

# Rethinking “Nation-Building:” The Contradictions of the Neo-Wilsonian Approach to Democracy Promotion

by Roberto Belloni

International intervention in weak states is the post–Cold War response to fragmentation and conflict. International operations have been deployed across much of the world, from Afghanistan to Bosnia, Cambodia, Kosovo, East Timor, Iraq, and Somalia, to cite just a few of the most prominent cases. These operations have taken place in different circumstances, with some of them justified in the name of the War on Terror, and others more broadly conducted in view of implementing recently achieved peace agreements. All of these operations face similar constraints and dilemmas. The context in which international intervention takes place is one of extreme political, economic, and social instability. Years of war destroy physical and economic infrastructure, provoke massive human displacement, and leave the population traumatized. Moreover, rarely does war end with a clear victory for one of the parties involved. Instead, conflicts frequently terminate with the signing of a peace agreement, which reflects a difficult and unstable compromise. Perhaps unsurprisingly, half of the countries emerging from conflict revert to violence within five years. Even when a return to violence is averted, these countries remain politically, economically, and socially volatile. Accordingly to one estimate, at present around seventy current or potential conflicts exist across the world.<sup>1</sup>

This situation calls for both a theoretically informed understanding of the goals, possibilities, and limits of international intervention in support of peace processes as well as country-specific knowledge to tailor such intervention so as to maximize its effectiveness. Unfortunately, even the basic vocabulary used to describe international involvement is contested and confusing, with analysts using terms such as “peace-building,” “nation-building,” and “state-building” to describe the same general phenomenon of international intervention in weak states. This paper begins with a brief attempt at conceptual clarification. Second, it explores the limits of the template adopted by international interveners. Wilsonianism, named after the American President who argued that democracy and self-determination are necessary conditions for domestic and international peace and stability, offers a basic

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model for contemporary international missions. While Wilsonianism was generally successful in the aftermath of World War I and World War II, this has not been the case for more recent attempts. Contemporary neo-Wilsonianism focuses on political and economic liberalization as means to build viable democracies. As increasingly highlighted by a new generation of democracy analysts, such a formula is often unsuitable for war-torn countries plagued by scarce domestic resources and continuing competition between groups wishing to control the state. At least in the short term, liberalization dangerously heightens competition among groups, thus increasing the possibility of a relapse into war. Third, this paper investigates the less often noted contradictions of neo-Wilsonianism. Not only do political and economic liberalization risk promoting further conflict, they are also at odds with other important goals of international intervention in weak states; in particular, the attempt to uphold individual and group rights. In addition, the potentially positive impact of international intervention is limited by the need to demonstrate concrete and visible results in a very short time frame. The paper concludes with a brief exploration of the alternatives to the prevailing practice of international intervention, with particular reference to the newly created United Nations Peacebuilding Commission.

### **IN SEARCH OF THE UNICORN: BUILDING PEACE, NATIONS, OR STATES?**

Scholars label international intervention in weak states in at least three different ways: “peace-building,” “nation-building,” and “state-building.” While sometimes these labels reflect the different priorities that intervention seeks to achieve and the research agenda of the investigator, often they signal a conceptual confusion. These terms obscure more than they clarify.

Peacebuilding is the broadest of the three terms. The 1992 report of the then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, placed the concept of peacebuilding at the center of the theoretical and practical debate.<sup>2</sup> The end of the Cold War, and rivalry between East and West, removed the main political obstacle that had previously limited the scope and effectiveness of UN operations, and thus allowed Boutros-Ghali to come forward with the promotion of post-conflict peacebuilding as a solution to violence and disintegration. The new environment not only allowed, but also required new and imaginative ways to think about conflicts and their resolution. In Boutros-Ghali’s view, peacebuilding involves a wide range of activities, including developing civil society, fostering economic development, protecting human rights, organizing elections, demobilizing soldiers, and reforming the police force. These are just some of the core, short-term tasks that international intervention is supposed to achieve. In the long-term, intervention is expected to build “peace,” a slippery concept that is very hard to pin down to a few clear indicators.

