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RETHINKING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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Exercise Solo Flight

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RETHINKING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

Failing states are countries that have neglected in some capacity to meet their state responsibilities to their citizens. These dysfunctional states have gained a lot of international attention because of the threats to security and to the economy they pose. The impacts of these failing states on their citizens, neighbors, region and global society are significant and cannot be ignored. The international community is compelled to act in order to protect national interests and to fulfill moral obligations. However, current intervention methods have faced significant challenges in delivering effective solutions. The demands from donors to provide better results with fiscally restrained resources are providing the impetus to rethink intervention strategies.

The cost of providing assistance to failing states is high, but the costs of not intervening are even higher. Globalization has created such an intricate level of interconnectedness that states are compelled to act in order to protect themselves from the impact of these failing states. However, past attempts at intervention strategies have had limited success in delivering significant improvements to the situation. Donors have lost faith in the existing intervention structures and are either reducing their donor resources or taking matters in their own hands. In order to satisfy donors and actually solve the problem of failing states, current intervention strategies need to be transformed. This essay will provide an analysis of the concepts and general practices of intervention

strategies and provide recommendations that will challenge the conventional approaches to make intervention strategies more effective.

This essay will describe the problem space surrounding failing states and how to provide assistance. It will begin with a discussion on the approaches used to define, measure and indicate failing states. Then, an overview of the costs of failing states will be provided to illustrate the significance of their impact on the greater global community. Following this, there will be a short analysis of the key challenges facing current intervention practices, culminating with a discussion on potential areas for improvement. The overall intent of the essay is to generate reflection on the impact of failing states and the effectiveness of past interventions, with a goal to encourage further discussion on methods to improve intervention strategies.

DEFINING FAILING STATES

How do we define the term ‘failing states’? When researching the subject, it quickly becomes apparent that while there is much literature on the subject, there is a lack of consensus on one definition and clarity of the terminology used. Terms such as failing, fragile, or weak states are used interchangeably, which can lead to confusion and questioning on why such a difference exists. There seem to be two broad perspectives that are reflected in the definitions: one that is static, using empirical and historical evidence to review past cases of state fragility; and the other dynamic, using a predictive

approach to monitor the development status of a state for indications of areas of concern. These approaches are used by various interest groups to create definitions that suit their purposes. Academic descriptions tend to use empirical information to describe a failing state that has been studied, using terminology that reflects their research criteria. International organizations (IO) such as the United Nations (UN) tend to focus on the development status of a state and the events that are causing fragility. Donor agencies (state aid agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGO), private donors) often create and tailor their definitions to focus on their respective areas of interest.

Choosing one definition, and the associated perspective, over another frames the analysis of the fragile states. Using a development-status approach is useful in the context of this essay, because it is predictive and forward looking which is required when considering preventive measures. Applying a term that is broad yet comprehensive enough to capture the essential elements provides enough ambiguity to allow freedom of interpretation. The application of the definition also drives the options development process, as the key terms of the definition become the indicators for monitoring fragility and the performance measurement criteria for assessing the progress of intervention strategies.

With all of these considerations in mind, the definition offered by Frances Stewart and Graham Brown from the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and

Ethnicity (CRISE)¹ will be used as the basis for this essay. “Fragile states are thus to be defined as states that are failing, or at risk of failing, with respect to authority, comprehensive basic service provision, or legitimacy.”² By coincidence, this definition is also most closely related to Canada’s Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) terminology.

What does this definition mean and what are the key concepts to fragility? One key concept is the authority, legitimacy and capacity framework (ALC), which considers fragile states as ones that lack the ALC to support its development and existence, and therefore create a level of fragility.³

Authority refers to the ability of the state to enact binding legislation over its population and to provide the latter with a stable and safe environment. Legitimacy refers to the ability of the state to command public loyalty to the governing regime and to generate domestic support for government legislation and policies. Capacity refers to the power of the state to mobilise public resources for productive uses.⁴

¹ Stewart, Frances, Graham Brown, *Fragile States - Overview* (Oxford, UK: University of Oxford, Oxford Department of International Development, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE), June 2010).

