Book Reviews
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Book Reviews

Fighting State Failure

Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World by Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Pp.272. £13.99 (hbk). ISBN 978-0195342697.

Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan by Antonio Giustozzi. New York: Columbia University Press/Hurst and Co., 2008. Pp.241. + bibliography + index. £16.99 (pbk). ISBN 978-0231700092.

Following the end of the cold war and the falling away of the security blanket offered to states by the superpowers, several dozens of states were revealed to be profoundly weak in the 1990s. Afghanistan became the first, and arguably still is the leading, example of a state that 'failed after the strategic disengagement of Moscow and Washington in the early 1990s, ending up as a haven for terrorists'.[1]

   In *Fixing Failed States*, Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart offer a radical reform programme. Their proposals come at a time when the American-dominated international project has failed, during the better part of a decade, to build either a state or peace in Afghanistan using the tools of another era. This has caused alarm in many quarters.[2] As a successful Minister of Finance, and unofficial prime minister, in the transitional Afghan state during the 2002–5 period, Dr Ghani has watched Afghanistan decline since his departure. During Ghani's term of office, many shared his optimism that Afghanistan could be fixed. His was a heroic effort to bring order and results from a broken system of donor support that he and his colleague and co-author, Clare Lockhart, dealt with at close quarters. *Fixing Failed States* imagines a fully-developed post-Westphalian, post-cold war world, wherein the idea of sovereignty is enriched by a shared understanding of the legitimate role of the state in a fully globalized institutional and legal order designed to support the state in serving its citizens. This is a book of enduring importance, that deserves a wide readership well beyond its likely academic audience, coming as it does from a source that, by virtue of experience, provenance and respect in international circles, may provide these ideas the deserved currency that they might not otherwise achieve. The proposals contained in Ghani and Lockhart's book will

be considered in greater detail below. But while the deteriorating military situation heightens the need for Ghani's sage counsel, first, let us consider the problems plaguing Afghanistan and identified by Antonio Giustozzi in his work, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop*.

A useful companion to *Fixing Failed States*, Giustozzi's book approaches the problem from the perspective of the insurgency which fills those political spaces where statebuilding has failed. It is a draft epitaph, as of May 2007, for what appears to be the irretrievable failures of strategy and execution of US/NATO efforts in Afghanistan. Giustozzi sees these failures as resulting in what he calls the 'neo-Taliban' becoming the global jihadists that the old Taliban never were (Giustozzi 2008, p. 138). As the story continues to unfold one hopes that this book will go into further editions. The author describes the social and tribal origins of the Taliban, how they are recruited, their ideologically driven and decentralized organization, their equipment and finances, and their adaptive strategy and tactics. He analyses the Taliban's strengths and weaknesses, examining the impact on Taliban recruitment of factors such as Pashtun nationalism, education and Sufism (Giustozzi 2008, pp. 62–63), as well as culturally insensitive US army tactics, US air strikes on civilian targets, polarizing warlords and poppy eradication (Giustozzi 2008, pp. 190, 205). The author's extensive endnotes and bibliography show a mastery of the available sources and factual detail that lends credibility to several of his contrarian analyses.

Giustozzi challenges several commonplace assumptions about Afghanistan since the American invasion of 2001. It was commonly held by Western military forces that the 'greatest indication of Taliban weakness was its inability to interrupt the October 9, 2004, presidential election'.[3] Giustozzi shows that, on the contrary, the total lack of such Taliban interference in elections was a sign of remarkable discipline and political sensitivity to the widespread public desire to engage in elections – as well as possible service to Pakistani interests (Giustozzi 2008, p. 114). He argues that the organizational coherence of the Taliban indicates that elements within the Pakistani government still control their finances, and enforce unity by funnelling all funds through the Pakistan-connected Taliban leadership (though it should be noted that Giustozzi does not provide any analysis of Pakistani motivations underpinning this support) (Giustozzi 2008, pp. 89, 232). Another example involves the question of warlords. Western support for warlords was justified as a military necessity. But Giustozzi shows that the tyranny inflicted by some of these strongmen on local populations has aided the Taliban by polarizing communities and inciting grievances. This has driven many people back to the Taliban as the only alternative for defending themselves in politicized local disputes (Giustozzi 2008, p. 177). The reliance on warlords has also inhibited the government's recovery of legitimacy in the eyes of the broader population (Giustozzi 2008, p. 231).

Giustozzi sums up with a number of insights at the more general policy level. The final and longest chapter criticizes: 'The Counterinsurgency Effort'. Here he points out that sufficient security for effective statebuilding existed

during the early years before the Taliban regrouped, but this opportunity was then lost.

Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop provides important support for those pointing towards political failure as the key obstacle to security in Afghanistan. After seven years, there has been no substantial progress in extending the rule of law and containing corruption by an Afghan administration handpicked and supported by the Bush administration's neo-conservative envoy Zalmay Khalil-zad and others, who Giustozzi describes as, 'Western politicians more concerned about their electoral prospects than with the future of Afghanistan' (Giustozzi 2008, p. 8). Ultimately he shows that while the Taliban have implemented and adapted strategy, the opposition went too long without 'a consistent strategy lasting more than a year', thereby leaving a situation that may not be recoverable (Giustozzi 2008, p. 238).

