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THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO
NATION-BUILDING

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Summary

Nation-building, as it is commonly referred to in the United States, involves the use of armed force as part of a broader effort to promote political and economic reforms with the objective of transforming a society emerging from conflict into one at peace with itself and its neighbors. In recent years, the frequency of such operations has greatly increased. During the Cold War, the United States embarked on a new military intervention on the average of about once per decade, while the United Nations launched a new peacekeeping mission on the average of once every four years. Few of these U.S.- or UN-led operations developed into full-blown nation-building missions. Since the end of the Cold War, the pace of U.S. military interventions has risen to about one every two years, while the frequency of new UN peacekeeping missions is up to nearly one every six months. The duration of these missions has also risen, with most now lasting five to 10 years. The effect is thus cumulative: The United States finds itself overseeing three or four such interventions simultaneously, while the United Nations must manage up to two dozen different missions at the same time.

The character of these undertakings has also evolved. During the Cold War, UN troops were usually deployed to separate combatants, to police demilitarized zones, and to monitor ceasefires. In recent years, the objectives for these missions have expanded to include reuniting divided societies, disarming adversaries, demobilizing former combatants, organizing elections, installing representative governments, and promoting democratic reform and economic growth. U.S.-led operations have also become larger, longer, and more ambitious in scope.

Despite some notable setbacks, the overall impact of this heightened international activism has been beneficial. International military interventions have proved to be the best, and indeed the only, reliable means of preventing societies emerging from civil war from slipping back into conflict.[1] Since the end of the Cold War, the number of civil wars around the world has reduced by half. The number of people being killed, maimed, or driven from their homes as a result of armed conflict has also, at least until recently, dropped even further.

Despite this wealth of experience, the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq has been marked by a myriad of unforeseen challenges and hastily improvised responses. Observers might be forgiven for thinking that the United States had never mounted such an operation. Yet, Iraq was the seventh major U.S.-led intervention in little more than a decade, having been preceded by operations in Kuwait, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. Of those seven societies, six are Muslim, Haiti being the sole exception. At the commencement of the Iraq occupation, therefore, no Western military had more modern experience operating in Muslim societies than the U.S. Army and no country had more experience managing large nation-building enterprises than did the United States.

Unfortunately, neither the U.S. military nor the government as a whole had made a systematic attempt over the preceding decade to reflect on the experience of those earlier operations and apply these lessons in preparing for what was likely to be their biggest and most difficult such challenge to date, in Iraq.

This attitude has changed. The administration has acknowledged early missteps in Iraq and has begun to put in place institutional arrangements designed to ensure a more professional approach to such contingencies in the future. Other governments, notably the UK, Canadian, and German governments, have set up similar structures. The UN has established the Peacebuilding Commission for the same purpose. These various initiatives are premised on the view that nation-building has become an unavoidable burden, that its practitioners need to do a better job of applying the lessons from prior missions

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[1]   Collier and Hoeffler (2004).

to an evolving doctrine for the conduct of future ones, and must build cadres of experts available to go from one operation to the next.

This guidebook is a contribution to that effort. It is organized around the constituent elements of any nation-building mission. These include the military and police contingents, the civil administrators, and the experts on political reform and economic development. It describes how each of these components should be organized and employed, how much of each is likely to be needed, for how long, and how much this may cost. These lessons are drawn largely from the 16 case studies presented in earlier RAND work on nation-building,[2] and an additional eight that are currently under preparation for a forthcoming volume that builds on the prior research.

Mission Planning

Planning is a routine military activity, but one less developed among civilian authorities. The lead-up to most nation-building missions affords ample time for detailed planning, which should involve both the civilian and military components of the mission. Among the first issues to be addressed are the mission's objective, the intended scale of commitment, and the institutional arrangements for managing the intervention.

Setting the mission objective requires looking beyond its immediate purposes to appreciate the impact that an external military intervention will have on both the society in question and the surrounding region and to plot an outcome commensurate with the likely scale of commitment.