Boutros-Ghali hoped that peacebuilding would remove the root, or structural causes of violence. He implicitly endorsed an open-ended, “positive” notion of

peace. The same notion has been discussed in academic debates since the 1970s, but failed to reach the policymaking community. Johan Galtung was the first researcher to distinguish between the concepts of “positive” and “negative” peace.<sup>3</sup> For Galtung, “negative peace” was tantamount to the absence of war, but was not a long-term solution to violence. He maintained that even when the guns fall silent, an unequal distribution of economic, social and political power preserves a condition of latent violence. This type of violence does not involve open warfare but a more subtle situation of exclusion, marginalization and oppression. Yet, instead of defining “positive peace” in truly positive terms, Galtung equated “positive peace” with the absence of structural violence, without describing how such an absence might look. We might live in a condition of “positive peace” and not be aware of it.

Current debates on peacebuilding echo these early discussions.<sup>4</sup> The literature reflects widely divergent notions of peacebuilding, severely limiting the usefulness of the concept.<sup>5</sup> When can it be said that peace is built? What legitimate targets can international interveners set for themselves when intervening in weak states? For how long is their presence required? How can progress in peacebuilding be assessed? Should interveners aim for establishing negative peace (usually by separating the parties to a conflict and monitoring the division line), or should they build some version of positive peace (removing structural violence through the promotion of social justice and the creation of inclusive economic, social and political institutions)? The problem with identifying a clear end-point of intervention (such as a condition of positive peace) advises the adoption of a more modest approach. Although the criteria for “success” in peacebuilding are likely to remain contested, in practice the main goal of intervention in weak states has been to preserve the absence of war, while building legitimate domestic institutions able to manage internal differences peacefully.

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## **Since the end of the Cold War, international intervention has applied the same general template to strengthen weak states.**

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The conceptual and practical questions raised by peacebuilding have led many scholars to change the very vocabulary of intervention. State-building and nation-building are narrower terms, describing a more limited set of activities focused on building domestic political institutions.<sup>6</sup> Although these terms are often used interchangeably (alimenting a semantic and hardly needed confusion), they should be kept separate. American usage assigns the term “nation” to a variety of phenomena, most of them territorial and political, in contrast to European usage, which employs the word “state” to describe roughly the same concept. But the two terms refer to different phenomena. To put it simply, the “nation” refers to a group perceiving itself as separate and different from other groups because of language, customs, tradition, religion, or race. There is much debate about whether nations have always existed or came into being in their current form in modern times, whether the root of nations

lies primarily in ethnicity or in the generating role of the state and citizenship, and whether nations are “found,” or imagined, and constructed.

This debate enthused theorists of nationalism well before nation-building reached the policy agenda, but did not lead to a set of agreed propositions about nations and their evolution. Nonetheless, most participants in this debate would endorse some version of two main ideas: first, group affiliation and identification is as old as history itself, and it is often strengthened by opposition and conflict with outside groups. At the same time, however, the encouraging aspect for nation-builders is that group boundaries change and evolve, possibly turning hostile relationships into peaceful, non-violent ones.<sup>7</sup> However, nations cannot be “built,” at least in the short period of time typical of international interventions in weak states. Moreover, grand nation-building schemes often involve a high degree of violence. Successful nation-building requires a group’s conquest of the state and the extension of its own culture over other groups and does so by subjugating or assimilating them if necessary. These groups’ reaction to nation-building efforts is actually the main explanation for the outbreak and persistence of inter-group violence.<sup>8</sup>

While the term nation refers to a group, the “state” is the bureaucratic apparatus to govern autonomously the territory where the nation resides. The term nation-state makes sense only in those very limited number of cases when the territory where the nation resides corresponds exactly to that of the state. In most cases, however, such a coincidence does not exist, creating the space for nationalism to arise as a political force. As Ernest Gellner famously put it, nationalism is “primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.”<sup>9</sup> Attempts to make the nation and the state coincide can create strong, violent competition among national groups to control the state, or can lead to attempts to leave existing political arrangements and create new institutions. Thus, group competition gives rise to a “stateness problem,” whereby institutions become the heart of groups’ struggle.<sup>10</sup>

