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Strategic Policy  
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# **Reconnecting joined-up approaches: Nation-building through state-building**

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Mary Thida Lun

**SPIRU Working Paper 25**

April 2009



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## Acronyms

DFID	Department for International Development
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
MOD	Ministry of Defence
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
START	Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
US	United States

## Summary

'Policy coherence is desirable but it is important to be clear about the policy around which policy coherence is sought.' House of Commons International Development Committee Report on Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Reconstruction, 2006.

Donors are increasingly tackling the complex task of rebuilding and supporting development in fragile states or states recovering from conflict using 'joined-up' approaches. These approaches seek to integrate and bring coherence to all government activity supporting the stabilisation, rehabilitation and long-term development of the country. The activities typically include *development* work, political and *diplomatic* efforts and providing security and *defence* support: the '3Ds'.

The reasoning behind creating a single coordinated action plan for these different activities is that the overall aim of promoting security, stabilising the country and establishing a sound basis for long-term development will be more efficiently and effectively achieved if the actors work together.

The challenge in fragile states is twofold. First, the basic environment for governance is weak. The government is often under-staffed, under-resourced and the basic systems of governance have either been destroyed or seriously damaged. So the need to build government capacity and achieve development outcomes is particularly acute and presents a major challenge. Second, because the government is weak there is a particular necessity to ensure that donors behave responsibly - because of the high political profile of the work of donor governments in fragile states, there is a strong desire to achieve quick and visible results.

This paper examines the tensions between the long-term goal of building government capacity as the basis for sustainable development and the equally important but shorter-term goal of securing a political settlement and delivering basic security. When these two objectives are pursued separately, they can conflict with each other. The need for quick results on the political or security front can, if pursued independently of development efforts, undermine those efforts to build a sustainable, stable and inclusive state. The paper suggests an approach that draws these different objectives together around a single objective or 'centre of gravity'.

A possible centre of gravity is nation-building - and nation-building as distinct from state-building. Nation-building is the indigenous and domestic creation and reinforcement of the complex social and cultural identities that relate to and define citizenship within the territory of the state. State-building is the restoration and rebuilding of the institutions and apparatus of the state, particularly through building capacity and providing the essential infrastructure for the state to function. Nation-building is an essentially indigenous political process that relies for its legitimacy on leadership from within the country. The scope for external engagement or contribution to the process of nation-building is very limited and any external engagement carries the risk of undermining the sovereignty and the integrity of the emerging nation state. State-building is a technical process that can be accelerated or made more effective through external technical assistance and the scope for engagement by external actors is much greater.

In order to achieve development, political, and security objectives together, a strong state needs to be embedded within a strong nation. A strong state within a weak nation will be vulnerable to fragmentation as groups within the country that challenge the legitimacy of the nation may provoke repressive responses from the strong state that could lead to internal conflict, with the risk of it spilling over into neighbouring countries. A strong or at least stable nation that contains a weak state will be vulnerable to the institutions of the state being subverted to illegitimate purposes that can threaten wider peace and security. Narco-states<sup>1</sup> are a good example of this.

The overall goal of building a strong nation with an embedded strong state has the potential to provide a common focus for the intermediate development, political and security objectives. It can help bridge the short-term objectives of restoring a measure of security to the country and delivering a political settlement that will ensure longer-term stability, and begin work on the longer-term objective of developing the capacity of the state to manage and deliver sustainable development. However donors' legitimacy technically stops at state-building. Legitimately, external intervention is limited to state-building as a means of enabling nation-building to take root. It is then the citizens of a fragile state who have the most important role to play in building a strong nation within which is embedded a strong state. Working within these boundaries of legitimacy, the role of donors' should be reconfigured from one of 'doing' to one of 'enabling', working increasingly through multilateral channels and regional bodies.