Most interventions are launched for some immediate, usually negative purpose, e.g., to halt aggression, civil war, famine, genocide, or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This purpose may be achieved quite quickly, but the intervening authorities will then be left with the more difficult, time-consuming, and expensive task

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[2]   Dobbins, McGinn, et al. (2003); Dobbins, Jones, et al. (2005).

of refashioning the society in which they have intervened. The intervention itself will change power relationships within that society and among its neighbors. Those advantaged by the intervention may begin to abuse their positions. Those disadvantaged may move to frustrate the intervening authorities' purposes.

Co-Option Versus Deconstruction

Broadly speaking, there are two alternative approaches to instigating reforms that can turn a violent society into one at peace with itself and its neighbors. One might be labeled *co-option*, under which the intervening authorities try to work within existing institutions and to deal, more or less impartially, with all social forces and power centers, to redirect their ongoing competition for power and wealth from violent to peaceful channels. The alternative approach might be labeled *deconstruction*, under which the intervening authorities first dismantle an existing state apparatus and then build a new one, in the process consciously disempowering some element of society and empowering others.

Most UN peacekeeping operations aspire to the first approach. Most U.S.-led peace enforcement missions adopt something closer to the second. A near-perfect exemplar of the co-option strategy would be the UN mission in El Salvador in the early 1990s. The embodiment of deconstruction would be the U.S.-led occupation of Germany in the late 1940s. Most missions fall somewhere between these poles. Peacekeeping, impartiality, and co-option are clearly the less costly approach. But peacekeeping alone will not halt aggression, civil war, genocide, or nuclear proliferation, nor can the intervening power remain impartial in conflicts to which it has become a party.

Where to position any given intervention along this spectrum from deconstruction to co-option depends not just on the needs of the society being refashioned, but on the resources the intervening authorities have to commit to that task. The more sweeping a mission's objectives, the more resistance it is likely to inspire. Resistance can be

overcome, but only through a well-considered application of personnel and money over extended periods of time. In planning any mission, therefore, it is essential to ensure a match between ends and means. Missions that aim to impose peace upon unwilling parties and alter long-standing power relationships are likely to require much greater resources than are operations designed to perpetuate existing truces while drawing contending factions into peaceful but potentially mutually advantageous power-sharing relationships.

Mismatches between inputs, as measured in personnel and money, and desired outcomes, as measured in imposed social transformation, are the most common cause for failure of nation-building efforts. In estimating the resource demands of such operations, this guide provides ranges that encompass both approaches. The intent is to assist those planning missions in increasing the necessary personnel and money if committed to promoting sweeping change or to dial down the objective if resources are likely to be limited.

Institutional Frameworks and Consultative Forums

All nation-building missions involve a mix of national, multinational, and international actors. The nature of that mix is determined largely by the purpose and scope of the operation. Even nationally led interventions, such as the U.S. invasion of Iraq or the Australian intervention in the Solomon Islands, quickly find roles for other national partners, for the UN, and for other organizations. At the other end of the spectrum, no UN-led mission is likely to get very far without the cooperation of regional states and the backing of major powers.

The UN provides the most suitable institutional framework for most nation-building missions, one with a comparatively low cost structure, a comparatively high success rate, and the greatest degree of international legitimacy. The United Nations does not do invasions, however, and seldom deploys more than about 20,000 troops in any given operation. For missions that require forced entry, or that demand more than a reinforced division of troops, a coalition led by a nation

or by an alliance such as NATO will probably be necessary, at least for the first phase of the operation. However, although NATO is militarily much more potent than the UN, it possesses none of the other attributes needed for successful nation-building. Thus NATO-led military operations will always require the UN or other national and international actors to provide the various civil components without which no nation-building mission can succeed.

Nation-building always requires the integration of national and international efforts. Larger missions require several layers of consultative machinery to operate effectively. The first, inner circle should include the major powers that care most about the success of the enterprise and are prepared to commit personnel and money to it. The second circle should involve the major financial donors. The third should involve the neighboring powers. Without such coordination, international efforts are likely to be disjointed, with the various organizations concerned competing for turf while shirking the riskier or less rewarding tasks.