Does *Fixing Failed States* offer any solutions to the problems diagnosed by Giustozzi? The essential concept in this project is 'the sovereignty gap', i.e., the dissonance between the respect and deference accorded to *de jure* sovereignty, and the fact that this deference may not be warranted by a state's actual performance. *Fixing Failed States* would seize the current moment to sweep out the old, increasingly dysfunctional, institutions and introduce a plan for an inclusive global order. The plan begins with a metric for legitimate sovereignty based on the aspirations of citizens and the performance of states in carrying out ten functions of a modern state. This new type of sovereign state would exist at the confluence of two compacts: one between the state and its citizens (such as a constitutional and legal framework supporting ground-up national programmes, discussed in Chapter 9); and one between the international community and the state (discussed in Chapter 8). This latter compact would reorient aid programmes toward the support of national programmes, such as the National Solidarity Program in Afghanistan which has pointed the way toward including Afghans in reconstruction at the village level.

The international community is responsible for intervening in a state that fails the metric. It therefore needs to fully embrace the apparent paradox of carrying out sovereign functions of a failed state to the extent necessary to restore such a state's legitimate sovereignty. In order to do this competently, the international community needs to not only revise its outdated Westphalian models of the state, but also to totally revamp its institutions and dysfunctional aid systems into a coherent structure (Ghani and Lockhart 2008, pp. 223–226). In spelling out the new international agenda of fixing failed states, the authors also present views on a variety of contemporary issues that induces confidence that this book is well-grounded in knowledge and experience so as to serve as a reliable guide to the complex and increasingly urgent subject of statebuilding.

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Notes

1   C.A. Crocker, Engaging failing states. *Foreign affairs*, (82) 5, 35. See also, J.M. Weinstein, J.E. Porter and S.E. Eizenstat, eds., 2004. *On the brink: weak states and U.S. national security: a report of the Commission for Weak States and US National Security.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution and the Center for Global Development, 12–13.
2   Afghanistan Study Group, 2008. *Report: revitalizing our efforts rethinking our strategies.* Washington, DC: Center for the Study of the Presidency, 30 January.
3   For example, Lt Col R.A. Millen, 2005. *Afghanistan: Reconstituting a Collapsed State.* Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

The Paradoxes of Statebuilding

The Sovereignty Paradox: The Norms and Politics of International State-building by Dominik Zaum. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp.245 + notes + bibliography + index. £45 (hbk). ISBN 978-0-19-920743-5.

Peace at Any Price: How the World Failed Kosovo by Iain King and Whit Mason. London: Hurst & Co, 2006. Pp.264 + notes + index. £15 (pbk). ISBN 1-85065-842-0.

Much of the literature on statebuilding interventions has been journalistic in focus. Written by observers or former practitioners, it recounts the cut and thrust of international administration in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Bosnia.[1] Much can be gleamed from this kind of writing, not least an idea of what statebuilders themselves think they are doing in Baghdad and Pristina. Iain King and Whit Mason's book is a well-written and engaging version of this genre, without the existentialist *ennui* of Mark Ethrington's memoir of being a regional viceroy in Iraq following the 2003 invasion. However, King and Mason remain at the anecdotal and descriptive level. By contrast, Dominik Zaum's *The Sovereignty Paradox* captures some of the deeper tensions that lie at the heart of the statebuilding enterprise.

   Zaum's book argues that contemporary statebuilding interventions need to be understood as a function of ideas of sovereignty that currently structure international life. For Zaum, the concept of sovereignty today is understood in terms of securing the rights and well-being of individuals. This concern with the *internal* composition of states contrasts with the norm of sovereignty as self-government and non-intervention that prevailed since decolonization in the 1950s. Zaum makes much of the reconfiguration of sovereignty *as responsibility*, and argues that this can account for the way a number of statebuilding interventions were conducted.[2] The paradox that he identifies in the title is the necessity for one kind of sovereignty (as self-determination and self-government) to be violated in order that the other (the ability to administer the needs of a domestic population) can be guaranteed via international intervention (Zaum 2007, p. 5).

The strengths of Zaum's book are considerable, not least in its clarity and the rich empirical detail on Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and East Timor. Zaum sidesteps the theoretical debate on the meaning of sovereignty, beginning instead with how sovereignty is understood by Western states and various international institutions. Noting that understandings of sovereignty rest upon particular accounts of authority and legitimacy, Zaum goes into a detailed consideration of the sources of authority for international administrations – a useful contribution to the existing literature. What emerges from Zaum's account is a sense of the fragility of such authority. As he observes, international administrations cannot forge for themselves entirely novel sources of authority. Yet in examining the ways in which these new authorities legitimize themselves, international administrations fare particularly badly.

Consent is very limited: those elections that do take place do not extend to questioning or circumscribing the power of the 'internationals': the representatives of the 'international community' who are on the ground and often enjoy some degree of executive power (Zaum 2007, pp. 59–60). Legitimacy through delegation is central to the statebuilding story, yet the delegated authority comes from above, not from below. It is the United Nations Security Council which delegates, meaning that the authority is located in the amorphous actor – the 'international community' (Zaum 2007, pp. 60–62). The remaining sources of legitimacy are entirely 'performative' – that is, they depend upon the *effectiveness* of international administrations in the carrying out of their functions. Given the dire record of these administrations, basing their authority on their performance often does them more harm than good (Zaum 2007, pp. 64–67). As King and Mason put it, in the case of the United Nations authority in Kosovo, UNMIK: 'if UNMIK had been up for election it would have needed to campaign hard to win votes from anybody in Kosovo other than its own staff' (King and Mason 2006, p. 220).

