

Peacebuilding: What Is in a Name?



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This article surveys and analyzes twenty-four governmental and inter-governmental bodies that are currently active in peacebuilding in order to, first, identify critical differences in how they conceptualize and operationalize their mandate, and, second, map areas of potential concern. We begin by briefly outlining the various terms used by different actors to describe their peacebuilding activities and correlate these terms with differing core mandates, networks of interaction, and interests. We then identify the divisions regarding the specific approaches and areas of priority. Thus far most programs have focused on the immediate or underlying causes of conflict—to the relative neglect of state institutions. We conclude by raising concerns about how peacebuilding is institutionalized in various settings, including at the UN's Peacebuilding Commission. **KEYWORDS:** peacebuilding, postconflict reconstruction, peacekeeping, United Nations.

Thirteen years ago, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali unveiled the concept of postconflict peacebuilding, defining it as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict.”¹ Since then practitioners, scholars, international and regional organizations, and states have attempted to better identify what institutionalizes peace after war and what the critical ingredients and steps likely to further that goal are. If the success of peacebuilding is measured against how well it has, indeed, institutionalized peace, the picture is very mixed. Nearly 50 percent of all countries receiving assistance slide back into conflict within five years, and 72 percent of peacebuilding operations leave in place authoritarian regimes.² If, however, success is measured in terms of the institutionalization of the concept of peacebuilding, then it appears to be a resounding success. An impressive number of organizations contribute to the cause of ending and preventing deadly conflict and use the concept to frame and organize their postconflict activities. Every indication, moreover, is that the demand for peacebuilding will increase further because the long-term concern about ending civil wars has now been joined by the fear that weak states pose a

major threat to international stability.³ Perhaps the surest sign of the thriving peacebuilding agenda is the decision by the 2005 World Summit at the UN to endorse UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's proposals to create a peacebuilding commission, support office, and fund. When implemented, these structures will institutionalize peacebuilding at the highest levels—and increase the incentives for others to join the peacebuilding bandwagon.

Although peacebuilding is generically defined as external interventions that are designed to prevent the eruption or return of armed conflict, there are critical differences among actors regarding its conceptualization and operationalization. This article surveys and analyzes twenty-four governmental and intergovernmental bodies that are currently active in peacebuilding in order to, first, identify critical differences in how they conceptualize and operationalize their mandate and, second, map areas of potential concern. Our survey includes actors who are the largest funders or implementers of international peacebuilding assistance and who are likely to participate in a future UN Peacebuilding Commission.⁴ In the first section we briefly outline the various terms used by different actors to describe their peacebuilding activities and correlate these terms with differing core mandates, networks of interaction, and interests. Although different terms are used to describe postconflict peacebuilding, there are even greater divisions regarding the specific approaches that might achieve it, which is the focus of the second section. Some programs focus on the production of stability and security in the early days of a peace agreement's implementation, while others focus on building vibrant civil societies and furthering development, democracy, justice, and the rule of law. Although there are various reasons for these differing priorities, the prevailing organizational mandates and interests are an important part of the explanation. Thus far, though, programs have focused on the immediate or underlying causes of conflict—to the relative neglect of state institutions. This neglect is a possible artifact of the ingrained belief by wealthy countries that liberalization, largely defined as the movement toward democracy, markets, and the rule of law, is the best way to develop a positive peace in poor ones. In this respect, international peacebuilders have demonstrated greater concern with the kind of state being built rather than its degree. There is evidence, however, that this neglect is being redressed. Although this greater attention is overdue, to the extent that it is driven by a fear that weak states create a permissive environment for terrorist and criminal networks, it might create a willingness to be more concerned with the degree of the state rather than the kind.

By way of conclusion, we discuss several policy implications. Although we see a lot of interest in peacebuilding, much of it is at the level of rhetoric and not at the level of resources. The danger, therefore, is that while peacebuilding looks highly supported on paper, in fact it receives little meaningful financial and political support relative to the costs of renewed conflict.

Second, we need to be very cognizant of the particular version of peacebuilding that is being institutionalized. There are important differences in how various actors see the complex task of peacebuilding and the many priorities it entails. Debates among agencies over how to implement peacebuilding in particular areas must not be settled by bureaucratic power but by the recipient states themselves, with international actors helping inform their choices by access to evidence-based arguments (and an acknowledgment that the evidence is limited and analysis highly provisional). These are critical issues to keep in mind at the UN Peacebuilding Commission. Finally, agencies must focus more attention on creating state institutions that can deliver basic public goods in an equitable manner. Although the state is not the only institution that underpins stability, pursuing peacebuilding without an institutional foundation is a recipe for failure.

Peacebuilding and Its Aliases

Peacebuilding is generically understood as external interventions that are intended to reduce the risk that a state will erupt into or return to war. Yet, as captured in Table 1, different agencies use a wide variety of terms that are related to but are not necessarily synonymous with peacebuilding. Even more confusing, some use the same term, peacebuilding, in slightly different ways. Different groupings clearly emerge: the UN Secretariat, UN specialized agencies, European organizations, and member states. This differentiation, as we suggest below, owes partly to prevailing organizational mandates and networks. The organization's core mandate will heavily influence its reception to, and definition and revision of, the concept of peacebuilding. Moreover, organizations do not exist in isolation but instead are nested in structured relationships and exchange of resources and information; those that are linked have tended to converge on a consensus definition.⁵

The UN Secretariat continues to build on former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's original formulation: "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict."⁶ At the UN, "peacebuilding" complements the organization's peacemaking and peacekeeping functions. In his *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, Boutros-Ghali expanded on the basic ideas behind peacebuilding and then defined its essential goal as "the creation of structures for the institutionalization of peace."⁷ Since then, other units within the Secretariat have modified and refined this formulation. As Charles Call notes in his review of peacebuilding at the UN, at this point the UN introduced two important clarifications. One, it began to emphasize that peacebuilding is more than the elimination of armed conflict; after all, stability can be achieved by the balance or threat of force. Instead, it involves the creation