When nations disintegrate, the competing contenders for power inevitably turn to external sponsors for support. Faced with the prospect of a neighboring state's failure, the governments of adjoining states seek to develop local clientele and back rival aspirants to power. It is, therefore, practically impossible to put a broken state back together if its neighbors are committed to frustrating that effort. Much as one may regret and deplore such activity, neighbors can be neither safely ignored nor effectively barred from exercising their considerable influence. The adjacent states, after all, suffer the consequences of state failure and civil conflict most directly. They must shelter the refugees and cope with the endemic diseases, increased criminality, spread of terrorism, and disruptions to their commerce generated by such conflicts. They cannot afford to remain uninvolved. It has always proved wise, therefore, to find ways to engage them constructively, no matter how unhelpful their activities may have been in the past. Failure to do so can condemn to failure even the most generously resourced operation.

Setting Priorities

The prime objective of any nation-building operation is to make violent societies peaceful, not to make poor ones prosperous, or authoritarian ones democratic. Economic development and political reform are important instruments for effecting this transformation, but will not themselves ensure it. Rather, such efforts need to be pursued within a broader framework, the aim of which is to redirect the competition for wealth and power, which takes place within any society, from violent into peaceful channels.

The first-order priorities for any nation-building mission are public security and humanitarian assistance. If the most basic human needs for safety, food, and shelter are not being met, any money spent on political or economic development is likely to be wasted. Accordingly, this guidebook is organized around a proposed hierarchy of nation-building tasks, which may be prioritized as follows:

- *Security*: peacekeeping, law enforcement, rule of law, and security-sector reform
- *Humanitarian relief*: return of refugees and response to potential epidemics, hunger, and lack of shelter
- *Governance*: resuming public services and restoring public administration
- *Economic stabilization*: establishing a stable currency and providing a legal and regulatory framework in which local and international commerce can resume
- *Democratization*: building political parties, free press, civil society, and a legal and constitutional framework for elections
- *Development*: fostering economic growth, poverty reduction, and infrastructure improvements.

This is not to suggest that the above activities should necessarily be initiated sequentially. If adequate funding is available, they can and should proceed in tandem. But if higher-order priorities are not adequately resourced, investment in lower-order ones is likely to be wasted.

Seizing the Moment

The weeks immediately following the arrival of foreign troops tend to be a time of maximum possibility. The appearance of an intervening force normally produces a combination of shock and relief in the local population. Resistance is unorganized, spoilers unsure of their future. The situation is highly malleable. But the capacity of intervening authorities to capitalize on these opportunities is usually limited by the absence of many mission components. To take advantage of what has been called the "golden hour" that follows the end of major combat operations, the intervening authorities need to have at their disposal upon arrival a minimum set of assets: enough troops, police, civil administrators, and humanitarian provisions to secure and supply at least the capital. These can be followed quickly by judicial and penal experts with funded plans for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants and the training or retraining of the police force.

Soldiers

Soldiers are among the first elements of any nation-building mission to arrive. They are often called upon initially to perform many functions that would be better fulfilled by civilian experts, were such experts available in sufficient numbers. Their first priority, however, should be to establish a modicum of security in what may be a chaotic situation. Success in this task will be key to obtaining the population's support for the operation and introducing the civilian components of the mission in adequate numbers. Until individuals feel safer with the external military presence, they will not collaborate in reporting on criminals, terrorists, and other spoilers. Unless goods, services, and people can again circulate normally, political and economic reforms cannot begin to take hold. Intervening forces will normally require help from the local police and at least the passive cooperation of the local military in establishing a secure environment. Even when available, however, indigenous security services will usually prove incompetent, corrupt,

or abusive, requiring close oversight, mentoring, and institutional change.