² *Ibid.*, 9.

³ Chauvet, Lisa, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “The Costs of Failing States and the Limits to Sovereignty”, *Fragile States: Causes, Costs, and Responses*, edited by Wim Naudé, Amelia U. Santos-Paulino, and Mark McGillivray for the United Nations University World Institute for Development and Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), v.

⁴ Carment, David and Yiagadeesen Samy, “Engaging Fragile States: Closing the Gap between Theory and Policy,” *Global Dialogue (Online)* 13, no.1 (Winter, 2011), 38. (accessed April 10, 2014) <http://search.proquest.com/docview/883389217?accountid=9867>

This state fragility “is associated with various combinations of systemic dysfunctions leading to government inefficiency and breakdown of the social contract”⁵ and is a continuum; a spectrum of different levels of fragility that states can progress through in either an improving or worsening manner.

INDICATORS OF FRAGILITY

Now that a common terminology for this essay has been established, there needs to be a method of measuring and indicating fragility. The literature on the topic reflects some of the same challenges that were uncovered when seeking a common definition of a failing state. There are numerous measurement indices and choosing which one to use is difficult, however necessary. “The correct measurement of the cause and extent of fragility is important to help identify and monitor situations of fragility, and hence to make context-specific responses to assist countries to overcome fragile situations.”⁶ The problem then arises on how to choose an indicator.

Because of the increased international attention on fragile states, there has been much research done on the subject that captures different perspectives, approaches, intent

⁵ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Sub-Regional Office for West Africa (ECA/SRO-WA), *Fragile States and Development in West Africa* (Denmark: Phoenix Design Aid A/S, February 2012), 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

and motivation⁷, as was seen with the research on the definition and terminology. Due to the large number and variety of indices, the German Development Institute (DIE) and the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) published the User's Guide on Measuring Fragility (2009)⁸. The guide is an in-depth analysis of the most commonly used indices and "provides a comprehensive overview of existing cross-country indices measuring fragility and demonstrates how to use them"⁹. The user's guide highlights some key points about the variety of indices. To begin, they are generally produced by four categories of actors: universities, think tanks, media corporations and international organizations.¹⁰ The category of the actors, the funding source, the affiliation of the authors and the normative bias of the producers naturally influence the focus of the index and must be considered. However, despite these differences, all of the actors conduct their analysis using the same limited pool of data and thus have the same informational starting point.¹¹ The indices measure the most central attributes of the state (as described in the definition section), namely the state's ALC within the security, political, economic and, only in case of the CIFP Fragility Index, environmental dimensions.¹² That being

⁷ German Development Institute (DIE) and United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), *Users' Guide on Measuring Fragility* (N.p.: German Development Institute (DIE) and United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) 2009), viii.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, vii-viii.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹² *Ibid.*, 25.

said, the indices are generally predictive or descriptive, based on their data sources and purpose of use: predictive methodology for warning mechanisms; and descriptive for research, policy formulation, performance monitoring and stakeholder reporting.

The purpose of this discussion is not to analyze all of the existing indices, but to demonstrate that, as there are numerous definitions of fragile states, there are numerous indicators, all which reflect a distinct bias. Caution must be exercised for the following; when selecting a definition and indicator, as purpose determines the selection of the index to use; when considering the context of the data source, as bias and index must be appreciated; and, when using these indices as the sole source of information for policy development, as they are not a fulsome representation of the situation. However, there is usefulness in the UNDP Users' Guide as a reference source, and it should be consulted for any further details on the indices available.

IMPACT OF FAILING STATES – MOTIVATION TO INTERVENE

What are the impacts of failing states and why is the international community compelled to intervene? In an era of globalization, the impacts of failing states are not only felt by their own citizens, but by their neighbors, the greater region and the international community. “When left to fester, fragile states don't simply implode and fizzle out. Rather, they tend to metastasize and engulf neighboring countries – and

beyond.”¹³ These costs are significant and can be broadly looked at in the context of security and economic factors.