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Even after national groups sign a peace agreement terminating open hostilities, a “stateness problem” continues to plague the post-settlement transition. Peace does not change the views of the former fighting parties, who maintain alternative views about the boundaries of the political community and the rights of citizenship within that community. Group competition prevents the universal acceptance of the state by its population. The lack of social cohesion further undermines the state’s ability to formulate and implement policy. The state is rendered unable to provide internal and external security for its citizens, meet their economic and social needs, and often remains subjected to parochial and sectarian interests preventing the development and consolidation of a bureaucratic structure. Social order is not guaranteed through

formalized procedures and the rule of law, but through informal, client-like channels. The absence of an organization with the characteristics of the modern state prevents democratic governance, although it does not preclude the presence of areas of segmented political authority. The persistence of client-like networks often with strong regional roots complicates the post-war building of a viable state, the key task of international intervention.

### NEO-WILSONIANISM AND ITS LIMITS

In weak states, democracy and peace can still be achieved and consolidated, but they require both considerable political crafting of democratic institutions and careful international support. Since the end of the Cold War, international intervention has applied the same general template to strengthen weak states. With the victory of Western-style democracy over its main twentieth-century ideological alternative, liberal democracy became the blueprint for “nation-building.” Roland Paris has defined this blueprint as “Wilsonianism,” named after Woodrow Wilson, the twenty-eighth president of the United States, who argued that liberalism and democratic forms of government were the key to peace and security in both international and domestic politics.<sup>11</sup> Wilsonianism informed the intervention efforts following World War I and World War II, and was re-affirmed at the end of the Cold War. According to Roland Paris, political liberalization involves the promotion of periodic elections, constitutional checks and balances, and respect for civil liberties. In the economic sphere, liberalization involves marketization, which is the development of a viable market economy where private investors, producers and consumers freely pursue their economic self-interest unhindered by government intrusion.<sup>12</sup> All international interventions in weak and failing states, regardless of the underlying reasons for state weakness, have promoted neo-Wilsonian principles to export and consolidate democracy. This is most recently seen in the ill-fated attempt to transform Iraq from an authoritarian country into a viable federal state.<sup>13</sup>

The problem with contemporary neo-Wilsonianism is that it does not take into account the specific nature of identity conflicts and the stateness problem they give rise to.<sup>14</sup> When political and economic liberalization are advanced as key intervention strategies in a context dominated by ethno-national mobilization on the basis of identity, they are unlikely to work. The presence of political and economic corruption, and a political leadership bent on plundering the assets of the state and those of ordinary people, makes quick elections and economic liberalization counter-productive. Moreover, because markets increase competition and inequality, in the short term they can exacerbate conflict instead of alleviating it. Similarly, political liberalization and elections in conditions of ethnic insecurity can result in an ethnic census, instead of an expression of democratic principles. In a society divided along national lines, neo-Wilsonianism has little chance to succeed. Unsurprisingly, in his thorough examination of post-Cold War interventions, Paris finds that their practical impact reveals a disconcerting chasm between expectations and actual outcomes.

By pushing for political and economic liberalization without directly taking into account the particular context of intervention, neo-Wilsonianism assumes that the stateness problem has been addressed or will solve itself during the transition process; a dangerous and untested assumption. By contrast, Wilson himself was keenly aware of the weakness of states composed of national and ethnic groups in competition with each other for the control of central institutions. To solve this problem, Wilson championed the principle of self-determination. The peace conference at Versailles, which ended World War I, strove to match as much as possible the nation with the state by creating ethnically homogeneous nation-states. No other attempt to this degree has been made, before or since, to make the ethnically homogeneous nation-state not simply an ideal but as close as possible to empirical reality. Each state in Central and Eastern Europe was effectively assigned to a dominant ethnic group. Many minorities were expected to move to a state where they would be part of an ethnic majority. Those who remained hoped that their state would respect the minority rights system established at Versailles. In practice, the Treaty of Versailles ratified cleansing by resettlement and identified citizenship with ethnicity, putting minorities in danger of becoming second-class citizens.<sup>15</sup> In sum, the Wilsonian agenda of democracy promotion actively endorsed a state-centered approach which sat uneasily with the defense of group and individual rights.