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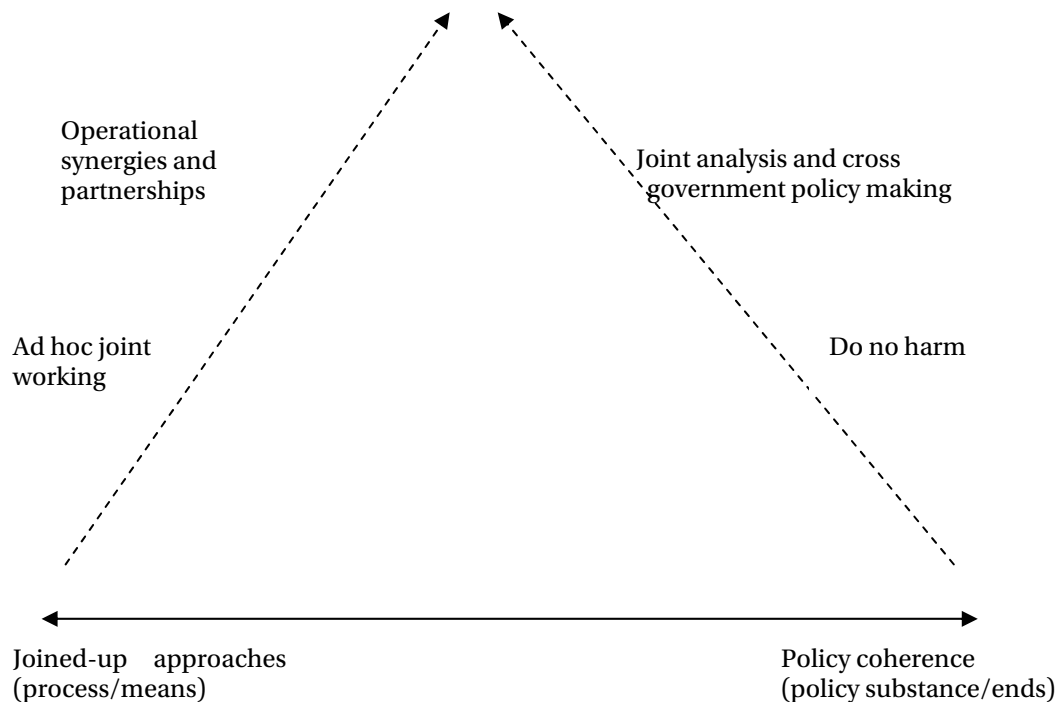
<sup>1</sup> 'A narco-state is an area that has been taken over and is controlled and corrupted by drug cartels and where law enforcement is effectively nonexistent'. [www.dictionnaire.com](http://www.dictionnaire.com).

## Chapter 1: Disconnects between joined-up approaches and policy coherence

A 'whole of government approach' involves a 'government actively using formal and/or informal networks across its different agencies within government to *coordinate* the design and implementation of the range of interventions that the government's agencies are making, in order to *increase the effectiveness of those interventions in achieving the desired objectives*'. (OECD, 2006 b).

The literature tends to use the terms 'joined-up approaches' and 'policy coherence' interchangeably. However, the two are quite distinct and can exist in isolation. Joined-up approaches embody the *process* and structures of coordination. Policy coherence 'involves the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing *policy* actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the agreed objectives' (OECD, 2003) Policy coherence has historically been issues-based: trade, untied aid, corruption, migration and now fragile states. Joined-up approaches should provide the vehicle by which policy coherence objectives are realised to their full potential. However, while there is a great deal of literature on the *process* of joining up (Centre on International Cooperation a, Joint Utstein Study, 2004, OECD 2005 a, 2006, a, b), joined-up efforts are largely disconnected from *policy*. The process of joining up has consequently become a separate end in itself to the detriment of any coherent policy around nation-building. Ideally, joined-up approaches and policy coherence need to be developed further and should coalesce to fully maximise outcomes.

### Policy coherence implemented through joined-up processes





## Chapter 2: Donor initiatives

A number of donors and institutions have pursued joined-up approaches and policy coherence initiatives in recent years. This has been the case in the work to link development objectives abroad to domestic security objectives at home. The focus of these efforts has been fragile and weak states that present both an acute development challenge in their own right, and also have the potential to present a wider threat to international peace and security. The UK government established the groundwork for a more integrated approach in highlighting these connections between national interest, international security, development, and environmental sustainability in the first *White Paper on International Development* in 1997.