Once a minimal level of security has been established, the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants should be the next priority. Agreement among the contending parties to take part in such a process is often a prerequisite for deployment of an international force. In heavily armed societies with a long tradition of gun ownership, depriving individuals of their small arms may prove impractical. At a minimum, heavy arms should be gathered, stored, or destroyed, and the display of small arms by any except state security forces should be banned. Armed units should be broken up, and individuals should be offered alternative livelihoods. It is important that the mission arrive with a plan and adequate funding to perform these tasks.

In societies with wide-scale unemployment, it will not be possible to find long-term positions for all former combatants. At a minimum, the reintegration program should supervise and support these individuals for a period long enough to allow units to be broken up and the ties among their members to be loosened.

The military component should establish extensive links with the civilian population. One avenue is through active intelligence collection, surveillance, and reconnaissance. The second is a program of civic action, through which military units support humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. Such tasks fall primarily to the civilian agencies, but the military can often supplement those efforts in useful and visible ways. This must be pursued with some sensitivity, recognizing that humanitarian organizations attach great importance to maintaining their impartiality in conflict environments and will resist close association with an intervening military force, even one operating on behalf of the UN.

While most postconflict societies will have more soldiers than they need, they will probably have fewer police officers than required. Even as armies need to be scaled back and reformed, police forces need to bolstered and also reformed. The military contingent of the mission is often involved in the former process and sometimes in the latter,

although police training functions are better assigned to civilian police when available.

Forced entries are often the prelude to demanding peace enforcement operations. The entries themselves may not prove particularly difficult—indeed, in recent decades these have invariably been achieved rapidly and with minimal loss to the entering force. By contrast, the postcombat stabilization and reconstruction phase has been much more time-consuming and costly.

Stabilizing an internally divided society without significant indigenous capacity for security can require an external military force of 10 to 20 soldiers per 1,000 inhabitants. In circumstances in which the parties to the conflict have jointly sought external intervention and are prepared to collaborate with it, that requirement can be potentially reduced to one soldier or fewer per 1,000 inhabitants. Where only this lower force ratio is likely to be achieved, deployment should normally be conditioned upon prior agreement among the contending parties to disarm and disengage.

The cost for fielding a U.S. or NATO force is about $200,000 per soldier per year. The cost of fielding the typical UN peacekeeping force is about $45,000 per soldier per year. High-end peace enforcement operations require a military staffing level, on average, 10 times higher per inhabitant than do standard peacekeeping missions. Clearly, then, peace enforcement is appropriately a last rather than first resort, to be employed only if the stakes are great and the intervening powers highly committed.

Police

Public security is the first responsibility of intervening authorities. That security is sometimes imperiled by contending armies and is always threatened by criminals, gangs, and violence-prone political groups. International military forces are best suited for dealing with the first sort of threat, police with the rest.

Military police are better than standard infantry for some public security functions—such as crowd control—but less well suited than

civilian police for criminal investigations or community policing. On the other hand, most international civilian police forces are not well equipped to deal with organized crime or large-scale violence. In many ways, the ideal police forces for nation-building missions are gendarmerie-type units that combine military discipline with a high level of investigative, forensic, and intelligence collection skills. Unfortunately, only a few countries maintain such forces and, consequently, they are always in short supply.

UN peacekeeping forces typically deploy about one police officer for every 10 soldiers. These international police forces monitor, mentor, and train local police forces. Where the local police force has disintegrated entirely, international police may need to undertake law enforcement functions themselves. This requires a much larger contingent of international police, something feasible only for very well-resourced operations in smaller countries.

Local police will need to be quickly vetted and closely supervised. In the medium term, they will need to be thoroughly reformed or replaced entirely. In the longer term, the new or retrained police will need to be mentored, supported, and held accountable. The intervening authorities should arrive with plans, funding, and personnel to begin performing at least the first two functions immediately.

Like the UN, the European Union has developed the capacity to deploy significant numbers of international police officers. The UN currently deploys over 7,000 police officers to postconflict areas; the EU has set a goal of being able to deploy up to 5,000. The United States currently deploys some 300 international police officers, mostly in Kosovo. It continues to rely on private contractors for this purpose. This arrangement is clearly inferior to a system wherein the deployed police would be U.S. government employees, rather than contractors, with the greater degree of reciprocal loyalty, discipline, and commitment that relationship implies. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States has failed to deploy any civilian police whatsoever.[3]

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[3]   International police are uniformed police officers who monitor local police or who themselves enforce the law. Civilian instructors in police training establishments, who may be former police officers, are not normally included in this category.