Table 1 Different Concepts and Definitions Across Agencies

Agency	Major Concepts	Definitions	Other Concepts
UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA)	Postconflict peacebuilding	All external efforts to assist countries and regions in their transitions from war to peace, including all activities and programs designed to support and strengthen these transitions.	n/a
UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)	Peacekeeping	Activities to help countries torn by conflict create conditions for sustainable peace, including activities to monitor and observe peace processes that emerge in postconflict situations and assist excombatants to implement the peace agreements.	n/a
UN Development Programme (UNDP)	Conflict prevention and peacebuilding	Activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations, something that is more than just the absence of war (Brahimi report). ^a	Postconflict recovery n/a
World Bank	Postconflict reconstruction	Activities that support the transition from conflict to peace in an affected country through the rebuilding of the socioeconomic framework of the society.	n/a
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Postconflict recovery	Activities to restore assets and production levels in the disrupted economy.	Postconflict peacebuilding
European Commission (EC)	Conflict prevention and crisis management	Activities aiming not only at easing a situation where an outbreak of violence is imminent (conflict prevention in a narrow sense) but also at preventing the occurrence of such a situation (conflict prevention in a wider sense).	n/a
	Reconstruction and rehabilitation	Reestablishment of a working economy and the institutional capacities needed to restore social and political stability in developing countries that have suffered serious damage through war, civil disorder, or natural disaster.	n/a
US Department of State	Postconflict reconstruction and stabilization	Activities to help postconflict states lay a foundation for lasting peace, good governance, and sustainable development.	Peacebuilding
US Department of Defense (DOD)	Reconstruction and stabilization	Competencies identified for reconstruction include humanitarian assistance, public health, infrastructure, economic development, rule of law, civil administration, and media, whereas stability operations require sufficient security forces, communication skills, humanitarian capabilities, and area expertise.	Conflict prevention

(continues)

Table 1 continued

Agency	Major concepts	Definitions	Other Concepts
US Agency for International Development (USAID)	Postconflict recovery and transition assistance	Immediate interventions to build momentum in support of the peace process including supporting peace negotiations; building citizen security; promoting reconciliation; and expanding democratic political processes.	Conflict prevention; reconstruction
UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UKFCO)	Postconflict reconstruction	An umbrella term covering a range of activities required in the immediate aftermath of conflict.	Postconflict peacebuilding; conflict prevention
UK Ministry of Defence (UKMOD)	Peacebuilding	Activities relating to the underlying causes of conflict and the longer-term needs of the people; requires a commitment to a long-term process.	
UK Department for International Development (DFID)	Conflict reduction and postconflict peacebuilding	Conflict reduction includes conflict management (activities to prevent the spread of existing conflict); conflict prevention (short-term activities to prevent the outbreak or recurrence of violent conflict); conflict resolution (short-term activities to end violent conflict); and peacebuilding (medium- and long-term actions to address the factors underlying violent conflict). ^b Essential postconflict peacebuilding measures include disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs, and building the public institutions that provide security, transitional justice and reconciliation, and basic social services. ^c	
German Federal Foreign Office (FFO)	Civilian crisis prevention	The concept of civilian crisis prevention encompasses conflict resolution and postconflict peacebuilding and is understood through a number of strategic leverage points, such as the establishment of stable state structures (rule of law, democracy, human rights, and security), and the creation of the potential for peace within civil society, the media, cultural affairs, and education. ^d	Conflict resolution; peacebuilding
German Federal Ministry of Defense (FMD)	Multidimensional peace missions	Multidimensional peace missions aim to redress the destruction of a country's infrastructure resulting from intrastate conflict. In addition to their military aspect, they undertake a variety of tasks ranging from reform of the security forces and demobilization of combatants to the rebuilding of the justice system and government structures and preparations for elections.	

(continues)

Table 1 continued

Agency	Major Concepts	Definitions	Other Concepts
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)	Development and peacebuilding	Development policy seeks to improve economic, social, ecological, and political conditions so as to help remove the structural causes of conflict and promote peaceful conflict management. Goals include poverty reduction, pro-poor sustainable economic growth, good governance, and democracy. ^c Peacebuilding attempts to encourage the development of the structural conditions, attitudes, and modes of political behavior that may permit peaceful, stable, and ultimately prosperous social and economic development. As conceptualized in the joint Ustein study, peacebuilding activities fall under four main headings: security, socioeconomic foundations, political framework of long term peace, and reconciliation. ^f	Peace policy; crisis prevention
French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)	Crisis management	Policy primarily pursued through multilateral organizations: peacekeeping, political and constitutional processes, democratization, administrative state capacity, technical assistance for public finance and tax policy, and support for independent media. ^g	Peace consolidation
French Ministry of Defense (MOD)	Peace consolidation	Activities in support of peace consolidation include monitoring compliance with arms embargoes, deployment of peacekeeping troops, DDR, and deployment of police and gendarmerie in support of the rule of law. ^g	Crisis management
Agence Française de Développement (AFD)	Crisis prevention	The French government's international solidarity policy is pursued in the areas of humanitarian action and development. ^g	Crisis prevention
Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)	Conflict prevention	Activities to prevent the emergence of violent conflict through an open, inclusive, coherent, and comprehensive framework that takes into account all phases of the peace and conflict cycle.	Peacebuilding
Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces (DND/CF)	Peacebuilding	Actions to support political, economic, social, and military measures aimed at strengthening political stability, which include mechanisms to identify and support structures that promote peaceful conditions, reconciliation, a sense of confidence and well-being, and support economic growth.	n/a

(continues)