There are two problems with Zaum's analysis that are worth exploring. The first is the transformation of a historical shift in the meaning of sovereignty. Zaum adopts Robert Jackson's distinction between 'negative' and 'positive' sovereignty, arguing that in the post-cold war period the concern has been mainly with 'positive' sovereignty.[3] Zaum also draws on Stephen Krasner's disaggregation of sovereignty into four component parts – domestic, interdependence, international legal and Westphalian sovereignty.[4] Zaum is right of course to suggest that these are the dominant understandings of sovereignty today. However, this does not mean that they are either practically or analytically viable. By accepting, rather than properly interrogating, the understandings of sovereignty that underpin statebuilding interventions, Zaum misses an opportunity to draw out the tensions and contradictions that have mired recent statebuilding actions.

These tensions and contradictions are evident in Zaum's case studies, though he does not draw them out as much as he could. In the case of Kosovo, he notes that a trade-off existed between building up institutional capacity and giving up power to Kosovo's own self-governing institutions (Zaum 2007, p. 147). Zaum

argues that, in its endeavour to make public services function in Kosovo, UNMIK was forced to sacrifice its political goal of devolving power to local institutions. However, the problems faced by UNMIK in its task of building public administration have not been free of the political question of independence, which the international community deferred for so long. Progress on technical issues was so difficult precisely because it relied upon the consent and goodwill of individuals in Kosovo, which in turn was conditioned by the political situation in the province. Institutional capacity-building cannot be divorced from the question of how a state's institutions relate to society. We are seeing here the difficulty of severing effectiveness and consent as two sources of legitimacy for international administrations. And this difficulty reflects the mistaken belief that 'negative' and 'positive' sovereignty, i.e., legal independence and internal political capacity, can be prized apart.

Zaum's account of the privatization debacle in Kosovo also demonstrates this point. He notes that: 'with the unresolved [political] status [of Kosovo], the question of who ultimately has the right to change the ownership structure of socially owned property remained also unresolved and contested' (Zaum 2007, p. 154). Basic questions of administration, such as the rules and procedures which underpin the functioning of a market economy, rest upon the political foundations of state-society relations. UNMIK's policy of 'standards before status', introduced by the Austrian diplomat Wolfgang Petritsch when he was heading the UNMIK mission in Kosovo, was the most obvious attempt to apply the analytical distinction between negative and positive sovereignty to real life.

The failure of this approach, and the privatization debacle, both highlight the problems the international community has faced in seeking to translate its own understanding of sovereignty into a basis for statebuilding interventions. Zaum very usefully draws out these problems in his work but does not reach the logical conclusion: that there is something wrong in imagining that the formal trappings of sovereign independence can be vitiated whilst pretending that the more substantial aspects of sovereignty, such as the human rights of a local population or the political and economic institutions of a state, are being supported. This implies a separation of politics from institution-building which, as we have seen in Kosovo, only leads to social instability and weak institutions. Without giving people a role in determining the political life of a state, it is difficult to identify and implement policy goals. The 'effectiveness' of the international community, a key basis for its claims to legitimacy, is therefore at odds with its desire to hold on to political power. These kinds of tensions are evident in Zaum's material but he does not seek to draw out the logical conclusions of his own case studies.

The second problem is Zaum's invocation of 'standards of civilization' as a historical analogy for understanding today's interest in 'positive sovereignty'. Zaum suggests that we can draw parallels between the way in which Great Powers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were keen to distinguish between civilized and non-civilized states, and the contemporary insistence on

human rights and good governance norms as prerequisites for membership of international society (Zaum 2007, pp. 38–43). Zaum suggests that the seemingly 'universal' framework of solidarist sovereignty norms really reflect a set of Western, or even European, standards (Zaum 2007, p. 43). Zaum himself seems rather more sanguine about this development than others who have noted the return of 'standards of civilization' to international politics.[5]

The trouble with adopting the 'standards of civilization' framework is that we find little evidence of it in statebuilding practices. Zaum notes that the 'standards of civilization' defined 'a particular social purpose … to the attainment of which the state was given authority' (Zaum 2007, p. 38). In other words, the standards of civilization reflected a certain clarity about the function and purpose of the European state, which was carried through into its international relations. Today human rights and good governance certainly predominate in statebuilding rhetoric, but international administrations seem to be distinctly lacking in a sense of their own 'social purpose'.

King and Mason's work is particularly illuminating in this respect, as they denounce what they see as the weakness of 'post-imperial would-be-progressives' (King and Mason 2006, p. 246). Their argument is essentially that 'the world failed Kosovo' because of an inadequate commitment on the part of UNMIK towards 'changing … hearts and minds', which was necessary in order to resolve Kosovo's problems (King and Mason 2006, p. 239). King and Mason flay UNMIK for shying away from the political and social reforms necessary to make progress. In their words, 'fatefully reinforcing the misunderstandings of Kosovo's problems was a deep reluctance to tell Kosovans what they should do or how their society should change' (King and Mason 2006, p. 245).