Hitherto, efforts to join up the work of different government departments have tended to consist of the creation of additional coordination mechanisms or institutions rather than a more fundamental reworking of the machinery of government (e.g. the creation of a post-conflict reconstruction capacity, rather than working on coherent policies for conflict prevention, and the creation of pooled funds from which several departments can draw). These have made a useful contribution. However, it has been more difficult to achieve progress in delivering a genuine coherence of policy and there remains scope for differing interpretations of the ultimate objectives of the joined-up *approaches* (Stewart and Brown, 2007).

The United States (US) makes the most explicit link between development objectives, national interest and security. In August 2004, the State Department created an Office of the Coordinator of Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) and made stabilisation operations the core mission of the Department of Defence, State Department and USAID (US Agency for International Development). In January 2006, Condoleezza Rice (US Secretary of State) announced plans to embark on a campaign of 'transformational diplomacy' of 'ending tyranny in the world' by changing weak countries into democratic, effective and well-governed states to engender 'responsible sovereignty' rather than 'permanent dependency' (US Department of State, 2006).

The UK government established the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) and Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) in 2001 to combine the knowledge and resources of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and Department for International Development (DFID) and integrate conflict prevention activities and policy-making. In addition, a corresponding unique pooled funding arrangement was created, following the recommendations of the UK government 'Wiring it Up' report on improving cross-cutting policies and services (Cabinet Office, 2000). The pools are aimed at increasing effectiveness through creative and coherent shared strategies which harness the expertise of the three departments under one shared Public Service Agreement (PSA). In 2004 the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit (PCRU) (later renamed the Stabilisation Unit) was established to strengthen the UK's ability to help achieve stability in countries emerging from conflict. It is an interdepartmental unit set up by DFID, the FCO and MOD and focuses primarily on the stabilisation phase by developing a common understanding of the issues, integrating planning across government, providing suitably experienced personnel and identifying and sharing best practice both in the UK and internationally on how to deliver support for countries emerging from conflict. Recent reviews suggest an increased role for the Stabilisation Unit. The latest capability review of cross-government working pointed to the need for more consistent and early engagement (Cabinet Office, 2006). Most recently, the 'Britain in

the World' Policy Review outlines plans to 'win the battle of ideas and values' and a role for the UK as an international 'force for good' (Cabinet Office, 2007).

The Australian government has established a specific Fragile States Unit in AusAid (The Australian Agency for International Development) and used a Special Coordinator model for the multilateral Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) – oft-cited as one of the most innovative 'whole of government' operations to date (Centre on International Cooperation 2004 a, 2005, RAND Corporation). The Canadian government established a permanent interagency Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START), housed in the Department for Foreign affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), which built on and formalised existing coordination structures. Canada adopts an Ambassador model in-country, which involves drawing up an annual country strategy for each embassy and establishing a performance management arrangement against the Ambassador's objectives in post. In a similar vein, the Netherlands uses a system of 'Task Forces' on a case-by-case basis. In Sweden, development is articulated as the core of foreign policy and was most recently underlined through the government initiative of 'Policy Coherence for Development' which emphasises multilateral cooperation. The German government has also taken steps to mainstream the fragile states agenda across government. In the latter two cases, both Germany and Sweden tend to take the lead from European Union policy, which has the potential to play a stronger coordinating role.

United Nations (UN) integrated missions planning and the idea of a system-wide approach is also being worked through, in tandem with the establishment of the Peace Building Commission (PBC). Simultaneously, governments are increasingly looking to multilateral bodies to play a greater coordinating role, in response to the continual efforts towards donor harmonisation and the resource-insensitivity of conflict-prevention. However, while the idea of multilateral coordination is fairly non-controversial, the question of who leads remains contentious and the tension between the urgency of intervention and the sometimes slower pace of multilateral action can prove to be problematic in practice.

## Chapter 3: Lessons learned and emerging themes

The lessons learnt fall into four broad categories: manpower, resources, time-scales and mission clarity. Outside of these, there remain a number of gaps in the literature, beyond the scope of this working paper, which require further exploration:

- donor engagement with civil society at a practical level;
- how local ownership can be instilled;
- rebalancing the top-down focus on institution-building and strengthening of bottom-up access to institutions; and
- further comparative analysis across different country contexts and the role of elites and spoilers.