Table 1 continued

Agency	Major Concepts	Definitions	Other Concepts
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	Peacebuilding	Efforts to strengthen the prospects for internal peace and decrease the likelihood of violent conflict in order to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence.	n/a
Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)	Conflict prevention	Activities to prevent violent conflict by promoting a peace process, securing domestic stability and security, and providing humanitarian and reconstruction assistance.	n/a
Japan Development Agency (JDA)	Reconstruction Assistance	Efforts to prevent a regional conflict from recurring after a ceasefire agreement, which include an engagement in relief and reconstruction activities for victims of conflicts from the viewpoint of stabilizing the situation in affected areas.	International peace cooperation
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	Peacebuilding	A general approach extending from conflict prevention to reconciliation and postconflict reconstruction, in which peace is pursued through across-the-board endeavors that include development assistance in addition to traditional efforts within military and political frameworks.	n/a

Sources: a. UN, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, October 2000, available at http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations.
 b. Simon Lawry-White, *Review of the UK Government Approach to Peacebuilding: An Synthesis of Lessons Learned from UK Government Funded Peacebuilding Project 1997-2001* (London: UK Department for International Development, 2003, available at: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/> [accessed March 2005]).

c. DFID, March 2005, available at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>.

d. OECD, "Action Plan: Civilian Crisis Prevention, Conflict Resolution, and Postconflict Peace Building," Berlin, 12 May 2004, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/32/12/33983678.pdf>.

e. "Crisis Prevention and Conflict Settlement," Position Paper of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2002, available at <http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/fach/spezial018/index.html>; and "Development Policy as an Element of Global Structural and Peace Policy," excerpts from the German government's 11th Development Policy Report, 2002, available at <http://www.bmz.de/en/service/infothek/fach/spezial/spezial067/90.pdf>.
 f. German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Joint Utstein Study of Peacebuilding, National Report on Germany, 2003, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/32/53/33983789.pdf>.

g. French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Report on the Year 2004," 2004, available at http://www.diplomatique.gouv.fr/en/ministry_158/publications_2288/index.html.

of a positive peace, the elimination of the root causes of conflict so that actors no longer have the motive to use violence to settle their differences. The other clarification, a logical implication of the first, is that the same technologies that are used to help build peace after war also can be used to help societies avoid war in the first instance. In other words, peacebuilding is conflict prevention by another name and, therefore, “postconflict” often modifies peacebuilding to distinguish it from conflict prevention.⁸

In early 2000 the Brahimi Report on Peacekeeping Reform further refined the definition of peacebuilding: “activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war.”⁹ Although the report stressed how peacebuilding comes after conflict, and thus intentionally bracketed its applicability to conflict prevention, this restriction primarily owed to the commission’s mandate to review peacekeeping operations in the main (and to bracket what comes afterwards). The Department of Political Affairs within the Secretariat was given the lead in peacebuilding policy and UNDP in peacebuilding assistance programs. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations tends to refer to all its operations as peacekeeping. Arguably its abstinence owes less to a principled opposition to peacebuilding and more to the view that peacebuilding is outside its mandate and it has a vested interest in ensuring that these areas are treated as distinctive, if related and sequential, activities. In any event, the definition offered in the Brahimi Report proved highly influential, informing discussions at the UN on postconflict assistance.¹⁰

The UN’s specialized agencies have adopted other concepts, a pattern that probably owes to how peacebuilding fits into their broader core mandates. Consider the international financial and development agencies, which introduced postconflict activities and terms in 1995. UNDP uses both peacebuilding and conflict prevention because it has a mandate in both. It adopted the definition used in the Brahimi Report, and then observed how peacebuilding and conflict prevention are virtually synonymous (and uses the two concepts interchangeably). In doing so, it signaled that its real concern is with conflict prevention; therefore, the organization should be as concerned with preventing conflict from returning as with stopping it before it begins. The concept of peacebuilding is less attractive to organizations with no direct mandate in peacekeeping. This is particularly true for the international financial institutions, whose mandates potentially conflict with their charge to be apolitical and not meddle in the domestic affairs of states. The World Bank tends to avoid the concept of peacebuilding and its connotations of active interference in favor of postconflict reconstruction and postconflict recovery; in many respects, this represents a return to its original mandate when its involvement in post–World War II reconstruction in Europe gave it its name—the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The IMF prefers

postconflict recovery. When it writes joint documents, it tends to adopt the concept of postconflict recovery.

Outside the UN system there is greater terminological diversity. The European agencies are more likely to avoid peacebuilding in favor of alternative monikers such as civilian crisis management. Here the effort appears to distinguish these efforts from military and security-based stabilization and peace enforcement efforts. The European Union favors the concepts of conflict prevention and management, and rehabilitation and reconstruction: the former pertains to the desire to prevent the outbreak of violence that is imminent (management) and the elimination of facilitating a broader peace process (prevention); the latter pertains to the reestablishment of a working economy and institutional capacity.

Different agencies within the governments of the United States, UK, Canada, Germany, France, and Japan use different terms. The defense departments in the UK and the United States use the concepts of stabilization, reflecting their security missions (although NATO does use the term peacebuilding). The US Agency for International Development has an Office of Transition Initiatives focused on postconflict recovery and an Office for Conflict Management and Mitigation focused on prevention. The UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development prefer postconflict reconstruction rather than peacebuilding, but also make reference to peacebuilding since peace-related activities clearly fall within their respective mandates. Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs describes its postconflict work as conflict prevention, but the Canadian government uses peacebuilding to describe its actions in support of peace operations and economic development. Similarly, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses the term conflict prevention, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, a lead donor to states recovering from conflict, uses the term peacebuilding. The Japan Defense Agency, with a limited role in security provision, describes its peacebuilding involvement as reconstruction assistance. France and Germany share with the European community a preference for civilian crisis management and conflict prevention.

