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Peacebuilding and Neoliberalism: Will Foreign Dictated State-Building Prevail?¹

In retrospect, many of us greeted the *Agenda for Peace* (United Nations 1992) with excessive optimism. Perhaps it was characteristic of the times to believe that genuine multilateralism could be the rule and not the exception in the conduct of global affairs. In that post-Cold War period – a period that has now ended – there appeared to be room for the negotiation of longstanding conflicts and the prevention of new ones with the UN playing a central role. The UN was to navigate in uncharted political waters involving the organization in what previously may have been considered the internal affairs of State. “Peace-building”, according to *An Agenda for Peace* (United Nations 1992), included “reforming or strengthening governmental institutions”. By 1995 the *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace* (United Nations 1995) was more explicit, proposing that peacebuilding entailed “the creation of structures for the institutionalization of peace”.

External involvement in the affairs of a sovereign state (as opposed to UN tutelage of decolonization processes) entailed new degrees and forms of engagement. Although there were always tensions between the principles of non-intervention in the affairs of States and that of the promotion of international security or human rights, it appeared that peacebuilding could mark both a conceptual and a practical leap forward, to be welcomed and not opposed by the majority of nations.

‘Post-war peace-building’ gave way to simply ‘peacebuilding’ coming quite close to what many progressive social groupings, North and South, believed could be a more supportive role for the UN, or at least its Secretariat, for those sectors committed to identifying and eradicating the roots of violence and authoritarianism. In short, to go beyond international policing

and cease-fire monitoring in order to tackle militarism and to support – by non-violent means – a civil society political agenda of democratization.

Many of us in Central America believed peacebuilding could represent the basis of a new institutional matrix within which external actors could support (not substitute) domestic ones to insure institutional changes, in ways that existing institutions had then prohibited – a movement towards a new paradigm, or at least a debate about paradigm choice: peacebuilding as both a problem-solving necessity and an opportunity.

However optimism began to give way to skepticism when, in the wake of events in the Balkans and elsewhere, the notion of peacebuilding began to encompass peacekeeping operations including policing, institutional restructuring, direct engagement with civil society, mediation and reconciliation among divided factions, ex-combatants reintegration, special tribunals and punishment of criminals, among others. Peacebuilding was substituted by peace-enforcement from above and the outside, something quite different and almost contrary to the bottom up efforts civil society-driven processes conceived by many.

Somehow the notion of justice and self-determination fell by the wayside in order to favour ‘stability’ and external strategic and economic interests. Interventions were now labeled ‘humanitarian’ but they were interventions nonetheless, with or without the acceptance of the population. The solution to the problem of governmental violence against its own citizens was formulated in terms of counter-violence from the outside: the age-old colonial dispatch of ‘punitive expeditions’ to punish some and protect others. Today, the intervention is termed humanitarian, but is it still humanitarian when the intervention causes more victims than it prevented? As Johan Galtung argues, even if one were to agree with the principle of the ‘responsibility to protect’, it does not follow that the response should be violent military intervention in general or by the US in particular (Galtung 2004).

Over the course of the nineties we had come full circle: violent military intervention and counterinsurgency were hailed as the new face of peacebuilding! Conflict prevention slowly gave way to conflict pre-emption – legitimating political intervention laid the basis for legitimating military force, from peacebuilding to nation-building. The shift was gradual but sure. Many present day ‘liberal’ critics of current US policy, within and outside the US, gave their support years earlier to intervention and the use of

force, setting international law aside, opening the door for Washington's subsequent savagery. But the real question is whether the differences within NATO or among US presidential candidates, along with their respective intelligentsia, are differences over means and not ends.

1. Virtue Runs Amok

Non-violent intervention is – or should be – a core element of peacebuilding. But it was hardly given a chance. Many of those outraged by events in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia did not take the time to consider non-military options. Apparently the militarist ethos was too deeply engrained in the West so as to ignore the real possibilities and precedents of successful non-violent intervention.