One of the impacts of failing states that receives substantial attention is the security threat posed by non-state, transnational actors that have emerged since the Cold War. “While developed countries like the United States are one of the *targets* of transnational actors, developing countries and poorly governed regions are frequently the *sources* of these challenges.”¹⁴ These transnational actors include terrorists and organized crime. Failing states are an attractive option to provide a home base from where these groups can operate. There is sufficient existing infrastructure, such as communication networks and transportation hubs, to support networked operations, training facilities and staging areas. These groups operate without being hindered by security forces because the fragile state does not have that capacity and level of control.¹⁵ As a result, these non-state actors can build and flourish in failing states. These domestic threats are left uncontained and spread to the region and international community, undermining

¹³ Siegle, Joseph, “Stabilising Fragile States,” *Global Dialogue (Online)* 13, no.1 (Winter 2011) 19. (accessed April 10, 2014) <http://search.proquest.com/docview/883393353?accountid=9867>.

¹⁴ Reveron, Derek S. and Kathleen A. Mahoney-Norris, *Human Security in a Borderless World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011), 5.

¹⁵ Mair, Stefan, “A New Approach: The Need to Focus on Failing States,” *Harvard International Review* 29, no. 4 (Winter 2008),53. (accessed April 10, 2014) <http://search.proquest.com/docview/230992725?accountid=9867>.

government institutions, disturbing financial systems and causing undue harm internationally.¹⁶

Fragile states also pose a security threat in terms of conflict and health pandemics that may occur within the state, but often spill over to the region. Failing states are more likely to experience civil unrest and conflict because the state does not have the capacity to provide basic societal functions including security. Conflict brings much suffering, loss of life, damage to property, human rights violations and potentially internally displaced persons (IDPs). Health epidemics are less likely to be contained, as there is a lack of capacity to monitor the situation and provide medical attention. All of these ‘problems without passports’ are threats to not only the state, but the region and global community.¹⁷

These security threats also create obstructions to economic development, which further increases the fragility of the state. Conflict in particular is a significant problem as the failing state’s resources are either damaged or destroyed, and, as a result, the state is not able to extract income from its resource potential. Poor economic performance and poverty may encourage conflict, which in turn impedes the economic performance of the

¹⁶ United States, The Office of the President, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 49.

¹⁷ Mair, Stefan, “A New Approach: The Need to Focus on Failing States,” ..., 53.

state.¹⁸ State fragility may also interrupt access to global commons, such as the sea, air and space domains, trade routes/shipping lanes and communication networks¹⁹ that are used for international trade. Any interruptions to regional and international trade will attract international attention, as states seek to protect their national interests abroad, particularly in the protection of their market interests.

The financial costs of failing states are also substantial. It is estimated that “the annual cost of failing states is more than twice the amount of aid being distributed globally, with most of the cost being inflicted on neighboring countries”.²⁰ More specifically, “the combined total cost of failing states is around \$276 billion per year. This far exceeds expenditures on global aid programmes and is indeed double what would be generated were the OECD to raise aid to the UN target level of 0.7 per cent of GDP.”²¹ Clearly, the costs of failing states are considerable, and provide ample motivation to intervene. “Interconnectedness has made the mutual involvement of states in each other’s domestic affairs necessary and inevitable.”²²

¹⁸ Chauvet, Lisa, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “The Costs of Failing States and the Limits to Sovereignty”..., vi.

¹⁹ United States, The Office of the President, *National Security Strategy*,..., 49.

²⁰ Carment, David and Yiagadeesen Samy, “Engaging Fragile States: Closing the Gap between Theory and Policy,”..., 41.

²¹ Chauvet, Lisa, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “The Costs of Failing States and the Limits to Sovereignty”..., 106.

²² Lyons, Gene M., Michael Mastanduno, “Introduction: International Intervention, State Sovereignty, and the Future of International Society,” *Beyond Westphalia? State Sovereignty and*

CURRENT CHALLENGES – WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

This essay has thus far described the problem of fragile states and their impacts, outlining the case for intervention. If the international community is compelled to intervene, and by all accounts is doing so, what are some of the problems with the current construct? What are the challenges facing intervention strategies?