Peacebuilding's popularity can be attributed to a host of factors. To begin, there is a strong interest from both international and domestic actors to help states emerging from civil wars, societal breakdowns, and a violent past. Certainly there is no shortage of demand from below, as many domestic actors look for international assistance in a variety of areas. International actors increasingly view peacebuilding as instrumental to the broader humanitarian and international peace and security agenda. Peacebuilding's place in this agenda helps to explain why so many international actors believe that they can and should contribute to it; not only do they view peacebuilding as related to their core mandate, but peacebuilding also provides an important opportunity to demonstrate their continued relevance. The willingness of so many diverse

constituencies with divergent and sometimes conflicting interests to rally around peacebuilding also suggests that one of the concept's talents is to camouflage divisions over how to handle the postconflict challenge. In this respect, it functions much like a favored political symbol. Symbols are often highly ambiguous. Ambiguity can facilitate collective action because different constituencies can support the symbol without necessarily achieving consensus on the substance. National flags, for instance, are potent symbols because most can get behind the flag, though they may do so for highly different, and potentially even conflicting, reasons. The same might be said for peacebuilding. Almost all agree that building peace after war is a good thing but may not agree on why it is a good thing (i.e., because it alleviates human suffering, generates regional stability, or creates conditions for long-term development efforts to take root). There is widespread agreement, as well, that peacebuilding means more than stability promotion; it is designed to create a positive peace, to eliminate the root causes of conflict, to allow states and societies to develop stable expectations of peaceful change. Consensus breaks down, however, over the substance behind the symbol of peacebuilding. Arguably, when the Bush administration thinks of peacebuilding it imagines building market-oriented democracies, while UNDP imagines creating economic development and strong civil societies committed to a culture of nonviolent dispute resolution. These different interpretations over the operationalization of peacebuilding lead to differences over appropriate strategies and priorities; some organizations might highlight democratic elections, transitional justice, and rule of law programs, while others highlight demobilization and private sector reforms. The critical point is that the growing number of international structures whose mandates include peacebuilding might easily mask essential differences regarding the concept's meaning and practice.

The Practices of Postconflict Peacebuilding

Because there are multiple contributing causes of conflict, almost any international assistance effort that addresses any perceived or real grievance can arguably be called "peacebuilding." Moreover, anyone invited to imagine the causes of violent conflict might generate a rather expansive laundry list of issues to be addressed in the postconflict period, including income distribution, land reform, democracy and the rule of law, human security, corruption, gender equality, refugee reintegration, economic development, ethnonational divisions, environmental degradation, transitional justice, and on and on. There are at least two good reasons for such a fertile imagination. One, there is no master variable for explaining either the outbreak of violence or the

construction of a positive peace but merely groupings of factors across categories such as greed and grievance, and catalytic events. Variables that might be relatively harmless in some contexts can be a potent cocktail in others. Conversely, we have relatively little knowledge regarding what causes peace or what the paths to peace are. Although democratic states that have reasonably high per capita incomes are at a reduced risk of conflict, being democratic and rich is no guarantor of a positive peace, and illiberal and poor countries, at times, also have had their share of success. Second, organizations are likely to claim that their core competencies and mandates are critical to peacebuilding. They might be right. They also might be opportunistic. After all, if peacebuilding is big business, then there are good bureaucratic reasons for claiming that they are an invaluable partner.

Both of these reasons help explain two patterns regarding the practice of peacebuilding. One, different agencies tend to prioritize different activities. These alternative priorities are shaped not only by their knowledge of how to reduce the risk of conflict but also by a consideration of how they might best and most easily extend their existing mandates and expertise into the postconflict arena. Two, most programs emphasize the immediate and/or long-term demands of peacebuilding, that is, how to reduce the risk that the combatants do not return to war soon after the ink is dry on their peace agreement, and how to create the socioeconomic foundations for a positive peace. Conversely, with few exceptions, they fail to give concentrated attention and resources to state institutions during the critical five-year period when the state is still weak and its authority contested.

Prioritizing the Practices of Peacebuilding

In Table 2, we divided peacebuilding activities into the following four sectoral categories: security and military; social, economic, developmental, humanitarian; political and diplomatic; and justice and reconciliation.¹¹ Two important patterns emerge. The first is that different agencies tend to focus on different activities.

The UN Secretariat's units tend to define their activities in a comprehensive manner. Almost all areas of activity are included. However, there are differences between security-oriented and socioeconomic-oriented agencies, which correlate with when they tend to enter into postconflict settings. The departments of political affairs and peacekeeping operations emphasize the political-diplomatic and security-military aspects of peacebuilding, a logical extension of their mandates. UNDP stresses socioeconomic areas. Although the World Bank and IMF focus on economic development, the former emphasizes reconstruction and infrastructure while the latter describes its activities as recovery and technical assistance. The European Union emphasizes the

Table 2 Sectoral Activities and Focus Across Agencies

Activity Categories	Multilateral Institutions					United States		
	DPA	DPKO	UNDP	World Bank	IMF EC	State	DOD	USAID
Security and military								
Demining	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
DDR		☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	
Security sector reform		☐	☐		☐		■	☐
SALW			☐			☐		
Security stabilization	☐	■				☐	☐	
Conflict assessment and early warning	■		■		■			☐
Defense diplomacy		☐					☐	
Social, economic, developmental, and humanitarian								
Reconstruction			☐	■	■	☐	☐	
Infrastructure			☐	■	☐	☐	☐	☐
Economic recovery	☐		■	☐	■	☐	■	☐
Financial assistance				☐	■	☐		☐
Policy and technical assistance			■	■	■			☐
Health and education			■	■				☐
Food and agricultural support			☐	☐	☐			☐
Media support					☐			■
Repatriation and return	☐		☐		☐		☐	
NGO capacity building			☐	☐				☐
Trauma counseling			☐					☐
Political and diplomatic								
Peace agreement and mediation	■	☐						
Democratization	☐		☐		☐	■		■
Decentralization			☐	☐	☐	☐		☐
Good governance			☐	☐	☐	☐		☐
Rule of law		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Institution building			☐	■	☐	☐		☐
Human rights	☐				☐			
Election assistance	■				☐		☐	☐
Justice and reconciliation								
Leader dialogue			☐					☐
Community dialogue			☐					☐
Bridge building			☐					■
Truth and reconciliation					☐			☐

Note: ■ = Core organizational competencies; ☐ = Named activities.

political and diplomatic aspects of peacebuilding activities with a growing focus on conflict assessment and early warning activities, which can be understood as part of the security and military terrain.