Worse still, the modality of intervention employed undermined subsequent efforts to sustain peace: the way soldiers were displaced and assistance was disbursed often undermined local and national potentialities to address the needs of the afflicted communities and to use external resources in the most strategic manner. Prevailing patterns of reconstruction assistance tend to undercut local and national economies fostering new forms of dependence. Not all problems can be blamed on contextual situations nor can they be justified as part of an international bureaucratic learning curve. The orthodoxies were deeply rooted in the multilateral and donor agencies applying, for example, recipes of 'relief to development continuums' presupposing a liberalized model of development and governance often at odds, ideologically and in practice, with processes of community empowerment and national self-determination. By now, even the humanitarian vocabulary has been dropped as the term 'nation-building' comes to the fore. Are we back therefore to traditional historical practice reminiscent of *mission civilizatrice*, manifest destiny and the white man's burden?

Confusing peace-keeping and 'humanitarian' intervention with peacebuilding was bad enough, but the confusion was not a simple coincidence. Such a distortion laid the basis for the massive onslaught of military power and intervention witnessed by the end of 2001. Over the course of the nineties official 'peace-building' came to encompass *externally-generated* instituti-

on-building sometimes to the point of assuming functions and attributions that previously were firmly in the domain of the State.

A few days after the US government forcibly evicted democratically-elected President Aristide from Haiti, British Prime Minister Tony Blair made a speech recalling “for me, before September 11th, I was already reaching for a different philosophy in international relations from a traditional one that has held sway since the treaty of Westphalia in 1648; namely that a country’s internal affairs are for it and you don’t interfere unless it threatens you, or breaches a treaty, or triggers an obligation of alliance [...] All this was before September 11th.”

Ironically, the master perpetuator of ‘pre-emptive’ interference in Latin America, Henry Kissinger, made the case against the liberals: “The abrupt abandonment of the concept of national sovereignty [...] marked the advent of a new style of foreign policy driven by domestic politics and the invocation of universal moral slogans [...] Once the doctrine of universal intervention spreads and competing truths contest we risk entering a world where, in G.K. Chesterton’s phrase, virtue runs amok.” (Plesch 2004: 23f.)

2. Failed Economies and Failed States: Chicken and the Egg?

Trusteeships could be transitional and legal as in the case of East Timor, but one thing was assisting the development of institutions and another the authoritarian and external nature of the decision-making. Perhaps there was a legal basis to the centralism in East Timor, but none existed say, in the case of Mozambique after the war, where the UN Secretary General’s delegate, by all inside accounts, held more power than the President and was not afraid to demonstrate it. Where power was not entrusted to an individual, it flowed indirectly, as in much of post-war Central America, where donors and the multilateral institutions exercised enormous sway over the negotiation process and subsequently the post-war governments in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Debt and aid-dependency played their part as post-war authorities were told to follow a determined (neoliberal) script with international consultants assigned to ministries to insure the compliance on the part of nominally independent governments. In this case, as in others the world over,

‘nation-building’ took the form of following an economic and political blueprint largely designed by the multilateral financial institutions in Washington. What we witness therefore is the transformation of nation-states and nation-building into the creation of neo-liberal national states. According to William Robinson, “the neo-liberal state retains essential powers to facilitate globalization but it loses the ability to harmonize conflicting social interests within a country, to realize the historic function of sustaining the internal unity of a nationally conceived social formation, and to achieve legitimacy.” (Robinson 2003: 46)

It has been said that failed states tend to have failed economies – but failed economies can be the product of either bureaucratic incompetence, of bombs and embargoes, but also the implementation of the recipes defined outside the country. Nation-building may be about institutions and infrastructures that may vary from country to country, but very little variance exists – or is admitted – when it comes to the definition of the economic or development model. Of course, there is the standard rhetoric about lifting the country out of grinding poverty and placing it on the path to sustainable development. Granted that long term development entails and presupposes a legitimate state, when donors and interveners add the qualification of ‘effective’ and ‘competitive’, the ideological presumptions rapidly come to the surface – an ideology that hesitates to admit the direct relationship, in so many countries, between the advance of globalization and the restructuring of existing ‘national’ and local social structures.