### 3.1 Manpower

Joined-up approaches tend to be highly labour-intensive and the limited outputs do not always justify the large-scale inputs. This is of particular relevance given that the literature argues heavily in favour of senior-level involvement or one central government authority charged with joining up different departments. Conversely, evidence also suggests that the most effective ways of joining up have tended to involve inter-agency units built on existing mechanisms, with realistic mandates and buy-in (e.g. RAMSI and START). While both models were built on existing mechanisms, ensuring effective joining up still requires a significant investment of people-time at all levels and sometimes necessitates the involvement of the most senior ranks of government to forge agreement around objectives and action plans.

### 3.2 Resources

Mobilising resources presents major challenges given that joined-up inter-departmental units tend not to have a single formal representation at the highest levels of government, for example in the form of a minister, to secure funding. The UK government 'Wiring it Up' report recommends pooled funding as a way of funding cross-cutting initiatives, especially in the period between spending reviews, thereby giving departments greater flexibility in planning spending and facilitating joint work (Cabinet Office, 2000). Pooled-funding has proven to be a popular alternative, but while this provides a way of encouraging different departments to work more closely with each other it does not on its own overcome potential different views on the ultimate objectives. Furthermore, administrative and budgetary practicalities can present barriers to joint working and consequently the question of departmental accountability can be quite complicated and problematic. As a result, pooled funds are sometimes seen as a source of additional funding for existing individual departmental objectives rather than additional funds for genuinely additional and shared interdepartmental objectives. The limitations of Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligibility also constrain activities at the harder edge of security sector reform (SSR) and can further impede joined-up working. Early warning systems exist, but the lack of ready resources, alongside other factors, can prevent early action. At worst, plans are made but are not matched by the necessary financial resources.

### 3.3 Time-scales

Development, diplomatic and defence objectives tend to have different time-scales. Development actors tend to take a long-term view. DFID's 10-year agreements

demonstrate an understanding of nation-building as a long-term enterprise that demands a long-term commitment. Diplomatic and political time-scales and military deployment schedules tend to be shorter-term given their shorter-term objectives. Reconciling these different perspectives creates a particular challenge when monitoring and evaluating the achievement of joined-up objectives. Agreeing traffic light rankings in assessing the UK government's public service agreement (PSA) commitments on conflict prevention presents an intellectually and practically challenging task. While the PSA unifies the FCO, MOD and DFID under one objective, departmental definitions and interpretations of success tend to differ given contrasting departmental norms, objectives, mandates and targets.

### **3.4 Mission clarity**

In the absence of a single strong central authority or clear mission objective, individual departments can tend to pursue their own objectives under the label of a joined-up approach. The disincentives for joining up remain strong and can result in departments resisting or bypassing joined-up mechanisms. In the absence of a clear mission objective, leadership and coordination tend to default to either the lowest common denominator or the strongest voice at the table (Stewart and Brown, 2007). The resulting separate strands of work have had limited strategic impact.

## Chapter 4: Disconnects between donors and partner country governments

At their best joined-up approaches have the potential to articulate unified country strategies which present diplomatic, development and defence objectives as a coherent whole – allowing for a frank and fair dialogue with the partner country. However this does not always happen. Joined-up approaches can weaken some of the areas of good practice identified in the OECD-DAC<sup>2</sup> principles for engagement in fragile states (OECD, 2005 b). Paradoxically, joined-up approaches can draw attention away from the priorities of the partner country and the need to deliver aid effectively and focus instead on issues of internal coordination within the donor government (Ghani, Lockhart and Carnahan, 2005, 2006). This in turn can weaken the relationship with the partner country. Local ownership, the harmonisation of donor practices and the alignment of objectives can suffer from the sometimes inward-looking analysis that can result from a joined-up approach. While aid agencies focus on lines of local accountability as well as accountability to the taxpayer, political and military mandates naturally focus more heavily on the national interest and domestic accountability, often to the exclusion of local actors. Given the tendency towards political primacy of diplomacy and defence over development, joined-up strategies can end up prioritising the domestic geopolitical agenda over the development needs of the fragile state.