A few of King and Mason's anecdotes capture particularly well the pusillanimity of the international community. They recount the OSCE's Permanent Council in Vienna refusing to endorse any attempts at meddling in Kosovo's educational system, for fear of 'interfering too much in local culture' (King and Mason 2006, p. 222). They also write of a meeting, in late 2003, where senior UNMIK officials discussed the reformulation of the UN mission's overall statement of purpose. One senior official described his discomfort over the statement's claim of transforming Kosovo 'into a society in which all its people could live in security and dignity'. His words were: 'I'm not comfortable with the word "transform"; I'd prefer the world "support".' For King and Mason, this was 'a shocking display of not getting it' (King and Mason 2006, p. 245). In effect, King and Mason are arguing that UNMIK's problem in Kosovo was that it was not imperialist enough, not that – as Zaum suggests – we were seeing a return of 'standards of civilization'.

A critical perspective on statebuilding needs to navigate between these two poles. It must demonstrate why it is that only the principles of autonomy and self-determination can provide a basis for politics, and thereby highlight that the rights of citizens need to be substantiated in the form of a self-governing state if they are to be more than tokenistic. However, at the same time, it should be aware of the peculiar character of contemporary interventions, which

have the appearance of neo-colonialism but lack any real ideological foundations.

Faced with such a picture of international administrations, unsure both of their role and the basis for their own authority, and clearly unwilling to promote any set of values beyond the platitudes of 'democracy-promotion', it is difficult to imagine that we are seeing a return to traditional colonialism. At the same time, the problems of effectiveness that have plagued the various international administrations should not be distinguished from the political question of self-government. The lesson of statebuilding interventions is not that the international community faces a trade-off between the respect for self-determination and the desire to re-build 'weak' or 'failed' states. It is that the legitimacy of political institutions rests upon their ability to unite their effectiveness with a set of procedures which ensure that political institutions adequately reflect the will and aspirations of citizens. Without such procedures, institutions lack any standard of assessment for their own effectiveness. This is the lesson which we should draw from both Zaum's study of statebuilding and King and Mason's account of UNMIK's role in Kosovo.

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Notes

1   See, for instance, M. Ignatieff, 2003. *Empire lite: nation-building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan*. London: Vintage; and M. Ethrington, 2005. *Revolt on the Tigris: the Al-Sadr uprising and the governing of Iraq*. London: Hurst & Co.
2   For a similar argument regarding the demise of pluralism in the post-cold war period, see G. Simpson, 2004. *Great powers and outlaw states: unequal sovereignty in the international legal order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3   R.H. Jackson, 1990. *Quasi-states: sovereignty, international relations and the third world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4   S. Krasner, 1999. *Sovereignty: organized hypocrisy*. Chichester: Princeton University Press.
5   Gerald Knaus and Felix Martin, 2003. Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina: travails of the European Raj. *Journal of democracy*, 14 (3), 60–74.

Humanitarian Protection: Prevention, Reaction, and Reconstruction

Cowardly Lions: Missed Opportunities to Prevent Deadly Conflict and State Collapse by I. William Zartman. Boulder, CO: Lynne Riener, 2005. Pp.281 + notes + bibliography + index. $22.50 (pbk). ISBN 1-58826-382-7.

Humanitarian Intervention edited by Terry Nardin and Melissa S. Williams. New York: New York University Press, 2006. Pp.308 + notes + bibliography + index. $55.00 (hbk). ISBN 0-8147-5831-2.

The Uprooted: Improving Humanitarian Responses to Forced Migration by Susan F. Martin, Patricia Weiss Fagen, Kari Jorgensen, Lydia Mann-Bondat and Andrew Schoenholtz. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005. Pp.294 + notes + bibliography + index. $26.95 (pbk). ISBN 0-7391-1083-7.

Humanitarian protection appears to be the *zeitgeist* of our time. Debates in academia, policy circles, and the press are continuously centred on how best to protect the human rights of peoples at home and abroad. The key term in these debates is 'humanitarian intervention'. The term has covered a wide variety of actions, ranging from diplomatic interventions, to the provision of humanitarian aid and assistance with resettling of refugees, to use of armed force to address a humanitarian catastrophe. A growing body of valuable literature has emerged in the past decade in tandem with the increasing importance of such practices.

A substantial part of the literature on the subject has been concerned with the *permissibility* question, i.e., under what conditions could armed intervention to help other people be justified on political, legal and moral grounds.[1] This might not be surprising given that the debate about humanitarian intervention is seen to remain situated within the Just War tradition, concerned with limiting the occasions for war, and views sovereignty as an indivisible attribute that prevents interference in the internal affairs of states (Nardin and Williams 2006, p. 58).

Nevertheless, a recent conceptualization of sovereignty as responsibility – which implies that states are responsible for their people's security and welfare, and that if a state defaults on its responsibility, other states have the responsibility to exercise its sovereignty[2] – has extended the humanitarian intervention debate beyond the permissibility question. Yet insufficient attention has been paid to the question whether humanitarian intervention, when permissible, can also be morally obligatory.[3] The assumption that there is a legitimate duty of humanitarian intervention is enormously important because it brings into the debate new questions with profound normative and policy implications, particularly: What does a duty of humanitarian intervention mean? Who is under the call of such a duty? And, how is such a duty to be performed?