Setting aside the growing divide between the global and the social (with the nation-state increasingly gravitating to the global), theorists tend to assume that ‘state-building’ is basically a matter of ‘good governance’ as part of a larger package of post-intervention re-engineering chores. But whereas implementers might see their task as managerial, the subjects of intervention – with the exception of the elites – would be tempted to regard the intervention as colonialist. The difference is fundamental, since advocates of state-building and so-called humanitarian intervention in general will prefer to leave out discussions of global causes of national economic and political breakdowns on the one hand, and the unintended outcomes of the interventions on the other.

More likely than not unexplored causes and unintended outcomes are related – and the failure to explore and to foresee is ideological. It is much

easier, for example, to blame war lords, 'ethnic' rivalries, and dictators as 'causes' of breakdowns, than to review how the process of globalization has weakened states, forcing them to slash public services and privatize government enterprises. According to the Inter American Development Bank, in Central America the shrinking state has crippled its capacity to carry out its basic functions, such as the rule of law, collecting taxes and promoting the health and education of people entering the work force. The responsibility for that contraction and eventual failure cannot be attributed exclusively to social dynamics internal to the nation. The analytical framework must be broadened in order to properly take account of transnational phenomena in general, beginning with regional or sub-regional factors, along with the role of the major donors and multilateral institutions in particular. Still some – beginning with the Salvadoran elite – will continue to insist that El Salvador is a fine example of a successful peacebuilding, although social inequality deepens as levels of social violence reach epidemic proportions, approximating the level of victims during the war period (Londoño et al. 2002; Bendaña 1992).

In short, the label of 'failed state' becomes synonymous with an invitation for external intervention and, ironically, the reinforcement of the State to serve global forces. Where governments fail to implement 'sensible' macro-economic reforms, they too become susceptible to intervention, chiefly in the form of external conditionalities and denial of new loans, economic assistance or debt restructuring. The global capitalist system insists that governments apply 'reforms' so as to ensure integration into a global market system. Yet the same neoliberal globalization process reduces State capacities to intervene or prevent crisis situations – many of them originating in market breakdowns – thereby making processes of external intervention all the more likely. As John Tirman has argued, "in what ways are the crises of famine, displacement, or even conflict – always depicted as challenges to the international order – in fact a consequence of that same order?" (Tirman 2004). Whether intervention is prompted by humanitarian or imperial concerns becomes a secondary question – indeed the trend may be to combine war and humanitarian crisis as the product of invasion – insofar as the state-building recipes are underpinned by a common allegiance to the liberal market-oriented economic order and subservient governments incapable of responding to the needs of their citizens.

3. Whose State?

State-building seems to become a matter of introducing western norms of liberal, market-oriented governance. Public administration and managerial engineering are the principal tools, leaving democracy and participation sidelined. Indeed, if one follows the debate over ‘good governance’, it rapidly went from a description of how nations or cities *were being* governed to one prescribing how they *should be* governed (Doornbos 2003). Thinking on governance underpins most donor-inspired state-building.

‘Nation-building’ follows the same prescriptive pattern: from a principle of how people constitute their own government to how international agencies believe states should function, stressing the building of capacities required to interact with the international market place. In all we witness the depolitization and globalization of processes that in fact are political and, in accordance with the principles of self-determination, should be local and national. In both cases, by using the concept to frame an argument, it appears that development and foreign political agencies are passing objective judgment on the ways governments behave. Much of the discussion about state-building, like that on development, attaches a mystical importance to institution and institution-building. Yet the literature prefers to circumvent the nagging question of whether ‘sound’ institutions are product and not the precondition for democratic stability and development. The neo-institutionalists might do well to review Latin American political development: never has there been so much institutional space, but never also has there been so much inequality. Does the inability to carry out a serious distribution of wealth reflect an institutional failure or does it correspond to political decisions to adopt an inequitable development model devoid of participatory democratic mechanisms? So much formal institutional space, yet so little authentic citizen power – unless one remembers that popular pressures have led to the ousting of six elected heads of State over the last few years in Latin America.

