

Summary of Discussions

SWP / Carnegie Endowment Working Group

"States at risk – Stabilization and state-building by external intervention"

2nd Colloquium, Berlin, Germany, June 14-15, 2004
at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

Day One

The first day of this second meeting of the working group was focused on case studies of Georgia and Pakistan. The presentations contain descriptive information related to the discussions.

Day Two

How to move from the analysis to points and means of intervention? How to coordinate the intervening forces?

The consensus is that policy makers need to focus more on prevention and pre-conflict intervention. However, due to the limitations of resources and instruments at the disposal of intervening states (current responses to security crises are anachronistic, as the structures date back to 1947, and no longer fit the 21st century world), it is difficult to meet such goals. Shifting attention to prevention is further complicated by the fact that intervention in post-conflict situations is politically more feasible than intervening preemptively, given the potential for controversy in connection with preemptive interventions and the more easily obtained media support for post-conflict interventions.

In order to make the instruments of intervention more effective, more consideration needs to be given to where the state is on the continuum from failing to stable, and in which direction it is heading. States that may be failing, but which are in the process of nation-building need a different type of intervention than those states which are more or less stable, but in the process of failing. It may also make more sense to direct interventions at the provision of core state functions directly rather than focusing them on the institutions—often dysfunctional—that are supposed to provide them.

Enhanced coordination between countries and international agencies dealing with interventions, i.e. the creation of a global architecture of intervention mechanisms, would significantly reduce the present inefficiencies. Although there has been some improved policy coordination in NATO and the G8, it has primarily been the result of the cooperation of four or five core states. The establishment of an interagency committee on post-conflict reconstruction would enable various agencies to pool the expertise and develop common policies on intervention. In addition, these organizations need to monitor and limit the negative effects of the increasing NGO business and the rivalries between civilian and military administrations.

Summary of Discussions

SWP / Carnegie Endowment Working Group
"States at risk – Stabilization and state-building by external intervention"

2nd Colloquium, Berlin, Germany, June 14-15, 2004
at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

Are there different types of risk factors in different regions? Do they require regional specific responses? Do large states require a different mode of intervention from small states?

Regional differences play an important role in the nature of the problems to be solved, as demonstrated by the importance of political Islamism in the Middle East or growing inequality in Latin America, and these differences imply the need for different solutions. Regional stability is also a factor that needs to be taken into consideration when developing solutions. However, the ability to tailor interventions for regional differences is limited in part by the need to have somewhat standardized instruments of intervention available for rapid crisis intervention.

The size of an intervening state is for the most part irrelevant, so long as it is capable and willing to intervene effectively. However, more consideration needs to be given to the nature of the intervening country, e.g. the different reactions the US or other countries provoke when they intervene. An EU-led intervention in the Middle East is likely to receive a less hostile reaction than an American-led one.

Is the international community/western states properly prepared for state building? Do we have the right structures, instruments and capabilities?

There is clearly a need for more coordination among national and international agencies in the process of state building. However, before policies can be coordinated on an international level, there needs to be better coordination on national levels where many departments have overlapping, and often competing, responsibility for development in general, and state building in particular. Without resolution of these internal philosophical differences, it will be difficult to achieve the global coordination necessary to make intervention more effective.