Democracy Promotion and Statebuilding

PS142A.15
Summary

- A primary response to terrorism has been to strengthen states so that they can control their extremist groups.

- While supporting democratization, most efforts still face a dilemma:
  - To build a legitimate state requires leadership close to what the population desires.
  - But international community and/or the U.S. prefer loyal leaders who will enact policies closer to their preferences.
  - In most countries today that require external assistance, these two sets of preferences are far apart.
Westphalian Sovereignty

- Sovereignty (formal equality)
  - Political authority is vested in the state
- Territorial integrity (no transfers by force)
- Non-intervention in “internal” affairs
- Any violence emanating from a state is an act of aggression
  - States are responsible for groups using violence that operate from their territories
  - Norm emerges by late 19th century
Statebuilding

- Problem: What to do with states that lack “capacity”?
- Answer: build “stronger” states
- Liberal Statebuilding
  - Democracy legitimates states by
    - promoting deliberation in a public sphere
    - ensuring government responsiveness
    - promoting “fair” procedures
  - Economic liberalization promotes growth and reinforces democratization
Critique

- Liberal statebuilding nearly always fails
  - Liberalism is not universal
  - Democracy challenges the political equilibrium
    - Powerful groups who will not win elections oppose
  - Economic liberalization also challenges the political equilibrium
- Proponents focus on procedures and timing of liberalization
Why are states weak?

Dominant state

Subordinate state

Bargaining range
Why are states weak?
The Statebuilder’s Dilemma
Somalia

- Highly factionalized by clans
- Said Barre ruled from 1960-1991
  - Falls from office in midst of widespread famine
  - Somaliland and Puntland de facto secede
  - Rest of country falls into chaos
New World Order

- UN attempts mediation among factions, 1991-1992 (UNOSOM)
- August 1992, U.S. begins providing humanitarian assistance (Operation Provide Relief)
- December 1992, UN and U.S. begin UNITAF
  - Military support to deliver humanitarian aid
  - Mandate limited
  - Due to expire in six weeks
Statebuilding Phase I

- In March 1993, UN and U.S. expand operations in UNOSOM II
  - Mandate expands to include settlement of disputes and political reconciliation
  - U.S. forces scaled back and replaced by poorly trained and equipped UN forces
- The hunt for Mohamed Farrah Aidid
  - “Warlord” primarily responsible for overthrowing Said Barre
  - Expected to be next president
  - In implementing liberal plan, UN comes to define Aidid as impediment to democratization
  - Ends in U.S. forces attacking stronghold (*Blackhawk Down*)
End of Statebuilding Phase I

- With 18 U.S. servicemen killed, Clinton terminates the mission, UN soon follows
- U.S. lack of “will”
  - No real stake in conflict (no specific assets at risk)
  - Drawn into larger political reconstruction by UN
Statebuilding Phase II

- After 2001, U.S. becomes more concerned about “ungoverned spaces”
- Union of Islamic Courts begins to consolidate authority
  - Islamist
  - Irrendentist — once again making claims against the Ogaden
- With “green light” from U.S., Ethiopia invades in 2006, expels the UIC in 2007; Transitional Federal Government is recognized as Republic of Somalia in 2012
  - TFG is seen as extension of Ethiopia (indirect rule)
  - UIC radicalizes and morphs into al-Shabab
The Statebuilder’s Dilemma
Where we are today?

- Somaliland essentially an independent state
- Kenya, Ethiopia, and African Union forces keep al-Shabab in check
- State still fractured and weak
Afghanistan
Afghanistan

- UNSC establishes ISAF in Dec. 2001 to oversee military operations and train Afghan forces
  - Taken over by NATO in Aug. 2003
- At Bonn Conference in Dec. 2001, Hamid Karzai selected to head Interim Administration
- In 2004, under new constitution, Karzai elected president
Hamid Karzai: Our SOB in Kabul

- President from 2001 to 2014
- Fought with the mujahideen against Soviet Union
- Later joined the Northern Alliance, principal U.S. allies
- Strongly allied with U.S. when in power
  - Highly corrupt (CIA money)
  - Rigged elections in 2009; first round negated and unopposed in second round
Ashraf Ghani: Our slightly nicer SOB in Kabul

- Elected president in 2014
- Ph.D. in Anthropology (Columbia), taught at Johns Hopkins University, worked at World Bank
- Returned to Afghanistan as Finance Minister in 2002
- Honest but has not succeeded in gaining popular legitimacy
Continuing Conflict

- U.S. now negotiating with Taliban
  - Breakthrough agreement on Jan. 29, 2019
  - Taliban pledges never to allow territory to be used by terrorists
  - U.S. agrees to withdraw troops
- Consistent with Trump’s announcement in Dec. 2018 that U.S. would withdraw half of its 14,000 remaining troops
  - U.S. has along sought to end war
- First meeting between Taliban and Afghan opposition to Ghani in Moscow
  - Taliban still refuse to meet with Ghani
Conclusion

- Not clear that any leader can unify deeply divided societies like Somalia or Afghanistan, especially after violent disintegration
- Liberal democracy has certainly not worked
- Core problem is that statebuilders prefer a pro-Western “puppet” who lacks domestic legitimacy
- Leaves state weak and ungovernable