Good governance or state-building, like good behavior, has deep ideological presumptions, which purport to offer technical solutions to what in essence are political problems. Politics and ideology stand behind what position we take as regards the nature of the relation between democracy and the market – the key underpinning of our understanding of the nature and

role of institutions and the state. ‘Good’ state or institutional behavior is defined within neoliberal parameters of how well the State enacts ‘reforms’ featuring policies to privatize and liberalize (Saldomando 2002). In truth, under neoliberalism, state-building becomes state-dismantling as power is turned over to transnational corporations and to the un-elected bureaucrats of the global institutions such as IMF, World Bank and WTO – a process of national and State disempowerment. These considerations cannot be neatly separated from the more institutional bureaucratic components of ‘nation-building’. Small wonder that the combination of exhausted societies and failed policies can generate failed political systems.

Post-war state-building features governance at the service of the market and structural adjustment. In the case of Kosovo, for example, western motivations, self-interests and/or ideological bias are expressed in Article I (1) and Article II (1) of the Rambouillet accord calling respectively for a ‘free-market economy’, and the privatization of all government-owned assets. Following the removal of Slobodan Milosevic, ‘state building’ or ‘reform’ in Belgrade was to enact legislation allowing 70% of a company to be sold to foreign investors. UNMIK altered the way land was owned in Kosovo allowing the Kosovo Trust Agency to sell it with 99-year leases – a step that even Belgrade’s pro-Western government called a ‘robbery of state-owned land’, all in the name of the ‘international community’ and ‘economic reform’ and ‘good governance’ (Clark 2004).

In the case of Kosovo, the US Under-Secretary of State, Marc Grossman, was quite explicit about the new standards being imposed on Kosovo before the ‘international community’ would begin discussion on the final status, among them: functioning democratic institutions, the rule of law, a market economy and property rights. The stated objective was to attain a ‘democratic’ stability as part of a larger project to keep the region stable for investment and the maintenance of military bases. Independence was as secondary consideration (Karadjis 2004).

Nor was there much room for democracy in such ‘transitional’ arrangements. The UN took its reconstituted trusteeship mission quite to heart. In East Timor, power was concentrated in the hands of the UN appointee, Sergio Vieira de Mello, who admitted, “faced as we were with our own difficulties in the establishment of this mission, we did not, we *could* not (italics in the original), involve the Timorese at large as much as they were entitled.”

How to exercise, in his words, “fair governance with absolute powers”, other than through a system of “benevolent despotism”? (The Economist 2003) Much the same story could be told in Kosovo where the UN assumed all legislative, executive and judicial responsibilities, turning military responsibilities over to NATO. Seventy officials elected in Bosnia in 1998 were sacked by the UN because they were considered excessively nationalist (The Economist 2003).

We thus return to the question: whose democratic governance? Or are we returning to an age of trusteeships? Small wonder that many in the South suspect state-building and good governance to be part of a neoliberal offensive: indeed that implementing the prescriptions can actually entail departure from the democratic goal.

If development was key to nation-building and the World Bank held an enforceable monopoly on development policy, then it was clear that, where a country adopted or was induced to adopt that model, the three other components of nation-building such as sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, and a strong State role in promoting socio-economic equity, fell by the way side. As the then-World Bank President Barber Conable put it, “If we are to achieve development, we must aim for growth that cannot be easily reversed through the political process of imperfect governance” (Doornbos 2003: 8). And because ‘growth’ could, according to the World Bank, only be the product of unfettered private capital investment, then, a political process democratically demanding State-led regulations, needed to be contained. Yet years later the World Bank came up with a ‘state-capture’ index to measure what happened – chiefly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia – when private sector firms ‘unduly’ influenced public institutions, laws and regulations. According to this study, “[L]iberalization and reductions in the size and control of the state have reduced the capacity of bureaucrats to intervene in the economy, but the process of privatization and the massive redistribution of formerly state-owned assets have also opened up new opportunities for corruption” (Gray et al. 2004: 1).

But is the unending quest for business opportunities a conflict-provoking factor in itself? Some analysts believe that the World Bank and IMF interventions can create conditions for direct violence or, at least, are not conflict-sensitive. Writing about the Balkans, Susan Woodward states that the shift to a market economy, and in particular IMF programmes, resulted

in “socially polarizing and politically disintegrating consequences” (Woodward 1995: 383), which in turn contributed to the implosion of Yugoslavia. Another researcher, Amy Chua, believes that the war in Sierra Leone in the 1990s was, among other things, the result of hardships created by “what IMF negotiators called ‘bold and decisive’ free market measures”, mostly a phase-out of subsidies (Bretton Woods Project 2004).