The countries we surveyed exhibit their own patterns. The UK has focused on the security and military sector. The United States began with a strong interest in democratization and economic recovery, but its experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq have caused it to refocus attention on stabilization. Japan tends to focus on broad postconflict reconstruction, while France and Germany have focused their attention on immediate postconflict stabilization and long-term democracy promotion and economic reconstruction. There are important interagency differences within these countries. The defense departments, predictably, restrict themselves to the security and military sectors, while USAID and DFID are more “full service” units. Canada’s agencies focus more on security, political, justice/reconciliation than on socioeconomic, developmental, or humanitarian aspects of peacebuilding. Japan, similarly, focuses on humanitarian assistance and development.

What accounts for this variation? The most straightforward explanation is that organizations have extended their existing mandates and competencies into the postconflict area, reflecting bureaucratic inertia and building on existing areas of comparative advantage. Both factors lead to a supply—rather than demand-driven menu of postconflict peacebuilding activities. Within UN funds and programs, for example, UNICEF emphasizes reestablishing primary education and working to reintegrate child soldiers back into society, FAO and IFAD emphasize the importance of food security, UNHCR focuses on refugee return, and UNIFEM stresses the opportunities to push for greater gender equity during moments of postconflict transition and reform. Also, certainly organizations are likely to favor those strategies and definitions that will most clearly advantage their bureaucratic interests. As the UNDP noted, “Crisis and post-conflict situations present a major challenge to development assistance but also constitute a unique opportunity for UNDP to demonstrate the importance of its own core mandate—that of building national capacity for long-term growth and sustainable development.”¹² Relatedly, there is tremendous overlap between specific tasks and programs. A recent survey reveals that disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) assistance is provided by six major international agencies, security sector reform and rule of law by the same number, repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons are shared among nine agencies, and six specialized agencies work on health sector issues.¹³ This suggests not only the existence of tremendous coordination problems, but also that agencies will attempt to expand when and where possible.

Dimensions of Peacebuilding

For heuristic purposes it is possible to identify three dimensions of postconflict peacebuilding—stability creation, restoration of state institutions, and addressing the socioeconomic dimensions of conflict.¹⁴ The first dimension is the desire to reinforce stability and discourage the combatants from returning to war. In important respects, peacebuilding continues an important function of peacekeeping, the attempt to maintain a cease-fire and stability by monitoring the combatants. Yet peacebuilding goes beyond this feature of peacekeeping in several ways. Peacebuilding activities directly attempt to reduce the means available, and the incentives, for actors to return to conflict. Toward that end, they include disarmament, demobilization, reintegration programs, security sector reform, and arms control for light and heavy weapons systems. The general claim is that if peace is to prevail, then the toys must be removed from the boys. But it is not enough to try to reduce the material means for going to war. The reintegration of former combatants requires alternative avenues for the pursuit of wealth and social recognition.

The second dimension is helping to build or restore key state functions that have the capacity to generate basic public goods and possess a modicum of legitimacy. A basic function of the state is the production of public goods. But many states, especially those emerging from conflict, are hard-pressed to deliver such goods. Accordingly, peacebuilders either replace the state or partner with the state to rebuild basic facilities, public administration, rule of law systems, transportation and communication networks, and utilities, and to re-create the educational and health infrastructure. But because international actors do not envisage playing state-like functions long into the future, they also provide some degree of technical and capacity-building assistance for state institutions—even as they support parallel NGO or private sector structures that may operate outside of or duplicate state functions. For instance, international financial institutions typically provide technical assistance so that state institutions can develop the capacity to build, monitor, and regulate basic economic and financial activities. Yet an effective state is not enough. It also is important that the state have legitimacy. Indeed, over half of all the named activities that fall into this dimension of peacebuilding involve programs that are designed to create institutions that are democratic, transparent, accountable, and responsive to local needs—that is, legitimate.

The third dimension is the attempt to build not only the state's but also society's ability to manage conflict peacefully and develop the socioeconomic infrastructure necessary to underpin economic development. Toward that end, peacebuilders are involved in trauma counseling, transitional justice

and reconciliation, community dialogue, strengthening civil society organizations, increasing human rights, promoting environmental awareness, assisting with gender empowerment, building bridges between different communities, and promoting economic development. The goal is not only to try to create a culture of peace, but also to try to develop civil society organizations and a viable private sector that have the capacity to represent diverse societal interests and constrain the power of the state.