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This solution to the stateness problem is still advocated by partitionists who believe that only by matching national with political boundaries will stability and democratic development in weak states be ensured.<sup>16</sup> There are many practical and ethical problems with this approach. In particular, there exists the possibility that partition will legitimize wartime ethnic cleansing, put pressure on minorities left behind to leave, and perhaps transform civil strife into a cross-border war. But the main limits remain ethical. Although population transfer was endorsed in the aftermath of World War I (and following the defeat of Nazism at the end of World War II), since then the collective consciousness has evolved. Policies of national homogenization, with their degree of human suffering and personal and societal upheaval, no longer fit the legitimate menu of choices available to policymakers seeking to improve the viability of weak states. Rather than being perceived as a threat, diversity has become a value to preserve even when it implies limiting state sovereignty. While Wilsonianism viewed security through a theoretical framework pertaining to the relations between sovereign states, leaving the internal configuration of states entirely to the control of national governments, an alternative perspective centered instead on the security of individuals and groups has begun to take root. At least at the level of rhetoric, human security and individual & group rights contend with state security in the constitution of order.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to their rhetorical commitment to democracy and human rights, contemporary international missions differ from previous ones in terms of the

context in which they take place. The stateness problem of contemporary weak states makes comparisons with previous experiences unreliable. Although the reconstruction of both Germany and Japan after World War II is sometimes hailed as a possible blueprint for international intervention in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Central Africa,<sup>18</sup> there are important differences between international intervention after World War II and contemporary nation-building efforts. To begin with, Germany and Japan at the end of World War II were conquered states, not weak or failing ones. Neither state had any significant stateness problems. For years prior to foreign occupation, a strong state apparatus and bureaucracy were able to effectively provide public goods to citizens. Moreover, both countries had long histories as a nation, where citizens had recognized loyalty to the state as opposed to a clan or a sub-national group.

By contrast, contemporary international intervention takes place in weak states, not conquered ones. Iraq is an exception, because of the military overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the occupation of the country by hundred of thousands of foreign, mostly American troops. But Iraq remains internally divided along national, religious or ideological lines. In weak states such as Iraq, citizens do not recognize each other as belonging to the same political entity, and the very existence and nature of the state remains in question. In this context, politics is the continuation of war by other means. Divided and/or weak institutions, the absence of a functioning state, the weakness of civil society, and the mass displacement of the population often directly targeted during the war place specific constraints on international actors and shape the nature of the choices they face in their attempts to export neo-Wilsonian ideals.

In sum, neo-Wilsonianism differs from its post-World War I and post-World War II variations in two fundamental ways. First, a normative change has limited the range of options available to international interveners. Population resettlement is no longer seen as a legitimate option for addressing the problems plaguing weak states. On the contrary, those individuals displaced by conflict are often encouraged to return to their pre-war homes soon after the signing of a peace agreement. Second, internal divisions remain to complicate the nation-building process even after the end of the war. These two aspects distinguish neo-Wilsonianism from previous attempts at restoring post-war order. They also combine to explain the limited effectiveness of recent and current attempts at democracy promotion, as the next section will argue.

## CONFLICTING OBJECTIVES

Neo-Wilsonianism's fundamental tenet is that political and economic liberalization are the preconditions for stability and peaceful domestic and foreign relationships. To this end, international intervention aims at building a limited state with the monopoly over the means of coercion and the administrative capacity to deliver basic services to citizens, while creating a strong society capable of restraining the state. However, not only can liberalization prior to institutionalization undermine



the viability of the state itself, as discussed above, it also clashes with the human rights norms that have slowly begun to take root since the end of World War II. The influence of human rights (vis-à-vis state rights) encourages the adoption by international interveners of intrusive and assertive strategies aimed at providing security, jobs, and more broadly economic and social opportunities to the population. However, these strategies are at odds with the dominant neo-Wilsonian view of economic and political liberalization, and are rarely embraced and implemented.