Most postconflict societies require at least two of their own police officers for every 1,000 inhabitants. The intervening authorities should anticipate the need to rebuild, reequip, and, for the first several years at least, pay a police force of this magnitude. The annual cost per local police officer will be approximately three times that country's per capita GDP. International police, by contrast, cost about $150,000 per person per year. Where the responsibilities of international police are limited to oversight, mentoring, and training of local police, one for every 10,000 inhabitants may be adequate. Where they assume a direct law enforcement role, one for every 1,000 inhabitants may be needed.

Rule of Law

In most nation-building operations, efforts to rebuild the judiciary and corrections systems have taken second place to police reform. This is unfortunate and counterproductive. Police who lack prisons in which to put criminals and judges before whom to bring them will inevitably be left with the invidious choice of either punishing miscreants themselves or letting them go. Either alternative will corrupt and demoralize the best-trained force.

A first-order issue to be addressed in most nation-building missions is what law to enforce. The usual answer is to take the country's most recently promulgated criminal code, purge it of obviously abusive statutes, and employ it as the law of the land. In some cases, the intervening authorities may have to go further into the past to find a criminal code acceptable to the population. Occasionally, it may have to promulgate laws of its own. These are decisions that should be made as part of the preparation for the mission so newly arriving troops and police have a clear idea of what rules are to be enforced.

In societies emerging from prolonged civil war, the legal system will likely have ceased to function. There will be an absence of judges, and those who are available may be unqualified. Courts and prisons may have been destroyed, and those that survive may have been stripped of essentials. As with the police, the short-term objective will

be to vet the judiciary and corrections staff and oversee their activities, in the medium term to reform and rebuild both these institutions, and, in the long term, to foster the development of a rule-of-law culture. These activities should proceed in parallel with police reform.

Establishing the balance between retribution and reconciliation in societies emerging from conflict or tyranny presents a particular challenge. Whom to punish and whom to forgive, whom to exclude from the new dispensation and whom to co-opt into it are choices that cannot be entirely avoided.

War crime tribunals provide a judicial vehicle for holding accountable those most responsible for past atrocities. The local society will seldom be capable of mounting a credible legal process. International tribunals, on the other hand, are hugely expensive and may lack legitimacy in the eyes of the affected populations. Mixed tribunals, in which international and local judges sit together, can help to address some of these difficulties.

Lustration represents an administrative approach to the same problem. Here the intention is to assess group, rather than personal, responsibility. The objective is not so much to punish as to exclude the affected group from future influence, usually by barring them from public employment, and sometimes stripping them of other civil rights. Denazification in post–World War II Germany, demilitarization in Japan, and debaathification in Iraq are examples of this process.

Truth commissions lie near the opposite end of the retribution/reconciliation spectrum. These are nonjudicial inquiries into past abuses with a view to assessing blame but not levying penalties. In going this route, society is saying, "We are prepared to forgive, but not to forget."

It is clearly easier to exact retribution in circumstances in which the conflict has produced clear winners and losers, particularly if the losers have lost so badly as to preclude any further resistance. This is seldom the case. In other circumstances, any effort to impose accountability for crimes committed in the course of conflict, whether through judicial or administrative processes, may occasion more resistance than the intervening authorities are capable of suppressing.

War crime tribunals are sometimes employed by the international community as an alternative to intervention, rather than as an adjunct. In such instances, tribunals serve principally as a means of assuaging the international community's conscience without requiring it to commit the personnel and money needed to actually stop the crimes it abhors and punish the perpetrators. Proponents argue that the simple threat of judicial action at some indefinite point in the future will curb abusive behavior. There is scant empirical support for this thesis.