Concerned with humanitarian protection, the books under review strive to provide answers to these questions. They cover key themes, such as the need for timely action with a view to prevent deadly conflict; the need to institutionalize humanitarian intervention and turn it into a claimable duty; and the need to improve humanitarian protection afforded to forced migrants fleeing violent conflict and destruction. The assessment of these volumes, therefore, provides an opportunity to address key, interrelated elements of contemporary humanitarian protection, namely: prevention, reaction and reconstruction. Let us examine their arguments in some detail.

Responsibility to Prevent Deadly Conflict

William Zartman's book is about the international politics of domestic conflict. Out of a potential pool of some three dozen countries which have experienced disintegration of legitimate authority in various forms during the last quarter of the twentieth century, Zartman has carefully selected six: Lebanon (1976–84), Liberia (1985–98), Somalia (1988–93), Zaire (1991–6), Yugoslavia (1989–98) and Haiti (1991–6). Across his case studies he identifies 30 instances of missed opportunities which, if followed, would have prevented or rerouted the conflict in order to change its course and head it toward a faster resolution and construction of a new political contract (Chapters 2–7). An 'opportunity' is defined as a moment when external entry into conflict is justified either because it is accepted by conflicting parties or because the intervener is able to produce an attractive way out of the impasse (Zartman 2005, pp. 13–17).

Zartman's analysis emphasizes that measures to be used to take advantage of opportunities include the normal range of diplomatic interventions, as well as a peacekeeping/enforcing adjunct. This covers a spectrum of involvement which includes *mediation* (when the interests of a limited number of clear sides need to be incorporated in ending violence and remaking a functioning political system); *convocation* (intervention to provide new leadership and fill the vacuum by convening a conference of the remaining pluralistic forces in the country); *deposition* (intervention to replace an egregious ruler); *consolidation* (intervention to rebuild the state following the successful implementation of the previous measures); and *enforcement* (intervention to restrain through use of force) (Chapter 8).

Zartman finds that the reasons why opportunities were missed ranged from a weak sense of the need for action, by those who had an interest and responsibility to do so, to a perceived lack of interest in the region of crises, and preoccupation with crises elsewhere. Premature satisfaction with results was another factor which figured in almost all the cases analysed. In fact, once an agreement was reached, the conveners tended to see the job done: 'It was not that they developed an exit strategy: exit was the strategy.' (Zartman 2005, p. 226)

Another important finding is that early action is more effective and less costly than delayed action. In all case studies considered, the United States, United Nations, European Union and other international actors, were obliged to enter the conflict in its final paroxysms, at great cost and with limited options, after having missed opportunities to take lesser action earlier on. Since the US and other outside players felt obliged to be involved at a later point when the conflict was worse, Zartman suggests that early engagement should become a matter of practical interest. The enormous losses that missed opportunities entail, and their effect on regional and global relations, provide a humanitarian interest in intervention (Zartman 2005, pp. 201–207).

Where ability to act is present, both action and inaction create new responsibilities (Zartman 2005, p. 210). But, what confers responsibility? Responsibility may be conferred by the simple ability to act, especially when this ability is reinforced by history and past policy. Responsibility may also be conferred by geography, which implies that states have neighbourhood responsibilities. Such conferment has its own limitations. The first implies that the most powerful states – the US in particular – should do all, or the lion's share, of the intervening – an untenable argument which imposes unreasonably heavy burdens on a country just because it is capable of acting. The second overlooks the fact that neighbours' interests may differ from the best interest of the conflict countries. Indeed, the roles played by Nigeria in Liberia, Syria in Lebanon, Ethiopia in Somalia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Angola in Zaire/Congo, and even Germany in former Yugoslavia, raise serious questions about the neutrality and responsibility of regional interveners (Zartman 2005, pp. 211–212).

The underlying message of the study is that the controversial interpretations of 'responsibility to act' reflect the need to lay out precise conditions for intervention, and to sharpen the norms for the exercise of responsibility in preventing deadly conflict and state collapse with a view to avoid or limit abuses. Nevertheless, in the twenty-first century, the responsibility to act should not be suspended until the conditions of action are fully worked out (Zartman 2005, p. 249).

Invoking missed opportunities in some recent cases, William Zartman shows that intervention in the context of deadly conflict and state collapse is not only necessary but that it also can be done more efficiently than in the past. However, given that the book is written from an interventionist perspective, seeking to affect the conduct of current and future policy, the analyses could have benefited from considering parallels with the most recent cases of intervention such as those in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. Curiously, moreover, no reference is made to the ongoing humanitarian disaster in Darfur. The extent to which the lessons drawn from the selected case studies have been applied to present instances of intervention and humanitarian emergencies has not been taken fully into account by Zartman's analysis.

Humanitarian Intervention as an Im/perfect Duty

Responsibility to act to protect innocent people subjected to grave human rights abuses in foreign countries is the underlying theme of the volume edited by Terry Nardin and Melissa Williams. One reason why the debate about humanitarian intervention is so prominent rests with its practical importance. Another, contributor Anthony Coates suggests, that it also has to do with its theoretical incongruity. In his opinion, there is little agreement about normative bases of humanitarian intervention. Realists criticize interventionists for their systematic neglect and supersession of cherished international norms such as state sovereignty and non-intervention. Interventionists, on their part, bemoan the

moral parochialism of realists, and their relative indifference to values and concerns which transcend the importance of states (Nardin and Williams 2006, pp. 58, 68–69).