International refugee policy is the area where the contradictions of neo-Wilsonianism are clearer. Population resettlement is no longer an option, particularly if it follows a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the civilian population. Although international refugee policy remains quite diverse, reflecting the varying circumstances and reasons for human displacement, since the end of the Cold War the return of refugees to their country of origin has been increasingly affirming itself as a preferred option.<sup>19</sup> To be sure, return and repatriation relieve Western states from granting asylum to individuals escaping war. This is perhaps the main reason why return is pushed by intervening states, rather than more altruistic motives.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, return and repatriation can be compatible with human rights norms, in particular the principle that individuals and groups have a right to return to their country of origin. Moreover, return can contribute to post-war reconstruction in a number of ways. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has noted, there are four mutually reinforcing ways return contributes to peacebuilding. First, return clearly signals the end of a conflict and the capacity of a state to protect its citizens. Second, it legitimizes the post-settlement political order, by providing validation to subsequent elections and democratic processes. Third, return deprives duplicitous leaders of the possibility of politically and militarily manipulating refugees in order to undermine the newly established peace. Finally, return (particularly that of professionals and skilled workers) contributes decisively to the economic recovery of war-torn societies.<sup>21</sup>

A number of recent peace agreements include provisions for refugees and displaced persons to return to their original homes, rather than simply being repatriated to internal displacement. Peace settlements in Bosnia, Kosovo, Guatemala, Mozambique, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea all recognized the right to return home. A right to housing and property restitution is slowly supplanting the age-old idea that displacement from one's own home of origin is a permanent condition.<sup>22</sup> In many cases "home of origin" has been interpreted to mean the physical structure in which one lived before the war. Because physical infrastructure is often under the control of a national group other than the one to which the returnee belongs, return is a difficult process involving individuals who have been defined as ethnic or national minorities.

Despite the Herculean task involved, return has often been a relatively successful process. In Bosnia, for example, where about 2.2 million people were uprooted by a ruthless policy of ethnic cleansing, more than 1 million people have returned home. At the same time, however, the process of return has highlighted an important



contradiction in the international intervention template based on neo-Wilsonian principles. On the one hand, the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons is one of the principal benchmarks against which international administration of war-torn territories is measured.<sup>23</sup> As international intervention in Bosnia confirms, considerable resources have been invested in attempting to reverse the homogenizing effects of the war. On the other hand, ensuring the sustainability of return requires highly intrusive social and economic policies that fit uneasily with the broader intervention template rooted in the idea that political and economic liberalization are the indispensable ingredients for successful nation-building.<sup>24</sup> International financial institutions have regularly dismissed programs of affirmative action for minorities as incompatible with market liberalization. As a result, international intervention has reflected a degree of human rights consciousness very different from the post-World War I and II Wilsonian approach, but not enough to ensure the individual and collective enjoyment of those rights. The lack of employment opportunities and the scarcity of social and economic services for returnees seriously hamper the sustainability of returns exemplified in Bosnia and also in other cases.

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Part of the reason for this failure to ensure the sustainability of return lies in scarce coordination among international agencies. While UNHCR can organize repatriation schemes, it does not possess either the human or the material resources to ensure the sustainability of return.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, UNHCR defines return as “successful” when the returnee spends one night in his or her house.<sup>26</sup> Because UNHCR is not a development agency, it cannot address the problems associated with post-settlement development and the reintegration of returnees in their former communities. This limitation has led the agency to seek collaboration with the World Bank and other international financial institutions, but these institutions have rarely loosened their economic dogma, leaving returnees trapped in a cycle of poverty and abandonment.

In sum, neo-Wilsonianism based on political and economic liberalization clashes with important human rights aspects, such as the need to return those individuals displaced by war to their homes, and to ensure the sustainability of their livelihoods. However, international financial institutions have resisted tailoring the intervention template to the specific needs of weak states recovering from civil strife. The top-down enforcement of market liberalization has often left these states prey to massive unemployment, slow growth, widespread illegality, and a constant flow of emigration of the young generation. Although refugees increasingly return to their country of origin after the end of the war, many leave soon afterwards in search of economic, social, and educational opportunities.