Just as was done for the discussion on definition and indicators of state fragility, it is useful to have a common understanding of the term ‘intervention’ in order to frame the discussion. For the purpose of this analysis, intervention will be considered as a spectrum of operations, ranging from influence activities using soft power, to the delivery of development aid and assistance, to exercising hard power through the use of force. The objective to intervention is “to change the behaviors and capabilities of a government, or to affect the activities of political factions in a country where effective central authority has broken down.”²³ More specifically, the spectrum can be described as follows:

Intervention involves the physical crossing of borders with a clear-cut purpose, such as transporting relief workers into the territory of a sovereign state to deliver humanitarian assistance, or bombing a country’s nuclear or chemical facilities to stem the development of weapons of mass

International Intervention, edited by Gene M. Lyons and Michael Mastanduno (Baltimore, MA: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, 11.

destruction. Short of crossing borders and physically intervening, a group of states may attempt to *isolate* another state by cutting off diplomatic or economic relations, usually with the aim of precipitating a collapse of the government or a change in its offensive behavior....But before applying sanctions and isolating an offending party, states may seek to *influence* another government to change its behavior through negotiations, or by promising rewards or threatening punishment.²⁴

If we consider intervention at the strategic level (the level of interest for this essay), the discussion is specifically about international intervention. The distinction is important, because intervention at this level is executed “by, or in the name of, the international community. An important difference between international and unilateral intervention involves the element of legitimacy, that is, whether and how the right to intervene has been justified, politically or legally.”²⁵

These definitions, and a reflection on the current state of intervention, bring about two areas of concern that donors have expressed regarding the delivery of intervention: state sovereignty and effectiveness. Any intervention, throughout the spectrum, is an infringement on state sovereignty. Because of the prevalence of Westphalian normative values regarding non-interference, there is reluctance from the greater international community to intervene and overrule the sovereignty of the failing state, unless there is an overwhelming need and/or international legitimacy. This legitimacy provides credibility to the actions and provides ethical reassurance to donors, and the public, that

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

the actions are taken in accordance with international law and the shared values of the group. However, the reluctance to meddle in the domestic affairs of the state only exacerbates the problem of fragility if the governmental institutions of the state are one of the causal factors of fragility. A reluctance to intervene and reform the state lets the problems of the failing state persist and reduces the effectiveness of the intervention.

The second issue of concern is regarding the effectiveness of intervention strategies. The resources available for assistance are decreasing and donors have lost some faith in development programmes. Lester Pearson's call for countries to donate 0.7 per cent of GDP to development forty years ago has not been embraced by the greater international community. The lofty goal remains "a target which to date has been reached by a tiny handful of nations, none of which are part of the G8. In fact, global development aid as a fraction of global GDP has fallen in the decades following".²⁶ One of the reasons for this decline may include donor fatigue, where donors have lost trust in the capacity of international aid to deliver results. With fiscally restrained budgets available for assistance and donor fatigue, states are expecting better performance for their limited resources, a higher return on investment. "The quantity of global aid remains abysmally low. But critics also point out that aid depends critically on its quality as well as its quantity."²⁷

²⁶ Butler, Colin, "Foreword," In *Measuring Effectiveness in Humanitarian and Development Aid: Conceptual Frameworks, Principles and Practice*, edited by Andre M.N. Renzaho (New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2007) xv.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, xvi.

One way that donors are attempting to maximize the value of their donor resources is through selectivity,²⁸ i.e. choosing, either unilaterally or multilaterally how much aid to donate and where to direct it. This selectivity creates two sets of problems. One, if donor states are deciding to intervene unilaterally or multilaterally, they lose the credibility of international legitimacy. The motivation for the infringement on state sovereignty is put into doubt. Two, these individual activities reduce the economy of effort gained by strategically collecting, amalgamating and allocating resources according to need. By being selective, donors may inadvertently further reduce the legitimacy and effectiveness of the development programme.

THE WAY AHEAD - POTENTIAL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Now that the problems of failing states and intervention challenges have been discussed, this essay will focus on potential areas for improvement. In light of the current problems with the delivery of aid, what can be done to make it more effective? This section will offer some general concepts that challenge the current construct of intervention strategies, with a focus on defining the problem, understanding the problem, formulating strategy and delivering intervention programmes.

