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DISSERTATION

Getting the Policies Right

The Prioritization and Sequencing of Policies in Post-Conflict Countries

Anga R. Timilsina

This document was submitted as a dissertation in July 2006 in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the doctoral degree in public policy analysis at the Pardee RAND Graduate School. The faculty committee that supervised and approved the dissertation consisted of Gregory Treverton (Chair), James Dobbins, and Robert Lempert. Francis Fukuyama of Johns Hopkins University was the external reader for the dissertation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the most pressing issues in the post-conflict reconstruction field is how to prioritize and sequence political, social, and economic policies to enable post-conflict countries to sustain peace and reduce the risk of violence re-occurring. Analyzing three cases of post-conflict reconstruction (Cambodia, Mozambique, and Haiti) and expert opinions of 30 academicians and practitioners, this study identifies major reconstruction policies, outlines the preferred way to prioritize and sequence them, and develops a framework to help policymakers better navigate the complexities and challenges of forming appropriate policies.

Security and development are interdependent: Development fosters security and security fosters development. However, in the early stages of reconstruction in most post-conflict countries, security must be achieved first. Without a sustained improvement in the security situation, other reconstruction efforts, such as relief efforts, political reforms, democratization, economic reform and reconstruction, are not possible. However, the question of how to achieve security is a context-specific. After security, important policy priorities should be building effective, accountable, and inclusive governance institutions, institutionalizing democracy at the national and local levels through free, fair, participatory, and inclusive elections. Similarly, economic stabilization is needed to revive market, attract investment, generate employment opportunity, and create an environment for economic recovery and stability.

How policies are sequenced in the post-conflict reconstruction environment is non-linear, context-dependent and specific to the needs and requirements of each country. Nevertheless, the top priority in early reconstruction efforts should be to generate rapid and visible results. Secondly, although planning and preparation can take place in the early stage, most long-term infrastructure development projects should be implemented in the medium, rather than in the short term.

Recognizing that the post-conflict reconstruction is a complex process, this study has also developed a framework for guiding policy prioritization and sequencing. The framework summarizes the areas of consensus and near-consensus regarding a policy, identifies context-specific issues, and outlines the prerequisites needed to implement the policy.

Finally, this dissertation acknowledges that political backdrop is the major limitation for implementing reconstruction policies and calls on the international community to find some institutional mechanisms to address the underlying difficulty of the political situation.