The use of force in international affairs − even if justified on humanitarian grounds − makes many people uneasy. Pratap Mehta thinks that organized hypocrisy is almost inevitable when it comes to humanitarian intervention. He is sceptical about the objectivity of moral principles and fears that claims to enforce international law are a cover for aggression by the powerful against the weak (Chapter 10). Thomas Pogge shares many of Mehta's concerns, in questioning benevolence as a motivating force for humanitarian intervention. In his view: 'There are no humanitarian heroes among those who exercise power in our names.' (Nardin and Williams 2006, p. 168)

The majority of chapters in this volume, nonetheless, emphasize that the debate about humanitarian intervention should not be restricted to the question of permissibility. Indeed, they treat humanitarian intervention beyond the boundaries of the Just War tradition, putting the emphasis on the questions of obligation and responsibility. From a moral point of view, because a state exists to protect the rights of its citizens, if it grievously violates those rights it loses its moral rationale and therefore its immunity from foreign interference. Other states are then justified in providing the protection it no longer provides (Nardin and Williams 2006, p. 4). The strict letter of the UN Charter, however, prohibits humanitarian intervention. In practice, nevertheless, as Thomas Franck points out, a pattern of exceptions is emerging which may suggest that it is excusable to violate the strict letter of the law if, in doing so, less human harm results than would have occurred had there been inflexible adherence to its strictures (Nardin and Williams 2006, p. 5).

Kok-Chor Tan argues that if rights violations are severe enough to override the sovereignty of the offending state, the severity of the situation should also overrule the right of other states to stay disengaged. He thinks that it is the force of human rights that imposes a duty on third parties to intervene to combat grievous abuses. But, who is under the call of duty in a case of humanitarian intervention? Since it is not clear which particular state(s) in the international community should perform the task of intervening, it appears that the duty to protect is at best an imperfect one, i.e., a duty which is not effectively claimable (Nardin and Williams 2006, p. 85). A right to protection (which victims of grievous human rights violations have) would be what Onora O'Neil calls a 'manifesto right', i.e., a right that a claimant has but that nonetheless cannot effectively be enforced because no specific agent has a duty to provide that right.[4] Nevertheless, to acknowledge that a duty is imperfect is not to deny the force of that duty but to recognize that there is an obligation to make what starts as a 'manifesto' right into a right which is enforceable and claimable. The way of solving the agency problem, Tan suggests, is by institutionalizing the duty to protect, i.e., putting in place institutional arrangements that would allocate and distribute responsibilities to ensure

that the duty to protect is effectively performed when the situation demands it (Nardin and Williams 2006, p. 102).

In reality, humanitarian intervention is not a perfect duty. As Catherine Lu suggests, the fact that the number of situations which call for humanitarian intervention has increased in recent years may not indicate progress towards a more just, humane and accountable world order, but rather may signify moral regress and a decreasingly legitimate global order (Nardin and Williams 2006, p. 209). Suggesting that there is an obligation to make the duty of humanitarian intervention enforceable and claimable, the edited volume by Terry Nardin and Melissa Williams is a welcome addition to the existing literature. Nevertheless, in raising the idea of institutionalization, the book does not really establish what this means. Does it refer to further consideration of intervention by the UN? Does it refer to the crystallization of customary law, or to some other normative evolution? Or does it, perhaps, refer to both? Moreover, the process by which such institutionalization can happen has not been interrogated directly. In addition, invoking the permissibility of humanitarian intervention on moral grounds does not supersede the need for identifying precise conditions under which such an intervention may be justified in the first place. Yet, these conditions have not been discussed in this volume.

Protection of Forced Migrants

That the protection of the dispossessed is an imperfect duty in dire need of institutional reform is made abundantly clear in the volume of Susan Martin *et al*. The steady increase in the number of intra-state conflicts since the end of the cold war has exposed civilians as targets of military activity as well as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Simultaneously, there has been an upsurge in the number of forced migrants fleeing violence and destruction: refugees, those who, having fled, cross internationally recognized state-borders; and internally displaced persons (IDPs), those who flee but remain within their states. It is a curious fact that the number of refugees is at its lowest level in years, although the number of IDPs continues to grow steadily. Whilst by conservative estimates 50 million forced migrants live outside their home communities – residing mostly in Africa, the Middle East and Asia – the number of IDPs is believed to be twice that of refugees (Martin *et al*. 2005, pp. 1, 6). Yet, refugees and IDPs do not share the same legal status in the international humanitarian system. Whilst refugee protection is codified in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the Organization for African Unity Refugee Convention of 1969, the protection of IDPs – often the most vulnerable of forced migrants – is not codified in either international or regional instruments (Martin *et al*. 2005, pp. 39–46).