In the context of nation-building, war crime tribunals and lustration should be employed only in those rare situations in which the intervening authorities are equipped to enforce the outcome and ready to deal effectively with the resultant resistance. Applied in any other circumstances, the effect is likely to be an increased polarization of the society in question and an eventual resumption of violence.

Humanitarian Relief

Humanitarian operations often precede nation-building missions, initiated in response to the conflict and sustained in many cases throughout its course. Thus, while the arrival of peacekeepers may signal the opening of an operation for most of its constituent elements, it can signal the beginning of the end for those engaged in lifesaving humanitarian relief efforts, as displaced persons are helped to return to their homes, as refugee camps are closed, and as public services are restored.

Most major humanitarian relief agencies are professionally staffed, highly experienced, and comparatively well resourced. Funding for nation-building is almost always in short supply, but humanitarian relief is the aspect donors are the most inclined to fund. As a result, relief efforts are usually among the least problematic of any nation-building mission. We have found no mission whose overall success was compromised by inadequacies in this aspect of its operations. On the other hand, there are many examples of situations in which the intervening authorities' failure to establish a modicum of public security has made it impossible for humanitarian agencies to com-

plete their tasks or even to sustain lifesaving assistance to threatened populations.

In cases in which the intervening authorities quickly establish a reasonably secure environment, relief operations usually proceed smoothly. Refugees return, sometimes with surprising rapidity. Public services are gradually restored, including public health services. The economy revives. Within a year or two, most humanitarian agencies can pack up and move on to another emergency or shift their emphasis from lifesaving to developmental activities.

Coordination between military forces and humanitarian organizations is never easy. The number of such organizations has grown vastly in recent years; not all are of the highest distinction. Humanitarian organizations seek to remain impartial, even when the United Nations is positioned on one side and local outlaws on the other. This may seem anomalous, as the same donor governments are often funding the humanitarian efforts and staffing the intervening military force. Humanitarian organizations feel strongly, however, that their ability to gain access to exposed populations depends on maintaining strict impartiality. Accordingly, representatives of such organizations carefully limit their interactions with international peacekeepers, even when they look to these forces for security.

Coordination becomes particularly difficult when the intervening authorities have failed to establish a secure environment. Then, the usual division of labor between international military forces and humanitarian organizations is difficult to maintain. Humanitarian organizations may find themselves unable to provide relief in very dangerous areas. International military units may feel compelled to step into this void and begin delivering relief supplies, in the process blurring the distinction between combatant and humanitarian worker. While such arrangements are better than a complete absence of humanitarian relief, it is generally best if the military and the humanitarian organizations each concentrate on their respective primary tasks: maintaining security or delivering assistance.

Governance

A society emerging from conflict may be able to wait for democracy, but it needs a government immediately if there is to be any law enforcement, education, or public health care. National governments are usually responsible for regulating and, in some circumstances, providing electricity and telecommunications. In most instances, municipal governments provide water and sanitation.

Although intervening authorities may sometimes serve initially as the government, they will never be in a position to deliver these services independently. They must rely on host country nationals and local institutions to provide public services. The intervening authorities may provide funding, guidance, and oversight, but the teachers, health workers, and most of the police force must be drawn from the host country.

The intervening authorities select people and organizations to deliver these services. These individuals and organizations are provided with funds and influence. The intervening authorities must be attentive from the start to ensure that such choices do not discriminate unhelpfully against groups, especially those that were party to the conflict. The intervening authorities need to choose partners carefully with a view to creating a government and distribution of power that will be sustainable when the authorities leave.

Many services can best be provided at the local level. Rebuilding government from the bottom up allows new leadership to emerge, including individuals unassociated with the recent conflict. On the other hand, empowering local officials before the national government has been reconstituted can feed sectarian conflict in circumstances in which the relationship between the center and the periphery is unsettled.

The intervening authorities will have to meet much, and perhaps all, of the initial costs of restoring basic government services. The requirement for financing public health, education, and general government administration can be expected to run about 10 percent of the country's preconflict GDP.