This tendency to weaken the role of the partner country can also be exacerbated by the time pressure that policy makers are under. Separate departments may tend to develop strategies to pursue their own objectives in isolation from other players. Coordination and coherence is then a *post hoc* paper exercise to present disparate ideas as a single coherent whole. In the worst case the result is a top-down and incoherent strategy that bypasses the partner country government altogether.

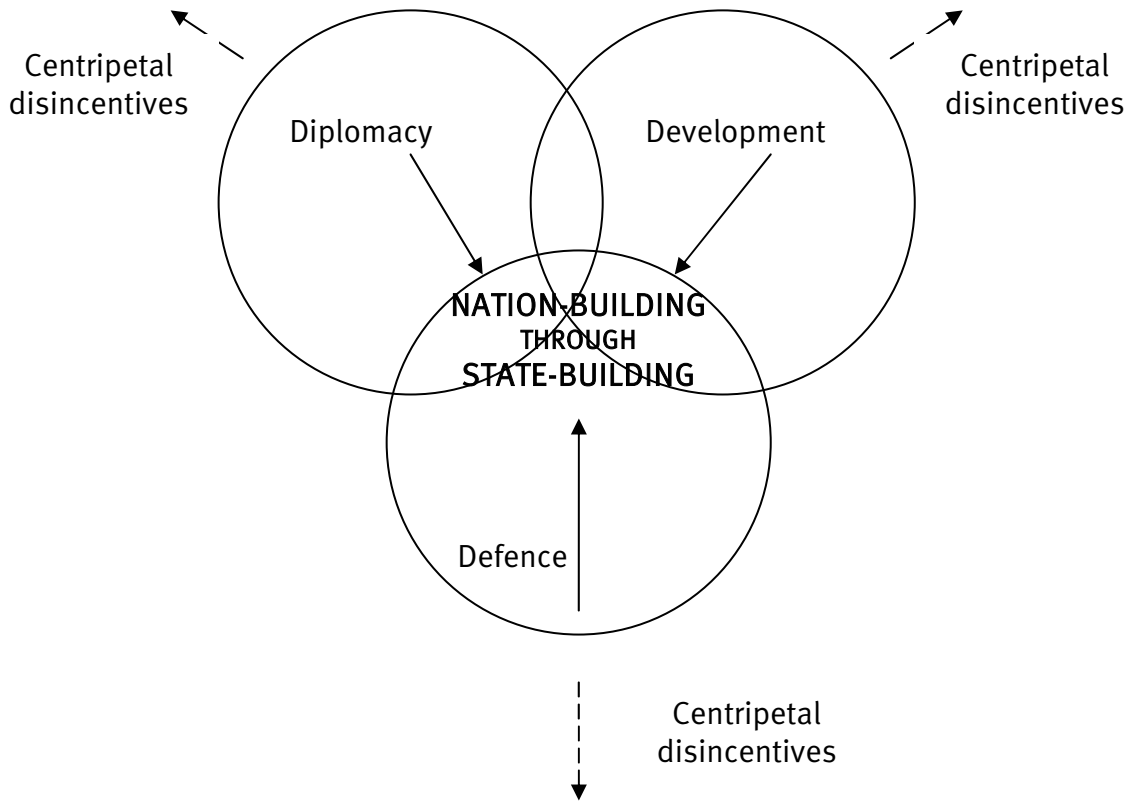
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<sup>2</sup> The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is the principal body through which the OECD deals with issues related to co-operation with developing countries.