4. September 11 and New Security Doctrine

In our opinion, the ‘humanitarian’ intervention of the 1990s laid the operational and conceptual basis for nation-building at gunpoint. What some described as the ‘worst’ features of the Bush approach to world affairs (Falk 2004a), could equally well be considered as the intensification of existing proclivities and historical tendencies not only in the US but also in ‘Western’ international behavior. But what stands out in the Bush approach – at least in its initial post 9/11 conduct – was the explicit way in which US intervention was articulated and practiced. “America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our country”, said Bush in the 2004 State of the Union address. Not a new notion because years earlier the Clinton administration had not sought UN approval for intervention in the Balkans, any more than the first Bush Administration received authorization for the 1989 intervention in Panama.

The differences between the nineties and the contemporary decade is that, whereas a chorus of ‘progressives’ in the 1990s forcefully supported and advocated ‘humanitarian’ interventionism around the world – Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti and Kosovo –, they had jumped ship by 2002. By the same token, Presidential candidate George W. Bush criticized ‘nation-building’ and the Clinton Administration’s extensive involvement in such operations (Vidal 2003). Yet, following the electoral victory and 9/11 the same Republican Party ideologues who chastised nation-building became its greatest advocates. At the level of government policy there was more continuity than change. According to the Rand Corporation, a conservative US think tank, since the Somalia operation, “US-led intervention has been wider in scope and more ambitious than its predecessor”.

The 2002 National Security Strategy document elevated historical practice to the level of principle, justifying the use of US military force to remove regimes that blocked US corporations from exploiting human and natural resources, or refused to cave in to the Pentagon's expanded need for bases and military operations. The war against Iraq was to have been the first of a series of 'pre-emptive' actions to remove the rogue states standing in the way of the United States interests but also to create new laissez faire utopias. Defense Department Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, applauded the drastic privatization and liberalization 'reforms' enacted by US representative Robert Brenner lauding these as "some of the most enlightened and inviting tax and investment laws in the free world", purporting to transform Iraq into a model corporate state that would open up the entire region. According to *The Economist*, Iraq's US-defined interim constitution was "the wish list of foreign investors" (Klein 2004: 46).

Equally explicit is Washington's resort to 'nation-building' as part of a mission to impose 'market-democracies' on sovereign states by the force of arms. Which is then followed by the Western interpretation of 'democracy' to mean not the will of the people, but rather the adoption of a Western dominated political and corporate-friendly economic model. According to James Dobbins, director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the Rand Corporation and special envoy for both the Clinton and Bush Administrations on reconstruction, "the object of nation-building is to return power to a competent, responsible and representative local government as soon as possible" (Dobbin 2004). This begs the question of who is to decide what is competent, responsible and representative, and just who decides how long is 'as soon as possible'.

The 2002 National Security Strategy provided some answers. A self-serving ideological and historical rationalization claimed that "[T]he great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom – a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise". Other NATO members claimed having substantive problems with such proclamations, or at least with the unilateralist rhetoric. Other critics claimed that the Pentagon distorted the tasks of nation-building applying its experiences in building military bases and procuring weapons systems, which "led it to ignore recent and historical experiences with nation-building" (Dobbin

2004). Of course, neither the Pentagon nor the White House nor NATO seriously entertain the possibility of a new Iraq with a different model of self-rule and economic development, one that would question the free market fundamentalism and the presence of 14 US military bases in that country.

With greater clarity than his predecessors, Bush spelt out the real goals of the ‘war on terrorism’: the NSS document stated that Washington would “use its unparalleled military strength [...] to extend the benefits of free markets and free trade to every corner of the world”. Little thought seems to have been given to the fact that privatization entailed the laying-off of roughly 145,000 Iraqi workers which in turn increased the recruiting pool for the armed resistance to the occupation (Klein 2004: 48).