²⁸ McGillivray, Mark, "Aid Allocation and Fragile States", In *Fragile States: Causes, Costs, and Responses*, edited by Wim Naudé, Amelia U. Santos-Paulino, and Mark McGillivray for the United Nations University World Institute for Development and Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) 174-175.

Fragile states are a menace unlike any other, endangering international security, while ruining the lives of hundreds of millions across the globe. Although everyone agrees that they should be dealt with, no one seems able to formulate a strategy to do so. Even worse, few seem to understand the underlying causes of their dysfunction.²⁹

The first area for potential improvement is on building consensus on what defines and constitutes a failed or fragile state. “Doing so helps to distinguish the positive and negative guidelines of nation-states in the developing world in order to respond to their needs.”³⁰ As was seen earlier in the essay, it is evident that there is no clear consensus on the definition, the measurement criteria or the indicators of fragility. Understandably, all of the contributors to the debate have their own biases and need to tailor the information to serve different purposes, but these divergent ideas are not constructive to building consensus on international intervention. Without a common definition and focus on the issue, time and resources are expended on discussing the matter rather than acting, colloquially referred to as ‘paralysis by analysis’.

Although there is motivation to intervene, there is a fundamental misunderstanding of the issues that create fragile states. “Nobody seems able to explain how to fix them – and why decades spent pumping money, peace-keepers, and advice

²⁹ Kaplan, Seth D., *Fixing Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2008) 1.

³⁰ Rotberg, Robert I., “The Challenge of Weak, Failing, and Collapsed States”, *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, edited by Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 84.

into fragile states have been unable to reform them.”³¹ The failure of past intervention strategies may have been caused by a lack of understanding of the problem. In his book *Fixing Fragile States*³², Seth Kaplan offers a new way of conceptualizing the problem by blending the approaches of “political science, economic, sociological, and business theory together with firsthand experience in the art of helping developing countries prosper”.³³ Kaplan’s model is an innovative, comprehensive approach that attempts to capture the complexity of issues in failing states, and describes “how a country’s political, economic, and societal life evolves: a population’s capacity to cooperate...and its ability to take advantage of a set of shared, productive institutions.”³⁴ These two factors (cohesiveness of population and the robustness of institutions) describe how a society functions, and in turn how it will be able to develop and implement local solutions.

The Kaplan model incorporates the two factors described above with the governance policies accepted by the local government to illustrate the determinants of the state’s capacity to advance and use development to improve the current state of fragility. The purpose of presenting this model is to offer a new paradigm in conceptualizing the problem of failing states. Although this is only one of many such models, its value is in

³¹ Kaplan, Seth D., *Fixing Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development*, ..., 1.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

its holistic approach to understanding the state and facilitating the creation of local solutions that are intuitive to the functioning of the state. It is a unique approach to development that goes beyond the traditional discussions based on economics or human rights and considers the essential elements of culture, traditional identities and historical context. The painful and expensive lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan have clearly demonstrated how essential it is to have this depth of appreciation of the situation, and how disastrous Western-centric attempts at solving the issue can be without it.

The key to using any such comprehensive model is, of course, stakeholder engagement. It is only logical to involve representatives from the local population when developing an appreciation of the local situation, however, this often is overlooked. This representation should also include the appropriate gender representation, as recommended in UNSCR 1325.

Having a consensus on the definition of fragile states and an in-depth understanding of the problem will build a solid foundation upon which the strategy for the allocation of resources can be articulated. One method to developing a strategy is to use a strategy formulation model. The key objective to any strategy development is to use a logical thought process that forces intervention planners to consider the numerous factors that will affect the intervention program. A strategy formulation process facilitates not just the planning, but enables stakeholder engagement in an up-front dialogue on their concerns, intentions, motivations and expectations. This dialogue and articulation of

intent can help build consensus on the intervention strategy and help build the case for international legitimacy.