The agency which has currently the most explicit mandate for assisting and protecting forced migrants, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has an elaborate organizational framework for the diminishing number of refugees but only makeshift *ad hoc* institutional responses for the increasing number of

IDPs (Martin *et al*. 2005, p. 81). The authors of *The Uprooted* opine that the UNHCR, as an organization with no specific responsibility for the largest number of forced migrants, is bound to fail in its protection and assistance efforts, 'precisely because when everyone within the system can theoretically be responsible for a particular population or set of activities, no one can be held accountable for failures' (Martin *et al*. 2005, p. 123). They recommend the replacement of the UNHCR with a UN High Commissioner for Forced Migrants, responsible for assistance to, and protection of, all forced migrants.

The recognition that mass exoduses threaten regional and international security has, nevertheless, spurred some protective action towards victims of humanitarian tragedies. The 1990s witnessed unprecedented military action by the UN to address international peace and security crises around the world. However, humanitarian operations such as in Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone often failed to 'do no harm'[5] to local communities as humanitarian aid was – in large measure – stolen, sold on the black market, or diverted for conflict activities. The dispatching of ill-prepared and ill-equipped troops, which lacked a sufficient understanding of the political situation on the ground and were not backed by conflict resolution efforts, led to the failure of UN mandates (Martin *et al*. 2005, pp. 196–199). These failures suggest that peacekeeping and peace enforcement should not be mixed, and that in the post-conflict phase military actors should be removed from public security tasks. In the view of the authors of *The Uprooted*, provision of public security, protection of humanitarian aid and humanitarian personnel, as well as the protection of forced migrants, is appropriate for police operations. Hence, they recommend the creation of a professional, standing UN police force, with the capacity to deploy rapidly and cohesively into emerging situations (Martin *et al*. 2005, pp. 217–218).

The assistance and protections offered to-date by states, the UN and regional organizations are premised on the assumption that forced migrants will return to their home countries upon the conclusion of hostilities. The experience – so far – suggests, nonetheless, that external actors do not sustain their operations beyond a period of months or a very few years. Yet, 'successful return of forced migrants depends on long-term international support for post-conflict rebuilding' (Martin *et al*. 2005, p. 248). The determination of foreign governments to return forced migrants to their country of origin does not appear to match their determination to help conflict-torn societies build state structures and legislative bodies as a prerequisite for the genuine protection of uprooted communities.

Susan Martin *et al*.'s book offers a solid account of current practices of protection offered to forced migrants, exposing present policy shortcomings and institutional gaps. The authors' emphasis on institutional reform is commendable. Nevertheless, the expectation that new institutions may resolve deficiencies of protection reflects an insufficient consideration of the potential of international institutions as problem-solving agencies. Furthermore, given that

institutional reform is, in part, a reference to UN reform, it could have benefited the analysis if more attention could have been paid to the role and operations of the UN as well as to their achievements and drawbacks.

Conclusion

It has often been asserted that the reason why intervention on humanitarian grounds remains such a contentious issue is that there is little agreement on its normative basis. Theoretical incongruity surrounding humanitarian intervention may be attributed to difficulties in integrating its three stages: the conditions under which intervention is permissible, the actual conduct of intervention, and the post-conflict process of rebuilding. Yet, the three volumes under review do not contest that there is a case for intervention on humanitarian grounds. Indeed, they are all written from an interventionist perspective. Endorsing intervention in the face of heinous crimes, these volumes expose serious drawbacks in the practice of protection. Building on themes developed in these books, this review has shown that humanitarian problems stem from the failure of prevention; a lack of empirical and conceptual clarity about the conditions of intervention; the lack of institutional reform, which could improve operations on the ground and ensure that the duty of protection is discharged effectively; and, finally, the reluctance of interveners to make long-term commitments to post-conflict rebuilding. The books under review go a long way to suggest that a holistic approach to humanitarian problems is warranted, with a view to forging links between prevention, reaction and rebuilding. Nevertheless, the ways in which this can be achieved still remain to be explicitly considered.

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Notes

1   See, for instance, N.J. Wheeler, 2000. *Saving strangers: humanitarian intervention in international society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; and J.L. Holzgrefe and R.O. Keohane, eds, 2003. Humanitarian intervention: ethical, legal, and political dilemmas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2   See further, F.M. Deng et al., 1996. *Sovereignty as responsibility*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
3   An exception is the 2001 ICISS Report, *The responsibility to protect: report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty*. Ottawa, Canada: International Development Research Centre. Although this report implies that a duty of humanitarian intervention exists, it does not employ the terminology of duty as such.
4   See O. O'Neill, 1986. *Faces of hunger*. London: Allen and Unwin, 101.
5   M. Anderson, 1999. *Do no harm: how aid can support peace – or war*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.

World Systems Theory for the Twenty-First Century

Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century by Giovanni Arrighi. London: Verso, 2007. Pp.389 + bibliography + index. £25 (hbk). ISBN 978-1-84467-104-5.

Delivering a bold, original analysis, which will be of interest to students of political theory, political economy and international relations, Giovanni Arrighi's sophisticated new book argues as follows. China was economically ahead of Europe in the eighteenth century, but was on a different developmental path of 'industrious development', based on intensifying labour inputs, rather than the West's 'extraverted' mode of development based on mercantile trade, fuelled by the demands of war- and state-making, which eventually gave Europe the edge in terms of economic and technological development. Arrighi argues hegemonic blocs of major trading nations and business organizations led Western development, creating new 'spatial fixes' – meaning geographic expansions of capitalist relations to solve crises of capital accumulation. Hegemons faced with major accumulation crises have 'financialized' their economies, retreating from production into financing others' trade and development. According to Arrighi, this latter phase is decadent and marks the hegemon's displacement by a new rival – most recently, the shift from British to American hegemony.