## SHOCK THERAPY: WILSONIANISM IN A HURRY

One important reason for this sub-optimal outcome is the speed of implementation of neo-Wilsonian precepts. In our post-colonial world there is little support for direct foreign rule of weak states or long-term missions. In Western states, there is a tendency to distraction in regards to foreign crisis, while in the developing world there remains an almost universal suspicion that intervention can be used (and abused) as a political tool of Western states.<sup>27</sup> Because foreign nation-builders are under enormous pressure to declare the mission complete, restore (formal) domestic sovereignty, and fully disengage, their priorities become skewed from long-term planning to the achievement of short-term, visible results.

“Imperialism in a hurry”<sup>28</sup> exposes the contradictions at the heart of international intervention. A formally sovereign and democratic state cannot be managed by international administrators indefinitely, at least not in our post-colonial age. Short-term deadlines, often linked to the holding of national elections, help to justify the exercise of international authority and make such authority more acceptable to both the local people and the electorate of those states contributing military and civilian personnel to peace operations. At the same time, the need for “instant gratification” and a short implementation timeframe explains “projectism,” or “project-mania,” which is the tendency to treat state-building as a set of discrete interventions incorporated into a project with a relatively clear beginning, implementation and evaluation, usually with a six-month time span, or, at best, one year. “Projectism” leads to at least three important shortcomings.

First, “projectism” causes international intervention to become a top-down enterprise, making it difficult to place the local population at the heart of the post-settlement transition, and leading international interveners to overlook local knowledge, talents, and aspirations in the name of short-term efficiency. Because of the brevity of projects, international agencies have little scope to develop significant local partnerships and include local actors in a process of joint planning, implementation, and assessment. Instead, they make important decisions about the priorities and allocation of international assistance in the initial phases of intervention, when international understanding of local conditions is limited.<sup>29</sup>

Second, in order to achieve immediate results, international agencies are geared toward attempting to manipulate short-term outcomes (by tweaking electoral laws, for example) instead of creating the long-term conditions for peace to take hold indigenously by slowly building the capacity of local institutions. Some critics go as far as arguing that domestic institutional and local capacity is actually being destroyed by international intervention in weak states. According to Francis Fukuyama, despite the rhetoric of “capacity-building,” the reality of international intervention shows a kind of “capacity sucking out.”<sup>30</sup> Instead of assisting domestic development of governing capabilities, rich and comparatively efficient international agencies crowd out weak-state capacities.

Third, the pressure on international actors to show that intervention “is working” prevents a balanced assessment of how best they can support the post-

settlement transition. Generally, the greater the international role, the more international interveners devote time to selling their achievements and minimizing the appearance of problems, since the recognition of difficulties and drawbacks may be perceived as an admission of failure. Meanwhile, this attitude creates the impression that international intervention is proceeding according to plan and thus alleviating pressure for reform. When delays, obstacles, and drawbacks cannot be ignored any longer, they are blamed on the local actors. While success has a thousand fathers, failure is an orphan. Time and again, lack of progress is blamed on the lack of indigenous democratic traditions and the influence of post-war trauma. For example, in south-eastern Europe it is the “Balkan mentality” (the supposedly combined effects of socialism and war) that explains continuing instability. In the Middle East, Arab culture, Islamic influences, and authoritarian traditions allegedly combine to prevent the spread of democracy. Needless to say, an honest assessment of the choices and strategies of international actors would yield a more accurate diagnosis and possibly better intervention strategies.

## CONCLUSION

Although most policymakers are familiar with these shortcomings, reform remains difficult, and is complicated by the different views and priorities within the donor community. A promising development is the establishment, in late 2005, of a United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission’s creation is a direct response to the limits evidenced by a decade and a half of international missions in war-torn regions. The Commission’s key tasks include: improving the coordination of all relevant actors, advising on integrated strategies for peacebuilding and sustainable development, developing best practices, ensuring predictable funding, and extending the period of attention the international community devotes to crisis areas.