It now is clear that intervention taking the form of state or nation building is losing what little normative value it held to become a great power policy instrument. Substituting the term ‘nation-building’ with ‘peace-building’, preferred by the UN, did not substantially change the presumptions of the ‘necessity’ to apply external military and economic power to force regime changes and then refurbish governmental institutions in a Western-oriented, market-friendly fashion. But contrary to the original notion of peace-building, the new ‘nation-building’ (or re-oriented peace-building according to the United Nations) now includes keeping order, rebuilding institutions, fostering democracy, punishing war criminals, promoting reconciliation and stimulating a market economy.

5. Permanent Transitions

Further complicating the picture was the post 9/11 US imposed imperative to ‘prevent’ any state from becoming a ‘terrorist haven’. In Africa as early as 1998 the United States was working to ‘modernize’ the local armed forces and to bring them into line with US norms, as part of an Africa Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) whose mandate was to provide military training for peace-keeping and humanitarian aid. During his visit to that continent in July, 2003 Bush made it clear “we will not allow terrorists to threaten African peoples, or to use Africa as a base to threaten the world” (Abramovici 2004). In any case, local military establishments heavily influenced by the

United States or other friendly neo-colonial powers, were a sine quo non of 'building nations'.

Democracy, autonomy and sustainable peace had little to do with the US-defined nation-building. And given the global power dynamics, it is unlikely – as witnessed in Iraq – that the UN or the US allies in Europe will depart from Washington's anti-terrorist pro-corporate investment norms. If this is the case, then it is indeed questionable whether – as argued in the IPA Report on Transitional Administrations – the local trust that is deemed indispensable can be reconciled with its playing the assigned role in the 'war on terror'.

Over and above naked US self-interest, there is indeed considerable room for UN self-criticism, particularly over issues of culture: the culture brought in by the outsider be it in the form of the UN's own need to claim relevance, the need of its experts to claim employment, and all by providing 'expertise' in many senses must condescendingly presume native incapacities. And then there is the impact of an expatriate culture and practices not only on the micro-economy but also on the culture as a whole. In this manner, both Nation and State were to be construed by, and embedded in, the transnational power constructs known as globalization – as part of making the world more 'governable' in the interests of the international power structure.

In short, it is extraordinarily presumptuous and dangerous to believe that outside powers can and should engage in 'social engineering', introducing rules for the construction of local social, economic and political orders. One might reply that the subjects of the thinking are post-war states or new nations – unfortunately the thinking is much broader, particularly in the war-on-terrorism context, where up to 50 states are being characterized as failed or failing, lacking in political legitimacy and a threat to their own people and the region.

The list expands when the new 'terrorism prevention' zeal is coupled with the old notion of 'democratizing authoritarian regimes', when 'nation-building' encompasses 'democracy promotion', that is Western oriented nations characterized by liberal democratic property-protecting institutions. Indeed, economic liberalization would be seen as a mechanism to foster 'democracy' and pro-US sentiment. That notions such as democracy or human rights are contested concepts, that authoritarian regimes greatly differ

among themselves and also exist in the North, does not seem to trouble the official proponents of the grand strategy. Imperial reasoning is elementary and not always consistent: one need only recall the double standards that the major powers employ in choosing where to intervene or promote democracy or which states and territories to place under ‘international’ administration. All this is coupled with the naïve belief that the intervening military forces would be greeted with flowers or at least eventual albeit grudging acceptance; far from the case in the Balkans or in Iraq.

Yet precisely because one cannot throw out the baby (democracy/human rights) with the bath water (imperial foreign policy invocations), one must be contextually specific. It may be wrong to generalize on the basis of a Rwanda or Sudan in order to justify a new international ultra-interventionist order – a debate that asks social scientists to calibrate the degree and modality of intervention, particularly where the principles on which that intervention is based are presumed to be correct. In other words, it is the war on terrorism rather than a war on poverty which is driving the arguments. The first will take us to external re-colonization and the re-legitimation of war (‘bombing works’). The second one would entail dealing with the responsibility of the global economic order for misery, destitution and state-weakening in the South. For better or for worse, attention is now centered on the first course of action particularly as the United States has set out to what Richard Falk argues is the use of the ‘global war on terrorism’ to “encompass all anti-state political violence and to include a strategy of regime change to promote the project of global domination under the anti-terrorist banner” (Falk 2004b).