Economic Stabilization

The resumption of commerce requires the availability of a reasonably stable medium of exchange. Sustained growth is virtually impossible in periods of very high inflation. Although donors may finance the resumption of government services initially, it is important to quickly reconstruct the host state's capability to allocate that funding and oversee its expenditure and to expand its capacity to collect its own sources of revenue. The more money that is pumped into government, the greater the opportunities for corruption, control of which requires institutions for auditing and accountability and the creation of a professional civil service.

To meet these needs, early attention should be given to creating or strengthening a central bank, ministry of finance, and civil service commission. Occasionally, the decision is made to adopt a foreign currency as the medium of exchange. More often, there is a preference to keep a national currency to preserve the option of adjusting the exchange rate to better manage economic activity. Among the most difficult tasks facing the central bank is ensuring that commercial banks become and remain solvent.

Donor budget support is required to keep government expenditures and revenue in balance, thereby avoiding the need to print more money. Donor conferences are the usual vehicle for ensuring an adequate flow of funding. It is usually best to hold at least two such meetings, the first for immediate humanitarian, security, and economic stabilization needs, and the second, a year or two later, to focus upon longer-term development. The World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme should be asked to prepare a needs assessment in preparation for these conferences. The International Monetary Fund should take the lead in establishing or reforming the central bank and providing the wherewithal to manage the currency.

Democratization

The prime objective of a nation-building intervention is to leave behind a society at peace with itself and its neighbors. Democratization alone will not ensure this outcome. On the contrary, elections may be polarizing events in already divided societies. In the context of nation-building, the process of democratization should be seen as a practical means of redirecting the ongoing competition for wealth and power within the society from violent into peaceful channels, not as an abstract exercise in social justice.

Representative institutions based on universal suffrage usually offer the only viable basis for reconstituting state authority in a manner acceptable to most of the population. In considering constitutional design, a first step is to analyze the sources of violent conflict in the society. An exceptionally strong and committed intervening authority may be able to dispossess one group and empower another in an enduring fashion. In most circumstances, however, success in nation-building will depend more on co-option than on the exclusion of potential spoilers. In societies divided by sectarian strife, it may be necessary to craft power-sharing arrangements that limit the authority of the majority and provide guarantees to minority parties beyond those found in more developed democracies.

Democracies come in many shapes and sizes. Left to their own devices, intervening powers will tend toward replicating their own institutions, while local populations will be inclined to opt for a system with which they are familiar, even if that system has served them poorly in the past. In most cases, it will be better to adapt the familiar to new circumstances, rather than import wholly new arrangements unfamiliar to host country citizens.

Ideally, national elections should be preceded by the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants; the growth of civil society; the establishment of independent media; the development of political parties; and the holding of local elections. This sequence may not always be fully achievable. In some instances, the intervening authorities may be too weak to resist the call from dominant elements

in the society for early elections, or to administer the society without the support of a government legitimized through the electoral process.

The UN is the best source of expertise on the development of transitional and permanent political systems. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has developed considerable expertise in the promotion of civil society, the establishment of independent media, and the development of political parties, though its activities thus far have been limited to Eurasia. Several nations, including the United States and Germany, maintain publicly financed party-based organizations that specialize in helping foster the development of political parties in emerging democracies. IFES (formerly the International Foundation for Election Systems) has organized elections in dozens of countries around the world under the most challenging of conditions.

Infrastructure and Development

Postconflict societies are attractive candidates for development assistance. Dollar for dollar, aid to nations emerging from war will result in much higher levels of growth than will the same amount provided to more settled societies. Postconflict societies also can use more assistance, as measured as a share of GDP, than more settled societies can. Whereas most developing societies cannot usefully absorb assistance representing more than about 20 percent of their annual GDPs, postconflict nations can make good use of aid representing up to 40 percent of their GDPs, and, in the first year following conflict, up to 70 percent.