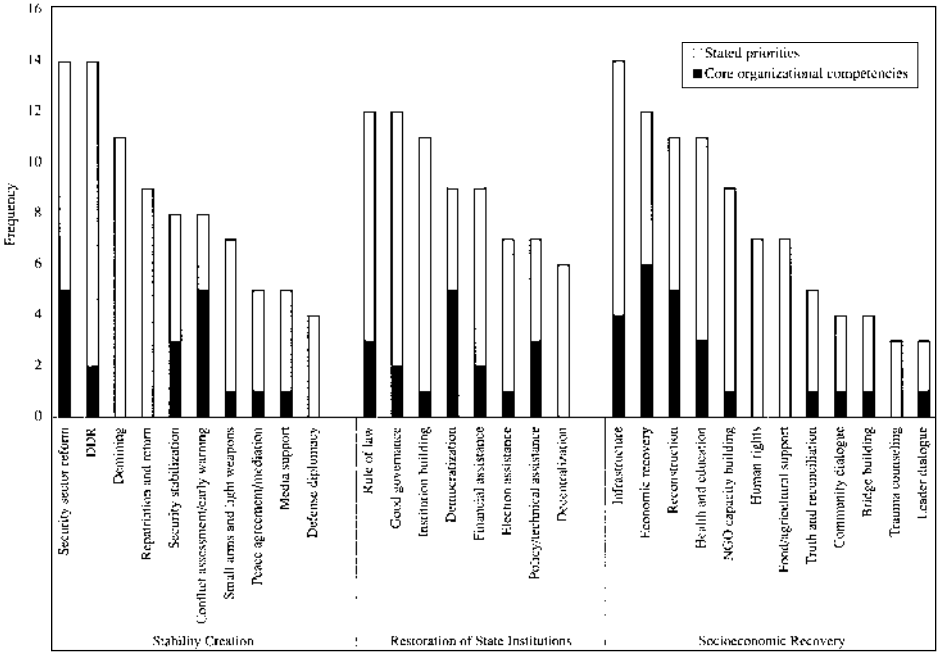
Do we see any pattern across the categories? At one level, no clear breakdown emerges. Figure 1 sets out activities by stages of peacebuilding, as per the data displayed in Table 2.

Although it could be that the peacebuilding sector is taking a nonsectarian approach, we suspect that if we weighted indicators or financial data we would see a more discriminatory pattern. While operations suggest that the peacebuilding sector is being equally attentive to all issues, studies of particular operations reveal that it generally gives more priority to one set of activities over another. Also, not all activities cost the same. Investments that fall in the first and third categories (i.e., international provision of security and reconstruction of physical infrastructure) are significantly more costly than investments in the second (public administration).

At another level, though, there is some clustering of peacebuilding activities around the first and third dimensions of peacebuilding to the relative neglect of the second. How do we account for this gap? One explanation is that these patterns reflect a particular image of the state. The modern state “exists when there is a political apparatus (governmental institutions, such as a court, parliament, or congress, plus civil service officials), ruling over a given territory, whose authority is backed by a legal system and the capacity to use force to implement its policies.”¹⁵ State building concerns how the modern state comes into existence, that is, how the process of institutionalization is accomplished along two dimensions. One concerns the specific instruments states use to control society. Attention is directed to the monopolization of the means of coercion and the development of a bureaucratic apparatus organized around rational-legal principles with the capacity to regulate, control, and extract from society. The concern, then, is with the *degree* of the state. The other dimension concerns how states and societies negotiate their relationship—that is, the *kind* of state. Attention is directed not only to whether the state has the ability to control society but also to the organizing principles that structure the state’s rule over society.

Peacebuilding operations have tended to emphasize the kind of state. Efforts around human rights, transitional justice, and democratization, in contrast, are more concerned about the kind of state rather than degree. Although not neglectful of the need to develop state capacity across a range of functions, traditional liberalization efforts prefer a “small state” and focus on creating mechanisms that limit the state’s power, increase societal

Figure 1 Name Frequency of Activities (all agencies)



participation, and hence invest the state with legitimacy. Indeed, many peacebuilding programs attempt to create the liberal state, which respects human rights; protects the rule of law; is constrained by representative institutions, a vigilant media, and periodic elections; and protects markets.¹⁶ This liberal bias has been the subject of considerable commentary in recent years, particularly since it might not promote peace. Several observers have noted that the peacebuilding project, far from eliminating the root causes of conflict, creating the liberal-democratic state, or creating an effective ally in international antiterrorism efforts, has only rekindled the conditions for conflict.¹⁷ Locating the cause of this dysfunctional outcome in the hurried way in which peacebuilding operations attempt to open up competition in a raw atmosphere that is absent of security, trust, or stable institutions, they argue in favor of a more sequenced, slower-paced, and strategic peacebuilding project that emphasizes the establishment of security and stable institutions before seeking the prize of liberalization and democracy.¹⁸

Although there is tremendous debate over what the basic functions of the state are (beyond the provision of security) and the minimal degree and kind of state that is required to underpin the peace, several elements are less

controversial. To begin, actors must have an incentive to preserve the state and its institutions. What matters, then, is the utility of the state to provide reasonable security guarantees and that powerful actors believe they benefit from a state that can enforce essential rules. In this respect, the test for the emergence of the state is the “appearance of political units persisting in time and fixed in space, the development of permanent, impersonal institutions, agreement on the need for an authority that can give final judgments, and acceptance of the idea that this authority should receive the basic loyalty of its subjects.”¹⁹ What is desired, then, is a state that can make credible commitments and deliver on those commitments in a reasonably efficient and impartial manner using rational-legal means (and coercion in the last instance). Although this does not imply the need to neglect the kind of state that is being built, it does suggest the need for more attention to the degree.

This is happening. Various state and nonstate agencies recognize that peacebuilding also is state building and that more attention needs to be directed at building a functional, capable state. Yet this growing interest might also be driven by a concern with ensuring that these states can not only deliver basic services but also contain networks that pose a threat to the international community. Led most prominently by the United States, there is a growing interest in making sure that states, especially those emerging from conflict, have the capacity to maintain stability and counter transnational threats. The degree of the state, then, matters not only because it provides a useful function for domestic society, but also for international society. Yet the desire to make sure that the postconflict state is strong enough to contend with uncivil forces might easily undermine the desire to build a liberal state, one that is accountable to society and fastened by the rule of law. If so, then peacebuilding might prove to be successful to the extent that states do not return to war five years after the peace agreement, but a failure to the extent that it leaves in place authoritarian structures.

Conclusion

Peacebuilding is increasingly institutionalized across the international landscape. Most major international and regional organizations, states, and non-governmental organizations have a program that either explicitly uses this term, adopts an alternative formulation whose practices overlap with the current meaning of peacebuilding, or work with an alternative concept whose activities intersect with peacebuilding. Yet there are several outstanding issues that suggest that this institutionalization is not all it appears to be.