The ‘war on terrorism’ notwithstanding, normative debate continues to be necessary, beginning with the rebuttal of the thesis that ‘failing’ nations or states require external intervention and even occupation. It is less a question of means than ends, and why? To simply argue over distinctions between multilateral versus unilateral, US versus NATO, minimizes the necessity of asking whether external entities should be in the business of running countries and assuming sovereign functions. Nor should we be deceived by the lively fiction that goes by the name of ‘international community’ (coalition of the coerced) whose action is supposed to legitimize the intervention. A more accurate description would be ‘empire-building’ under the guise of finding a role for NATO in the post-Cold War period. That illegitimate

unilateral acts by the US eventually attain some multilateral veneer and a Security Council 'blue wash' might make that first intervention legal, but the illegitimacy remains, particularly in the eyes of the occupied.

Did the 'international community' fail in Kosovo to distinguish between nationhood and statehood as the basis of political community? Is it the outsider that determines when a 'minority' qualifies as an independently recognizable 'nation' or that a sovereign state must be fragmented? Unfortunately these critical considerations are displaced once military intervention takes place in Iraq or in Haiti, and as the UN and NATO leave behind the legal and normative debates in order to secure regime change prompting a shift in the debate towards a post *fait accompli* mechanics of nation or state building. And even at this level, broader considerations are excluded from the debate – as the US puts Iraq and Haiti on the track to 'stability' defined as the adoption of corporation-friendly export-oriented economic models.

In that market-friendly anti-terrorist state-building agenda there is little consideration of the daily plight of vast majorities, or of the real origins of their plight. There is no principled framework that would allow the 'international community' to address both direct and structural violence. 'The Responsibility to Protect' continues to be selective – Darfur yes, Northern Uganda no, Palestine impossible. The protection does not extend to those who are victims of marginalization, exclusion and misery that stem from the current model of global economic governance. Until that credibility gap between the promises of international law and the UN Declaration on Human Rights on the one hand, and the weakness and selectivity of its application is significantly narrowed, nationally democratic-minded nation-builders may justifiably wish to adhere to the classic regime of state sovereignty. As David Held argues, "the focus of the liberal international order is on the curtailment of the abuse of political power, not economic power. It has few, if any systematic means to address sources of power other than the political" (Held 1995: 51). Means, will or self-interest? The truth is that opening up countries and their economies to the world market is not the path to sustainable peace; rather it results in a new colonialism, divisive and conflict-generating like its predecessors.

One is tempted to believe that any evolution from the United States to the United Nations nation-building is positive, but it is difficult to disentangle UN agencies and procedures from the foreign policies of the organiza-

tions and states from which they come. Multilateral policies today are clearly contaminated and conditioned by Washington's 'war on terrorism' on one side and the longstanding ideological partiality to the neoliberal economic development model. Either is sufficient to undercut efforts to build new forms of global political legitimacy. In this context 'state-building' translates into little more than imposing new political leaders loyal to the military victors and to the neoliberal economic development model. Genuine self-determination – or the space to pursue it – is ruled out.

Despite efforts to arrive at a nation-building doctrine, the UN seems to have little idea of what it is doing: the Brahimi Report indicated as much when it said that the growing involvement in state building lacked clear institutional guidelines or political consensus. What it did not say is that justice remained hostage to geopolitics and free market economics: that any new State would have to be pro-US and investor friendly, permitting the privatization of major resources and services, and admitting external tutelage, and not simply during a transition period that promises but cannot deliver sustainability. There is no bureaucratic replicable ready formula, and the search for managerial fixes merely complicates the picture. David Malone and Simon Chesterman, warn us that "the greatest mistake by US planners may have been the assumption that previous UN nation-building efforts achieved mixed results because of UN incompetence, rather than because of the inherent contradictions in building democracy through foreign military intervention and the difficulty of the tasks involved." (Malone/Chesterman 2004)

Policy-makers tend to avoid entering into discussions as to the nature and calling of democracy, the nation, State and peace. Others should have no such compunction and pose the indispensable question whether the social (as opposed to the repressive) effectiveness of the state is undermined by external structural and national forces, and not simply poorly designed policies. It is not a question of getting back to the 'more state versus less state' or 'state versus market' Thatcherist discussions. Rather, as Hilary Wainwright argues, more fundamental questions need to be posed: What state? To meet what goals? Organized on what principles under what kind of management? How may democracy be deepened beyond its rather weak electoral form? How may public resources be managed responsively to an electorate? How can business be made socially accountable? Nor should we doubt that com-

munities themselves can come up with these and other criteria, and that its articulation does not require imported, patronizing, moralizing and public relations minded ‘participation’ schemes that leave the broader power structure untouched (Wainwright 2004).