The next area of potential improvement is how to intervene, i.e. how to fix failing states. There are numerous models for aid allocation that have been developed, based on economic performance criteria, political indicators or contextual models. One approach is the use of the authority, legitimacy, capacity (ALC) framework that was introduced earlier in the essay. “The ALC framework can be a guiding framework for thinking about the types of intervention that are required (for example, programme versus project lending, targeting poverty versus governance, or looking at absorptive capacities)”.³⁵ Another framework to consider is that offered by Kaplan, who offers a set of ten guiding principles for the creation of an assistance programme. These guiding principles are an attempt to get beyond the traditional blueprint of aid in order to focus on the internal functioning of the failing state. The principles are based on the central theme of “facilitating local processes to enable them to foster the cohesive societies and widely accepted institutions necessary for societal governing systems to work effectively”.³⁶ The overall goal of the framework is “to produce a locally appropriate and self-sustaining governance system that can – within a reasonable amount of time – drive development

³⁵ Carment, David, Stewart Prest and Yiagadessen Samy, “The Causes and Measurement of State Fragility,” *Fragile States: Causes, Costs, and Responses*, edited by Wim Naudé, Amelia U. Santos-Paulino, and Mark McGillivray for the United Nations University World Institute for Development and Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 55.

³⁶ Kaplan, Seth *Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development*, ..., 50.

forward”³⁷, i.e. to rebuild the fragile state from the ground up within the context of the state (its history, precedents, culture, society and functions). The ten principles are as follows: adopt local models, closely integrate state and society, design institutions around identity groups, construct states bottom-up, exploit the advantages of regionalism, unify disparate peoples, supplement state capacity, reinforce and complement local processes, foster private investment and competition, and creatively and gradually increase accountability³⁸. These principles, just like the model of understanding the problem, are a fresh approach to delivering effective aid in order to fix fragile states.

Now that the problem has been defined and there are frameworks for both understanding the problem and formulating a strategy for intervention, some attention should be directed towards improving the implementation of assistance and execution of intervention strategy. There are two issues to consider: first, the removal of the impediments to reform; and secondly, determining the timing and focus of aid.

The first step to implementing reform in fragile states is to remove the roadblocks to development. If the goal to an intervention strategy is to reform the existing state’s authority, legitimacy and capacity (ALC) so that the state can meet its responsibilities and reduce its fragility, then impediments to reform must be removed. These obstructions may be caused by the existing governance structures. “Inappropriate institutions cause

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 50-63.

fragile states and that only by redesigning those institutions can dysfunctional places craft the commercial environments necessary to attract investment.”³⁹ The traditional options for replacing these institutions are governance assistance and transitional administration. Governance assistance is used to provide oversight within a specific sector of the state, such as reform of financial institutions through the assistance of organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).⁴⁰ “Transitional administration, usually authorized by the UN Security Council, has always been seen as a temporary, transitional measure designed to create the conditions under which conventional sovereignty can be restored”⁴¹ and can range from “the full assertion of executive authority by the UN for some period of time, . . . , to more modest efforts involving monitoring the implementation of peace agreements”.⁴² These two forms of institutional reform have been used in the past and are generally not viewed as intrusions of state sovereignty. Because of the Westphalian normative values of non-interference, the international community may be most comfortable with these options. However, these may not be the ideal solutions.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰ Krasner, Stephen D, “Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States,” *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, edited by Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 660-661.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

Other options for institutional reform to be considered are trusteeships and shared sovereignty. Trusteeships, or protectorates, assign the responsibility of the state to a trustee, whether that is the UN, a regional organization such as the African Union (AU), or another state. In essence, the sovereignty of the state is transferred to an external actor until such time that the fragile state has the capacity to resume its control. “Shared sovereignty would involve the engagement of external actors in some of the domestic authority structures of the target state for an indefinite period of time.”⁴³ This option does not relinquish total control of the state, but only specific areas of governance.

The point of discussing these options is to challenge the existing normative values of non-intervention of state sovereignty, to consider the options that have the most potential to remove institutional impediments to change and implement alternative institutional structures that will gain the support of the state’s population. The key to choosing another form of governance is to use Kaplan’s model of understanding the local societal functions, so that the new institution makes sense within the context of the failing state and has the greater chance of success. Of note, holding an election in order to encourage the use of the democratic process is not a recommended option to begin the reform process, as “the prospect of an election and its immediate legacy make reform

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 666.

more difficult than otherwise”.⁴⁴ Elections use up valuable resources and detract from more immediate problems, notably implementing a central government structure.

