. When nation-building responsibilities are regarded as a major aspiration, a distinct policy may promote greater coherence and longer-term stability that can both reduce their frantic improvisations and enhance their impact. Even strong critics of nation building interventions based on liberal market democracy point out that it would have a greater chance of succeeding if governments and international organisations developed a more gradual and controlled process of democratisation in post-conflict states, if they supported electoral systems that rewarded moderation rather than extremism, promoted growth-with-equity economic adjustment policies and extended the duration of their commitment to peacekeeping and nation building operations to at least a decade (Paris, 1997).

If nation-building programmes were recognised as coherent matters of policy, the characteristics and needs of countries outside the periphery of diplomatic priority could be better known, alternative plans and designs could be clarified in advance of emergency, capital and human resources for a finite future could be calculated, administrative and organisational approaches could be explored in advance and desired end states could be defined so as to envisage suitable strategies for withdrawal. Past experience with post-conflict reconstruction suggests that both international development organisations and the governments of countries that have emerged as major powers need a cadre of military and civilian professionals who devote their careers to peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and restoration of governance, and who can apply the lessons of nation building flexibly, creatively and with sensitivity to local conditions.

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