6. Conclusions

If ‘peacebuilding’ leads to ‘nation-building’, whose peace and nation are we dealing with? What is the social content of that peace, nation and state? Can we have the best of all possible worlds? Unlikely, since democracy and development, like power itself, are not necessarily ‘win-win’ propositions, internally or internationally. The empowerment of the many may entail the disempowerment of the few, as the nation and the state are themselves sites of social and ideological struggle. One may wish away the dimensions of power, as the power structures tell us there is no alternative. In such a case, ‘Dialogue’, ‘participation’, ‘empowerment’, ‘consultation’ work well, at least rhetorically, for external interveners but only in as much as both national government and national society are convinced (or are helped to conform by the power by access to international funding) of the sanctity of the prevailing fundamentals. In other words, avoid discussing the structures of power and wealth – national and international – which controls access to resources, and with it the character of the peace, the nation and the State.

The real issues are democracy and self-determination – in reality a single issue since there is no such thing as democratic colonies or partially sovereign democracies. This relates to what US ideologues such as Samuel Huntington term the ‘democratic paradox’. The paradox being that people might elect governments unfriendly to the United States. Yet national ownership of peace, the nation and the State presupposes that the perspectives of developing nations and the people affected by those policies are taken into account.

In the best of all possible worlds, peacebuilding would be, as Necla Tschirgi has argued, the missing link between development and security. That window of opportunity, she warns, may be closing (Tschirgi 2003). If there is no peace without justice, nor can there be development and security without peace. However, if security is being defined by the principal global

power then peacebuilding becomes the smoke screen behind which equally self-serving political and economic practices are enforced upon the State and the people. All in the name of peace or, again, nation-building. The least of our obligations as social scientists is to lift that smoke screen, demand respect for the words and concepts of democracy, peace and nation. The focus on 'results' must be tempered by our insistence on values – if not ideology itself – reviewing the relationship between economic liberalization and democracy. There is no 'right policy' without them unless one exclusively identifies, as many do, democracy with the procedure of electoral competition, and not with the substantive values of social justice and equality.

It may still not be too late to reclaim peacebuilding, nation-building and state-building, and perhaps even the United Nations, to step back from corporate neoliberalism and the militarist agenda of the USA. Return them to their normative underpinning—that is as pathways to justice and equity. If nation-building belongs to the nation, so too does state-building. It is time to swing the clock, not backward, but forward towards the construction of ever more democratic gender sensitive differentiated democracies with economies based more on solidarity than on profit. In a word, peacebuilding, state-building and nation-building, through and for justice promotion.

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Abstracts

Der Artikel stellt die These auf, dass *Peacebuilding* einen funktionierenden Rechtsstaat oder zumindest die vollständige Implementierung eines Friedensabkommens, das auch die strukturellen Konfliktursachen berücksichtigt, voraussetzt. Der Autor argumentiert, dass die globale ökonomische Ordnung diese Grundvoraussetzung oft nicht zulässt. Mit Hilfe sogenannter humanitärer Interventionen wurde in der zweiten Hälfte der 1990er Jahre das Konzept des *Peace Enforcement* durch *Peacebuilding* abgelöst. Dies führte aber gleichzeitig zu einer Ausbreitung der neoliberalen Doktrin unter dem Deckmantel der Terrorbekämpfung.

The key message of this article is that peacebuilding requires a functioning State committed to justice, or at least the full implementation of a peace agreement, addressing also the structural root causes of conflict. The author argues that often the international economic order undermines this possibility. With the so-called humanitarian interventions in the second half of the 1990's the concept of peacebuilding substituted peace-enforcement from above. This development led the foundation to extend the neoliberal economic doctrine worldwide under the cover of a war against terrorism.

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