To begin, assessing the degree of the institutionalization of peacebuilding requires more than attention to the organizations and units that are

actively associated with this agenda—it also demands a consideration of whether states and organizations are putting resources behind their statements. Although such data is difficult to assemble, our casual survey suggests that the peacebuilding agenda is not necessarily gorging on funds and these activities represent small percentages of the overall budgets. Consider the following examples. Since its establishment in 1997, the World Bank Post-Conflict Fund has disbursed a total of \$66.7 million, including \$10.6 million in 2004.²⁰ The 2004 budget for the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives was \$54.6 million; in 2005 it was \$48.6 million, which means that it received only 3.5 percent of a total USAID budget of \$9.1 billion.²¹ Consequently, while the peacebuilding agenda might look impressive given its recent origins, it remains diminutive when compared to the traditional activities undertaken by these and other organizations.

Second, notwithstanding a consensus definition emerging at the UN, there continues to be considerable variation in the meaning of peacebuilding because organizations are likely to adopt a meaning of peacebuilding that is consistent with their already existing mandates, worldviews, and organizational interests. The consequence is that while everyone might support the idea of building peace, they will operate with considerable differences of interpretation regarding the meaning and practice of peacebuilding. The impact of existing organizational mandates and worldviews on the variation in the practice of peacebuilding is particularly evident in the actual programs.

This suggests that any consideration of international coordination and collaboration will be more than a technical feat—it also will be profoundly political. Different agencies work with alternative modes of operationalizing peacebuilding, which, in turn, are reflective of different strategies for achieving peace after war. These strategies, though, more often than not, reflect unexamined assumptions and deeply rooted organizational mandates rather than “best practices” born from empirical analysis. This suggests that the desire to achieve coordination requires more than simply dividing up the terrain and creating linkage and efficiencies. It also is a political accomplishment that might be settled by bureaucratic and political power. Some might hope that this tendency might be cured by the proposed Peacebuilding Commission at the UN, which is mandated to help coordinate the postconflict activities of the relevant implementing agencies. Although this move can improve the efficiency and implementation of peacebuilding activities, it also is likely to clarify profound differences among these agencies regarding priorities, mandates, strategies, and trade-offs. Although one of the functions of the proposed Peacebuilding Support Office is to provide critical information so that operational agencies can make informed and reasoned choices, it is quite likely that such knowledge will be unavailable for a while. More complicated still is the process of merging this generalized knowledge with specific circumstances on the ground to yield appropriate recommendations.

Consequently, the institutionalization of peacebuilding might emerge from bureaucratic power and political infighting, and not empirical analysis. Scholars and policymakers should, therefore, monitor to see which version of peacebuilding is being institutionalized and attempt to ensure that alternative understandings are kept alive as alternative hypotheses so that reasoned choices are made at critical junctures. 🌐

Notes

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1. UN, *Agenda for Peace*, Report of the Secretary-General, para. 21. Available at http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/.

2. Paul Collier et al., *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press and World Bank, 2003); Charles T. Call and Susan E. Cook, "On Democratization and Peacebuilding," *Global Governance* 9, no. 2 (2003): 233–234.

3. Stephen Krasner and Carlos Pascual, "Addressing State Failure," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2005: 153–163.

4. This is a selective, rather than a comprehensive review. We have drawn from available data on official development assistance (ODA), emergency assistance, and assessed contributions to peacekeeping operations in ten postconflict countries (see Appendix 2, p. 57) to identify a list of the key bilateral and multilateral organizations involved in financing or implementing international "peacebuilding" efforts. Appendix 3 (p. 58) lists the actors included in the survey: the United Nations, World Bank, IMF, European Commission, United States, France, Germany, Japan, UK, and Canada. The list of the dozens of documents we reviewed and that inform our analysis are available from Michael Barnett.

5. We also detect moments when tightly networked agencies attempt to distinguish themselves and protect their turf by developing distinctive definitions of peacebuilding and alternative concepts.

6. *Agenda for Peace*, para. 21.

7. "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, Supplement to an *Agenda for Peace*: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations," A/50/60-S/1995/1, 3 January 1995.

8. Charles Call, *Institutionalizing Peace: A Review of Postconflict Peacebuilding Issues for DPA*, January 2005, unpublished paper on file with Barnett, pp. 3–4.

9. "UN, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations," October 2000. Accessed at http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/.

10. "Statement by the President of the Security Council," 20 February 2001, S/PRST/2001/5. Cited from Call, *Institutionalizing Peace: A Review of Postconflict Peacebuilding Issues for DPA*, unpublished paper on file with Barnett, p. 4.

11. See Appendix 1 (p. 56) for a list of different areas, activities, and descriptions. Table 2 identifies the prioritization of areas of involvement by organizations in their official documentation.

12. "Role of the UNDP in Crisis and Post-Conflict Situation" (DP/2001/4).

13. Susan L. Woodward, "Peace Operations: the Civilian Dimension, Accounting for UNDP and the UN Specialized Agencies," Discussion Paper, Copenhagen Seminar on Civilian Capacity for Crisis Management, 8–9 June 2004.

14. This tracks broadly with what the Secretary-General calls the "stages of recovery," including early and medium-term recovery issues and the transition to development. "Explanatory Note of the Secretary-General," 19 April 2005.

15. Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Polity Press, 1993), p. 309.

16. For related arguments, see Roland Paris, *At War's End* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Robert Orr, "The United States as Nation Builder," in Robert Orr, ed., *Winning the Peace: An American Strategy for Post-Conflict Reconstruction* (Washington, DC: CSIC Press, 2004), p. 11; and Jens Meierhenrich, "Forming States After Failure," in Robert Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 155–156.

17. Roland Paris, *At War's End*; Frances Fukuyama, *International Order and State-building* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

18. Roland Paris, *At War's End*; Jens Meierhenrich, "Forming States After Failure," in Robert Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail*, pp. 155–156.

