

Failed States, Post-Conflict States and Reconstruction

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Abstract

Building peace in a post-conflict situation is perhaps an even greater challenge than ending war. Almost half of all post-conflict states fall back into violent conflict within a decade. Yet this is not unavoidable: experience shows that there are ways to rebuild the fabric of society and create institutions that enhance sustainable peace. The example of Bosnia-Herzegovina showed that EUFOR played a decisive role not just in the traditional security field, but also in supporting local authorities and fighting corruption. Afghanistan has gone a long way from the Taliban regime, where women had no public role to play, but it is still plagued by a weak government, insurgencies and narcotics trade. Sudan is torn by conflicts; a federal model requires not just sharing power, but also wealth. Guatemala has gone far in demilitarization, democracy is working, but crime and the legacies of the authoritarian past still cast their shadow. Private sector financial and technical support is vital in all post-conflict countries to create jobs.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

*David Leakey*²: One of the key tasks of EUFOR (ca. 7,000 soldiers) was to maintain a safe and secure environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The second key task was to support the high representative mission implementation plan (involving reform of the economy, reform of the rule of law, restructuring of the police and defense reform). EUFOR therefore used its intelligence and surveillance to act as a coordinator, to support the local authorities. There was resistance to this, i.e. "Soldiers don't do this," but we overcame this opposition. Organized crime and corruption are always a problem in post-conflict countries; we have not yet sufficiently addressed this challenge.

Afghanistan

*Shinkai Karokhail Zahine*³: Afghanistan is a newly established government. We still have to face the greatest challenges: the government is weak; there are great socio-economic problems, insecurity, corruption and al-Qaida/Taliban to name a few. The invading forces after 9/11 decided to make an alliance with the warlords against the Taliban. They may have initially saved international resources, but it legitimized the warlords and made them stronger than they really were, i.e. with negative results, such as insurgencies in the south and east, narcotics trade, etc. The Afghan cabinet is very large; there are many inexperienced people in it. It is also made up of returnees with no knowledge of the country. The country is very dependent on foreign aid, IGOs and NGOs pay high salaries, causing a brain drain from the government. Justice is neglected and customary law often plays into the hands of warlords. The neighboring countries also love to meddle in the affairs of Afghanistan. We are very worried that the world will forget Afghanistan and resources will be poured into another "crisis." We are worried we will be left alone to those who want a weak Afghanistan. We do not want to go back to a Taliban regime, where women have no social role to play. The bombardment of villages in the south is not the way forward. What is needed is money and technical assistance to make the government stronger. The role of Provincial Reconstruction Teams? They do not deal sufficiently with the communities, but build what they want. We need to adapt the idea, to work with local communities.

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Sudan

*Julian Thomas Hottinger*⁴: Sudan can head toward peace, but it is a very complicated situation, with about 3.5 conflicts. First: the North-South conflict, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 partially resolved this. Yet in south Sudan it is not just a question of rebuilding a state, but building it in the first place. Second, the Darfur conflict, involves three provinces, together about the size of France. Darfur is perhaps at its worst phase now; Jan Pronk was expelled by the government. It is not a new problem, however, it has flared up many times over the last decades, e.g. already in 1926. Darfur is very poor; desertification is putting the existing form of life into question. Third, the conflict on the eastern border, in the Beja area. It is a low intensity conflict, and now there is a partial agreement, but the implementation is still unclear. And finally, the “half” conflict in the south, in relation to the Lords Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA is based in Uganda, but also is active in Sudan. So Sudan is a country that is torn: When one conflict is over, it flares up in another area. A federal model does not just require sharing power, but also sharing wealth. If the UN is not wanted in Darfur and cannot deploy, do we see which countries would be more acceptable to Sudan, or do we give greater support to the 7,000 troops of the AU, which now have no mobility, no logistics and are paralyzed by the task? Concerning the question of a forceful entry of the International community, the problem is not just simply gaining an acceptable entry, but holding the ground. An international entry that does not have the go ahead of the government will have an impossible task. Furthermore, which countries are ready to deploy?

Guatemala

*Bernardo Arévalo de Leon*⁵: Ten years after the peace accords, we have moved far, we have the hardware of democracy, but it is operated in an authoritarian culture, the “software” is missing. Much has been done toward demilitarization, to curtail the military, such as a reduction in the military budget. Democracy works, the opposition always wins. Yet there is too much turnover in terms of leaders; hardliners follow those who work for change. So we have a post-conflict security crisis, with high crime, new organized crime, youth gangs, a general feeling of insecurity and incapacity of the state to deal with the situation. The focus is on the short-term goal of “putting out fires” instead of sustainable change. Guatemala lives with the legacy of an authoritarian past. It is an unconsolidated democracy, which is vulnerable. But the country has one strength: Change was based on internal agency. This is my hope.

Private Sector

*John Maresca*⁶: The idea is to support local entrepreneurs; they need special help in the post-conflict situation. People need jobs to be stable “good” citizens. NGOs and aid often create temporary work, but the private sector creates sustainable jobs. The private sector is often hesitant to invest, but we have to look at how to attract investment from the beginning, immediately after a conflict, as it takes time. The tasks are to support with financing, to give practical help to the local private sector (e.g. business plans), and to give support for the external private sector coming in. Often the incentive is to pay a percentage to the foreign investor.

Conclusion

- No size fits all, but one can learn from different experiences and build on them
- Organized crime and corruption are key problems in a post-conflict situation. Military can also take on the role of coordination and support of local authorities in dealing with such problems
- The challenge of military peace operations is not simply the entry mandate, but how to hold the ground. If not accepted by the host country, it can be difficult or even impossible (e.g. Sudan). Another challenge is how to get enough international troops available for such tasks

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- The choice of local alliances (e.g. warlords) at the beginning of an invasion (e.g. Afghanistan) legitimizes these forces and can negatively shape the future of the country
- Private sector investment needs to be supported to create jobs