The establishment of the Commission has been met with almost universal approval. Addressing the problems of weak states requires a structure of global governance where leading states accept that effective intervention needs time, money, and manpower; all of which are aspects the Commission is meant to provide. Yet, the extent to which the Commission will increase the effectiveness of international intervention remains untested. Several issues provide matters of concern. The terms of cooperation among the various stakeholders remain unclear. The Commission includes members from the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In addition, members are elected by the General Assembly to ensure regional representation. Other actors can be involved in country-specific operations to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of the operation, including national and trans-national authorities, regional actors and organizations, troop contributors, and major donors to the specific country. However, the role of the national authorities of those countries under consideration remains uncertain, in particular the extent to which their views should shape the Commission’s agenda and strategy. Moreover, no particular role is foreseen for humanitarian organizations,

local and international civil society groups, and academic or regional experts. Long-term financial resources have not yet been secured. Sceptics fear that the Commission might constitute a new bureaucracy that will add another layer of inertia to intervention efforts.

While this judgement might be too severe (and so far lacking in empirical evidence), the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission should not prevent the consideration of other options. In south-eastern Europe, accession agreements with the European Union (EU) and eventual EU membership are the obvious alternative to short-term, crisis driven international involvement. The EU accession process can be described as a successful form of “member-state building.”<sup>31</sup> Were the EU to extend its accession instruments to the Balkans, this would constitute a major step forward in the spreading of peace, democracy, and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, alternatives also exist for troubled lands in the post-colonial world further a field from Europe. Regional organizations are potentially well placed to improve coordination among donors and provide indispensable knowledge of local political, economic, and social variations. While almost everyone involved in peace operations praises coordination in theory, in practice nobody wants to be “coordinated,” that is, lose decision-making power and operational autonomy. Nevertheless, coordination is necessary, particularly to devise suitable intervention strategies that coherently incorporate human rights components in addition to neo-Wilsonian precepts. Finally, technology transfer, debt forgiveness, and increased aid might constitute useful tools to prevent state failure and the return to lawlessness. The complexity of the task and the stakes involved demand nothing less than the careful assessment of all options for international engagement, and the long-term commitment to support the democratic development of weak states.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Crisis Watch, constantly monitoring the evolution of conflict areas worldwide, with monthly updates. Available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1200&l=1>. More broadly: Stefan Wolff, *Ethnic Conflict: A Global Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peace-making and Peace-keeping* (New York: United Nations, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Johan Galtung, “The Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding,” in *Peace, War, and Defense: Essays in Peace Research*, ed. Johan Galtung (Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen, 1976).

<sup>4</sup> Ho-Won Jeong, *Peacebuilding in Postconflict Societies: Strategy and Process* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005); Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Philip G. Roeder and Donald Rothchild, eds., *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy After Civil Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> For an assessment see, Charles T. Call and Susan E. Cook, “On Democracy and Peacebuilding,” *Global Governance*, 9, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 233–247.

<sup>6</sup> The literature is vast and growing. Good studies are Simon Chesterman, *You, the People: The United Nations, Transitional Administration and Statebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff and Ramesh Thakur, eds., *Making States Work: State Failure and the Crisis of Governance* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2005); Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation-Building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan* (London: Vintage, 2003); Francis Fukuyama, *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Francis Fukuyama, ed., *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Henry Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

- <sup>8</sup> Peter Kreuzer and Mirjam Weiberg, *Framing Violence: Nation- and State-Building: Asian Perspectives* (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute, 2005). See also James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).
- <sup>9</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1.
- <sup>10</sup> Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 16–37.
- <sup>11</sup> Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 40–42. On Wilson, see Thomas Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- <sup>12</sup> Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*, 5.
- <sup>13</sup> Larry Diamond, *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005).
- <sup>14</sup> David Chandler, “Back to the future? The limits of neo-Wilsonian ideals of exporting democracy,” *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (Summer 2006), 475–94; Roland Paris, “Wilson’s Ghosts: The Faulty Assumptions of Post-Conflict Peacebuilding,” in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, ed., Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Hall (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001).
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