## Chapter 5: Disconnects between policy and process: Nation-building as a centre of gravity?

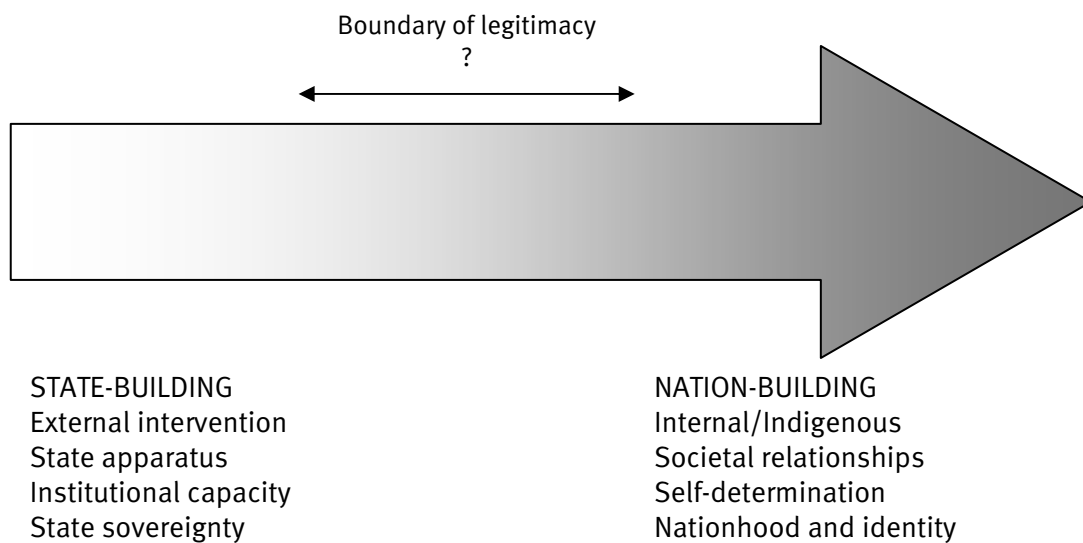
Nation-building is more likely to succeed if it is an internally driven and legitimate local process. Donors should therefore focus their efforts on state-building. But rather than being an end in itself state-building is potentially a means to the overall objective of nation-building. The literature analysing the *processes* of joined-up approaches (Joint Utstein Study, 2004; Centre on International Cooperation 2004 a, 2005; OECD 2005 a, 2006 a) and the extensive literature on *policy coherence* around nation-building (Chauvet and Collier, 2004; Ghani, Lockhart and Carnahan 2005, 2006; Picciotto, 2004 a; OECD, 2003) are quite separate and distinct. This is often reflected in donor behaviour where policy making and implementation are often separate and isolated activities. Marrying policy and implementation into a coherent strategic and operational whole is hard to achieve. As a result, process-heavy joined-up approaches sometimes lack a policy centre of gravity, and undervalue the substantive discourse on policy coherence around nation-building. As such, mechanical joined-up approaches should be more effectively linked to the nuanced policy debate around policy coherence and nation-building. This would enable donor efforts to work in a joined-up and coherent way to focus on the outcome of promoting the development of an effective state within a strong nation.

By putting nation-building through state-building at the centre of diplomatic, development and defence efforts it may be possible to start reconciling the differences in time, resources, manpower, mission clarity and the centripetal disincentives of departmental objectives, culture and operating procedures, which can undermine joined-up efforts. Nation-building through state-building has the potential to serve as a centre of gravity which appeals to all players around the table, and most importantly to the partner country. Typically, this would involve diplomatic, development and defence ministries. It could go further and involve additional sections of government where relevant, such as trade, police, justice and treasury.



## Chapter 6: Nation-building through state-building

Rather than treating state-building as an end in itself, state-building should be recast as a means to the ultimate end of nation-building. While state-building can enable nation-building, the former does not necessarily guarantee the latter and the links between the two are not clear cut. There can be a highly effective state apparatus that contributes nothing to the emergence of a sense of nationhood, and vice versa. External donor intervention should be limited to state-building, but the challenge of legitimate engagement lies in the lack of any clear boundary between state-building and nation-building. The idea of state-building contains assumptions about an ideal type of well-functioning state, a politically impartial civil service, taxation, welfare and service delivery. The state structure permeates through to societal structures and political dynamics, so that it is often difficult to maintain the distinction between the technical task of state-building and the political process of nation-building. This is particularly acute in fragile states, where external actors tend to fill the vacuum left by the weak state and the very slender or non-existent institutional capacity. Country-ownership is therefore vital from an early stage to ensure that state-building efforts are domestically sustainable. Failure to ensure country-engagement risks perpetuating donor dependence and pushing at the boundaries of donor legitimacy into the indigenous realm of nation-building.