The quality of policies adopted by the intervening authorities and the host government will be as important as the volume of assistance in determining the latter's utility. Controlling inflation, financing the government's budget (in the early years via large-transfer payments from international donors), creating regulatory and tax systems conducive to growth, reducing or eliminating subsidies, attracting investment, and operating utilities and state-owned enterprises on a sound, market-oriented basis will be essential to fostering sustained growth.

Reforms of this nature will necessarily occasion resistance. The process needs to be managed in ways that draw the society's major contending factions into a process of peaceful competition and away from a return to violent conflict.

The term *reconstruction*, when used to describe the reform of post-conflict societies, conveys the sense that physical rebuilding of homes, factories, roads, and power plants destroyed in the war is the prime need. This is misleading. Even more than infrastructure, nations emerging from conflict need better institutions. In most cases, these institutions need to be refashioned, not just rebuilt, since it is the old institutions that will have failed in the first place. This is as true in the economic sphere as in the political.

As regards physical infrastructure, the intervening authorities should give priority to fixing those related to security, health care, education, power, water, and sanitation in an effort to raise these services to something approaching prewar levels. The focus should be on emergency repair, not new investment. The improvement, as opposed to the repair, of infrastructure should be funded through project financing by international financial institutions like the World Bank or other lenders rather than through bilateral grant assistance. Project financing imposes disciplines that are too frequently absent from schemes funded with grant assistance, requiring, as the former does, all the parties to address issues of size, cost, and repayment in light of demand, anticipated revenues, and rate setting.

Security is an essential precondition for productive investment. Money spent on infrastructure and development will be largely wasted if people, goods, and services are subject to high levels of abduction, theft, or attack.

Conclusion

The ultimate objective of any nation-building mission is to leave behind a society likely to remain at peace with itself and its neighbors once external security forces are removed and full sovereignty is restored. Some level of democratization and economic development is likely

to be essential to this desired result. Neither endeavor, however, can ensure peace, and either, if pushed injudiciously, can exacerbate rather than ameliorate the tendency toward renewed violence so prevalent in postconflict societies. If peace is to be created, security is key. Only when a modicum of security has been restored do prospects for democracy and sustained economic growth brighten.

Most historical nation-building operations have fallen into one of two categories. Peacekeeping missions have been mounted on the basis of prior agreement among the warring parties. Peace enforcement operations have been launched despite the opposition of one or more indigenous factions. Interventions of the first type have typically been led by the UN; those of the second by a major global or regional power. Peace enforcement operations typically require 10 times more personnel and money than do peacekeeping operations.

The expense of nation-building is shared among troop contributors, aid donors, and the international community as a whole according to various burden-sharing formulas. The costs of UN-led peacekeeping operations are spread most widely. Those for peace enforcement missions fall more heavily on the lead nation and its principal allies. Peace enforcement is thus not only much more expensive than peacekeeping; it is particularly so for the lead nation.

As a practical matter, therefore, full-scale peace enforcement actions are feasible only when the intervening authorities care a great deal about the outcome, and even then, only in relatively small societies. Thus, the effort needed to stabilize Bosnia and Kosovo has proved difficult to replicate in Afghanistan or Iraq, nations that are eight to 12 times more populous. It would be even more difficult to mount a peace enforcement mission in Iran, which is three times more populous than Iraq, and nearly impossible to do so in Pakistan, which is three times again more populous than Iran. Considerations of scale therefore suggest that the transformational objectives of intervention in larger societies need to be sharply restrained on account of the much more modest resources, relative to the population, likely to be available for their achievement.

Even the lighter, more consensual approach to nation-building epitomized by UN peacekeeping represents an expensive enterprise,

although not more expensive than allowing a conflict, once halted, to be renewed. Put differently, conflicts impose greater costs on the international community than the expense necessary to ensure that the cycle of violence, once halted for whatever reason, is not renewed.[4]

Just as no war plan survives contact with the enemy, no nation-building plan can survive contact with the nation being built. The true test of any such planning process, therefore, is not its capacity to foresee every twist and turn of the operation, but rather its success in matching ends to means.

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[4]   Collier and Hoeffler (2004, p. 3); Dobbins, Jones, et al. (2005, p. 247).