19. Joseph Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 5. Cited in Jens Meierhenrich, "Forming States After Failure," in Robert Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail*, pp. 155–156.

20. World Bank, Post-Conflict Fund, *A Trust Fund for Assisting Conflict-Affected Countries*, August 2004, available at [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/PCFAnnualReport2004/\\$FILE/Annual+Report+PCF+04\(lowresolution\).pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/PCFAnnualReport2004/$FILE/Annual+Report+PCF+04(lowresolution).pdf).

21. USAID Budget, *Transition Initiatives*, 2006, available at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2006/ti.html>.

Appendix 1 Peacebuilding Areas, Activities, and Definitions

Activity Categories	Explanation and Examples
Security and military	
Demining	Mine clearance
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of excombatants
Security sector reform	Democratic reform and retraining of security, military, police, and correction sectors service with emphasis on efficiency and ethics
SALW	Removal of small arms and light weapons
Security stabilization	Clearance of threat and terror after the conflict
Conflict assessment and early warning	Development of conflict assessment system/study and early warning system
Defense diplomacy	Nonoperational activities such as verification of arms control agreement; visits by ships, aircraft, and other military units, and by military and civilian personnel at all levels; staff talks
Social, economic, developmental, and humanitarian	
Reconstruction	Aid for physical reconstruction of buildings, utilities, and structures
Infrastructure	Support for improving economic infrastructure
Economic recovery	Investment in key productive sectors and supporting the conditions for resumption of trade, savings, and domestic and foreign investment, including macroeconomic stabilization, rehabilitation of financial institutions, and restoration of frameworks
Financial assistance	Financial assistance once the situation is sufficiently stable for it to be used effectively
Policy/technical assistance	Assistance to rebuild capacity of key economic institutions responsible for making and implementing fiscal, monetary, and exchange rate policies
Health and education	Rebuilding and maintaining education and health infrastructure including the financing of recurrent costs
Food/agricultural support	Secure the food after the conflict and support and advise on agricultural policy (e.g., releasing land for agricultural purposes)
Media support	Support and development of a free and independent media
Repatriation and return	Support for the repatriation of refugees and return of internally displaced persons
NGO capacity building	Encourage and support networks of nongovernmental organizations and community-based organizations involved with conflict mitigation activities to leverage resources and provide coverage to larger geographic areas
Trauma counseling	Psychological and trauma counseling
Political and diplomatic	
Peace agreement/ mediation	Negotiation and implementation of peace agreement
Democratization	Support for democratic institutions and activities in the fields of education and culture that have a democratic theme or intention
Decentralization	Support decentralization of political authority

(continues)

Appendix 1 continued

Activity Categories	Explanation and Examples
Good governance	Promotion of ethics, transparency, and accountability of government
Rule of law	Establishment of law and order, justice system, and legal reform
Institution building	Help foster the development of democratic institutions and processes including the restoration of local organs of authority
Human rights	Promotion of awareness of international human rights standards and of monitoring and reporting abuses
Election monitoring	Electoral assistance and observation
Justice and reconciliation	
Leader dialogue	Dialogue opportunity between leaders
Community dialogue	Dialogue opportunity between members of antagonistic groups in community
Bridge building	Strengthening and reinforcing interethnic confidence, tolerance, and trust in the state institutions
Truth and reconciliation	Commissions—and/or other means—of inquiry into recent and violent past, using knowledge as basis for reconciliation

Appendix 2 Top Contributors to Current Peacebuilding Operations

Rank	Top Donors to 10 Countries with Ongoing UN Peacekeeping Missions ^a				Assessed Contributions to UN Peacekeeping			
	2003 Official Development Assistance		2004 Emergency Relief		2005 UN Peacekeeping Budget			
	Millions of \$	%	Millions of \$	%		%		
	Total	10,566		Total	1,806			
1	US	2,879.00	27.2	US	564	31.2	US	26.49
2	France	1,924.00	18.2	EC	288	15.9	Japan	19.47
3	EC	1,280.00	12.1	UK	156	8.6	Germany	8.66
4	Belgium	822.00	7.8	Private	102	5.6	UK	7.38
5	Germany	802.00	7.6	Germany	79	4.4	France	7.26
6	Italy	523.00	4.9	Netherlands	77	4.3	Italy	4.88
7	Sweden	272.00	2.6	Sweden	76	4.2	Canada	2.81
8	UK	203.00	1.9	UN	67	3.7	Spain	2.52
9	Canada	201.00	1.9	Norway	62	3.4	China	2.47
10	Norway	169.00	1.6	Canada	55	3.0	Republic of Korea	1.80
11	Japan	145.00	1.4	Japan	51	2.8	Netherlands	1.69
12	African Development Fund	45.00	0.4	Switzerland	40	2.2	Australia	1.59

Sources: OECD DAC database; OCHA Financial Tracking System; 2005 Annual Peacekeeping Review (forthcoming).

Note: a. The 10 countries surveyed are Afghanistan, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, former Republic of Yugoslavia (and Kosovo), Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Timor Leste.

Appendix 3 List of Organizations Surveyed

Intergovernmental Bodies

European Commission (EC), Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management Unit
International Monetary Fund (IMF)
UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)
UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA)
UN Development Programme's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
World Bank (WB)

United States

Agency for International Development (USAID), Bureau for Democracy Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, and Office of Transition Initiatives
Department of Defense (DoD)
Department of State (State)

United Kingdom

Department for International Development (DFID)
Foreign and Commonwealth Office Conflict Prevention Pools (UKFCO)
Ministry of Defence (UKMOD)

Germany

Federal Foreign Office (FFO)
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Federal Ministry of Defense (FMD)

France

Agence Française de Développement (AFD-Fr), under Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of French Overseas Territories
Ministry of Defense (MOD)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

Canada

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)
Department of National Defence and Canadian Forces (DND/CF)

Japan

Japan Defense Agency (JDA)
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