## **Chapter 7: Opportunities and risks for development in the nation-building project**

### **7.1 State-building as a means of enabling nation-building**

Donors arguably have a legitimate role in supporting the restoration and rebuilding of the institutions and apparatus of the state. In parallel, nation-building is the home-grown formation of a cultural identity that relates to the particular territory of the state. Whilst external actors can legitimately engage in state-building, in order for nation-building to succeed it must be an entirely locally-owned process, shaped by the citizens of the nation through the emergent civil society via a legitimate process of self-determination. Any substantial engagement by external actors in this process risks undermining the legitimacy of the nation state. While external contributions to state-building can assist indirectly with nation-building, it may be difficult to contain the direct impact of external support to state-building alone. For example, external actors may provide support to elections through the provision of technical assistance, infrastructure and support for electoral education and outreach. These activities, however carefully managed will inevitably have an impact on the degree to which the nation state is politically inclusive – the universal enfranchisement of its citizens. Defining the boundaries of the nation state and the scope of political enfranchisement should be the result of a domestic political process and debate, for it to be legitimate. However, without a sufficiently inclusive political process, an election that is technically well-run will not necessarily deliver the political legitimacy and long-term stability.

### **7.2 External action to protect people from failing states**

External intervention to achieve a combination of political, development and security objectives can be controversial. As such, most governments continue to look to the UN as the main multilateral channel for external intervention and guiding body on international norms. One example of UN leadership in the area of external intervention was the agreement at the Millennium Review Summit in 2005 that the international community had a responsibility to act when a nation state is failing to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The idea that the international community has a duty to safeguard the human rights of all citizens has given rise to the concept of a universal 'Responsibility to protect' (R2P). The challenge now for the international community is the timely and consistent implementation of the tenets of R2P as situations arise. As stated, R2P does create space for external intervention in a seriously failing state but will require adequate resources and further theoretical refinement for effective implementation. While R2P provides the basis and entry point for external intervention, the strategy behind any intervention will need to include action to tackle the underlying causes of the failure of the nation state to protect its citizens. While Rwanda does not present a good example of timely external intervention it does present a positive example of tackling underlying causes through the inclusive indigenous process of post-conflict nation-building.

Intervening from the outside to build a state carries with it the risk of undermining the legitimacy and sovereignty of the state donors are trying to secure and build. To achieve the objective of developing a secure, legitimate and sovereign state, donors need to support the government and ensure legitimate inclusive local ownership of

the political process of nation-building that will underpin the longer-term sustainability of the nation and state.

A further challenge is how to achieve domestic and international security objectives without contributing to the circumstances that led to the insecurity in the first place. In fragile states this is a complex challenge. Among the root causes of conflict and fragility are often disaffected populations. These disaffected populations often feel that the nation does not adequately represent their interests and the state does not adequately fulfil their needs. Disaffected and alienated people can be exploited by illegitimate leaders to cultivate national and transnational groups which may in turn become a threat to the integrity, legitimacy and stability of the nation state.

### 7.3 Aid or development?

The challenge for development policy today is to play a constructive and complementary role in its interface with diplomatic, defence, trade and other global agendas, including migration and climate change. These global issues call for joined-up responses from governments. In the model proposed, nation-building can serve as a centre of gravity. This will take time. For it to work there needs to be agreement that nation-building requires an immense amount of time and resources. Above all, donors must engage with the partner country at the very outset to ensure a co-production of sovereignty towards 'sustainable turnaround' (Chauvet and Collier, 2004) – while plans should be responsive, they must also be formulated with an exit strategy in mind.

Partner countries need to take on the functions of the state as early as possible, in particular establishing law and order in order to prevent a power vacuum, which is a risk in post-conflict situations. In such circumstances, donors need to surrender the role of 'doer' and adopt the more nuanced backseat role of 'enabler'. Donors cannot single-handedly build states, or nations, but in partnership with countries they can help them grow and can nurture an investment climate for sustainable long-term growth. Donors can provide financial support and technical advice but their role in nation-building is limited to enabling through state-building.