Inherent to implementing a central governance structure is the requirement to reduce the influence of the ruling elite. If the starting point for development and reform success is cooperation, this will be unlikely if the ruling elite maintain their power circles. If the state is rich in natural resources, the elite will typically have control over the resources and the income it generates, because there is no system of checks and balances to ensure equal distribution of the equity. The elite class will then seek to maintain the absence of regulation in order to maximize its payoffs from the natural resources.⁴⁵ What then is to be done to reduce the influence of the elite class? Because their preferences and objectives cannot be changed, the windfall of income to this class can be reduced through a control system that will limit their hegemony on the resources of the state. This holds true for either the natural resources of the state, or the flow of financial aid. Instituting a central government that can implement and enforce these control mechanisms will help ensure that income and aid can be distributed equitably, not just to the groups in power.

Once a governing structure has been established, then the timing and targeting of financial aid and technical assistance needs to be reconsidered. In order for the state to be able to absorb financial aid, it requires some fundamental social knowledge to be able to

⁴⁴ Chauvet, Lisa and Paul Collier, “Aid and Reform in Failing States,” *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature* 22, no. 1, *Business Source Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 4, 2014), 20.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

assess the needs of the state, to decipher how best to allocate the aid and to actually be able to use the aid. Social knowledge can be built through technical assistance such as training and education. “Technical assistance augments the capacity of the public sector to implement reform. It increases directly the skilled labor force in the public sector and, more indirectly, contributes to building the capacity of the local labor force.”⁴⁶ It essentially builds state capacity to absorb and use financial aid. If it can absorb, spend, and distribute financial aid as the needs demand, then there is less opportunity for the abuse of the aid and misallocation of funds, and provides a better chance of reform actually working.

The delivery of financial aid is only effective once the pillars of central governance and state capacity have been established. If these two are lacking, then funds will stay in the hands of the ruling elite or corrupt factions that may use the windfall to support and increase their area of influence. Foreign aid as a liquid currency is also too strong of a corruptive influence in a chaotic state that does not have the control mechanisms to monitor the flow of aid or the ability to use it. All of this not only wastes away foreign aid, but may actually make the fragile situation worse.

The key to any assistance is timing and selection of intervention strategies. However, the basic logic to any intervention is that there must be a framework that begins with establishing a central government that can control the population and facilitate state

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

functions; then, build the social knowledge and capacity to implement reform and absorb aid; and, finally, when these conditions have been met, deliver financial aid. In addition to this framework, donor supervision is required to ensure that the donor resources are being allocated and used as intended.⁴⁷ If this framework is followed, then there will be a process that creates and implements the necessary structure that can use the aid effectively and reduce the likelihood of corruption or misuse.

CONCLUSION

Failing states are a persistent, expensive problem that is difficult to solve. But the problem cannot be ignored, because the impacts of these fragile states within a globalized community are too high and the costs of allowing these states to fail are even higher. However, developing and delivering effective intervention strategies is a challenge. This essay has highlighted some of these issues and offered recommendations that would improve the effectiveness of intervention in failing states.

The essay began with a discussion on the problem space around failing states, demonstrating the lack of common definitions, measurement criteria and indicators of state fragility, to highlight the absence of consensus on these basic concepts. Then, an overview of the costs of failing states was provided, to illustrate the significance of their impact on the greater global community and the motivation to intervene. However

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

inclined donors are to contribute, there are some significant challenges facing current intervention practices. In order to solve these issues, potential areas for improvement were offered. These recommendations challenged the conventional wisdom of current intervention strategies, with the goal to make them more effective. “If local, regional, and international actors embrace the new paradigm of development, fragile states can look forward to a much brighter future for their inhabitants and can begin to play a constructive role in the world at large.”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Kaplan, Seth *Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development, ...*, 13.

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