Arrighi claims that American hegemony was lost during its profound crisis in the 1970s, after which the US economy was 'financialized'. American hegemony has now entered its 'terminal phase' (2007, pp. 151–165). The Iraq War exposed America's reliance on 'protection rackets' – the creation of the very threats Washington claims to protect the civilized world from – and plunged the American state into deeper indebtedness, revealing its dominance 'without hege*money*' (Arrighi 2007, pp. 254–256, 193). Beijing, meanwhile, has combined its unique development path – which endowed it with a vast internal market and high-quality labour – with Western industrialism (Chapter 11). Thus, China is now poised to be 'the real winner of the war on terror', and a weakened US has had to abandon its attempts to contain China's rise (Arrighi 2007, p. 261).

Arrighi's macro-historical analysis of global economic development, and his treatments of Smith and Marx, are extraordinarily rich and fascinating. However, it leads him to over-stated claims about US decline and China's rise. Arrighi's account of the Iraq war, which mostly follows David Harvey[1], is somewhat confused, combining two different logics: a supposed 'spatial fix', designed to gain control over the Iraqi 'oil spigot', and a subjective element, a desire to vanquish the 'Vietnam syndrome' (Chapters 7–8). Yet Harvey himself admits that the war made no sense from the perspective of the capitalist logic of power, leading to Arrighi's bizarre claim that the war aimed to preclude the rise of an unspecified 'Eurasian power' (Arrighi 2007, pp. 213–215). The subjective logic is never explored in any depth, while its relationship to the economic logic is left unspecified (Arrighi 2007, pp. 221, 226). The argument that Bush saw

globalization as a threat to US freedom of action is an unconvincing explanation for his break from Clintonite foreign policy (Arrighi 2007, pp. 190–191).

Moreover, although Arrighi convincingly demonstrates that US power has suffered as a result of the war, especially in the Middle East (2007, pp. 182–189), he provides no real evidence to show this really is 'terminal decline' which cannot be fixed by the next administration adopting different policies. Despite differences over Iraq, core US allies in Europe and Asia still support global US agendas including the War on Terror. President George W. Bush, like Reagan before him, has gone back to international institutions like the UN, IMF and World Bank, created and dominated by the US, to pursue these agendas – as Arrighi himself is forced to admit (2007, pp. 193–194). Despite Arrighi's apparent incredulity, the major countries appear not to have completely given up on the idea of America's military and economic power as crucial to a 'benign' international order; simply viewing Iraq as a temporary aberration.

Of course, this matters less if China really is poised to supplant US hegemony. But again the evidence here is thin, with Arrighi relying on excited US press reports rather than the expansive academic literature on the subject (Chapter 10). Undoubtedly, Asian banks have bought up vast amounts of US bonds, thus financing the Iraq war, but the supposed 'leverage' this gives Asian states is merely asserted, not proven (Arrighi 2007, p. 195). Indeed, the management of the present global financial crisis has been left entirely to the US and Europe, with Chinese influence conspicuously absent. Certainly, while Washington has been blundering around the Middle East, China has quietly been securing raw materials and cutting deals with US enemies like Iran and Venezuela (Arrighi 2007, pp. 207–208). But to suggest China is now increasingly *the* regional hegemon in Asia (Arrighi 2007, pp. 205–206) ignores the strategic hedging of China's neighbours, who see America's presence as a force for stability and have collaborated in the 'war on terror'.

Moreover, China's economic rise, while helping to rescue Southeast Asia after its financial crisis in 1997–8, is not seen as an unequivocal good: while stimulating demand, it has also massively diverted investment away from, and sometimes undercut, neighbouring low-wage economies. Other economic analysis is also absent: given the crucial importance accorded to US bond sales, one expects data and some argument as to why Bush administration officials are wrong to believe the US can keep selling over-valued bonds rather than devaluing the dollar to cut US deficits for another 20 years. Arrighi suggests it would make 'no sense' to keep lending – and yet it continues (2007, pp. 200–201).

As yet, China has neither the resources nor, crucially perhaps, the ideological attractiveness to supplant the US, so at best Arrighi is describing an incipient trend. His claim that as a result of developing countries' advances and the oil price boom there is an opportunity for a 'second Bandung' conference is intriguing (2007, pp. 384–385). At Bandung in 1955 the Third World made itself felt as a political bloc with shared aspirations for the first time. Now Arrighi hopes that Asia's newfound economic clout might enable the countries of the region to harness 'the global market as an instrument of equalization of

South-North power relations'. Yet just as ideological solidarity without economic might made the Third World vulnerable to the 'monetarist counter-revolution' (Arrighi 2007, p. 384), so economic might without ideological purpose is strangely impotent. While the G20 of developing countries is able to block further rounds of damaging liberalization at the WTO, it appears unable to propose, let alone impose, any alternative. Whether the future lies with China and the South will certainly turn, at least in part, on the question of subjective political and ideological forces.

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Note

1   D. Harvey, 2003. *The new imperialism*. New York: Oxford University Press.