#### **Ten key functions for the modern sovereign state** (Ghani and Lockhart, 2006)

1. A legitimate monopoly on the means of violence
2. Administrative control
3. Sound management of public finances
4. Investment in human capital
5. The creation of citizenship rights and duties
6. Provision of infrastructure
7. Market formation
8. Management of the assets of the state
9. Effective public borrowing
10. Maintenance of the rule of law

### 7.4 Aid effectiveness

The principles of aid effectiveness apply just as much in fragile states as in other contexts, if not more so given the high risk of failure. The key to success in fragile states logically points to returning and adhering to these aid effectiveness principles.

An effective joined-up process should support harmonisation, alignment and country-led approaches. One possible model would involve mutual partnerships in which the co-production of sovereignty is the aim of both national leaders and international partners through international compacts (Ghani, Lockhart and Carnahan, 2005, 2006). Donor-centric aid effectiveness measures would also need to be balanced by partner country involvement. The literature on joined-up approaches has focussed heavily on donors but this should be rebalanced to explore the role of partner countries as active participants in nation-building.

## Conclusions and recommendations

### Internationally

The challenge of ensuring that the different branches of governments operate in a concerted and coordinated way to achieve their objectives is not new. Studies of joined-up government in 'normal' conflict-free contexts and even those of totalitarian regimes reflect a multitude of practical and intellectual challenges, demonstrating the complexity, labour insensitivity, and compromise involved in joining-up (Bogdanor, 2005). Achieving this in fragile states, where there are complementary, but sometimes competing diplomatic, development and security agendas is a particular challenge, both domestically and bilaterally. Joined-up approaches have hitherto focussed on state-building as an end in itself. However if the source of the security threat is disaffected individuals, external actors need to address the root causes of instability at the societal level, using state-building as a means of enabling nation-building.

To achieve home-grown political inclusion, the role of donors is perhaps best limited to state-building. For example, democratic elections may not equate to political inclusion and if not managed carefully, can in fact exacerbate existing divisions and cleavages in society. A genuinely multilateral intervention, in which the partner country is an equal player along with the interested donors probably stands the best chance of balancing the need for legitimacy and effectiveness.

### Nationally

Joining up can become an end in itself. At worst in fragile states 'joining-up' can result in top-down strategies developed at the expense of partner country engagement and best practice such as harmonisation and alignment. By using state-building as a *means of enabling* nation-building and putting nation-building at the centre of 'joined-up' efforts, donors could establish a policy centre of gravity which incentivises development, diplomatic and defence actors to work together under one coherent strategy. However, the role of external actors in nation-building will be limited and the biggest shift for donors will be from 'doer' to 'enabler' – putting the partner country in control.

### Locally

If state-building is carried out as an exogenous intervention and the links to the endogenous process of nation-building are not well articulated this can weaken effectiveness. If the centre of gravity in 'joined-up' approaches is to be building nations then there needs to be sufficient involvement of the population in the partner country.

If policy coherence centres on nation-building, donors will need to shift from the standard engagement of line ministries and get out of capitals and meet non-traditional partners – the non-state actors, the 'spoilers', the socially excluded. If the aim of nation-building is political inclusion, democracy will only be realised through indigenous self-determination. But in a non-Western political culture elections, for example, may not necessarily guarantee political inclusion and could in fact exacerbate divisions. As such, donors should be willing to subordinate to local processes for justice, reconciliation and political representation.

## Summary

Joined-up approaches by donors in fragile states have experienced a recent surge in popularity. However, efforts to achieve coordinated and concerted donor processes and efforts to rebuild fragile states have often been disconnected from and devoid of the substantive policy dialogue around nation-building. In most external interventions, donors have largely focused on state-building. But sustainable peace and stability will likely only be established through a deeper process of nation-building. However, in the politically-sensitive, indigenous self-determination of the cultural identity of any given state, external actors will probably find themselves restricted to the role of 'enablers' rather than 'doers' - using state-building as a means of enabling nation-building. As such donors enabling nation-building activities will typically be limited to statebuilding: assisting in the establishment of rule of law, creating a fertile investment climate for economic regeneration and agreeing an exit strategy with the partner government. Arguably, it is only the partner country that can take the active lead role in nation-building, beyond the mandate and time horizon of donor assistance.

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