

DRAFT, Not for Citation Without the Authors' Permission

A revised version of this paper will appear in Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

The Peacebuilder's Contract:

How External Statebuilding Reinforces Weak Statehood

Michael Barnett and Christoph Zürcher

Complex peacebuilding operations are reasonably successful at ending violence.¹ Yet they generally aspire to do more than end violence – they also intend to remove the root causes of violence and create the conditions for a positive peace. It is not enough that former combatants go to their respective corners, disarm, or recognize that a resumption of violence will generate more costs than benefits. In order for there to be a stable peace, war-torn societies must develop the institutions, intellectual tools, and civic culture that generates the expectation that individuals and groups will settle their conflicts through non-violent means. Peacebuilders seek to remove the root causes of violence and create this pacific disposition by investing these postconflict societies with various qualities, including democracy in order to reduce the tendency toward arbitrary power and give voice to all segments of society; the rule of law in order to reduce human rights violations; a market economy free from corruption in order to discourage

¹ For statistical evaluations of their rates of success, see Doyle & Sambanis 2006, Fortna 2003; Zurcher 2006.

individuals from believing that the surest path to fortune is by capturing the state; conflict management tools; and a culture of tolerance and respect.

There are various explanations for why peacebuilding operations have fallen far short of this ambitious goal of creating the good society. Perhaps the simplest explanation is that peacebuilders are expecting to achieve the impossible dream, attempting to engineer in years what took centuries for West European states and doing so under very unfavourable conditions. Peacebuilding operations confront highly difficult conditions, including a lack of local assets, high levels of destruction from the violence, continuing conflict, and minimal support from powerful donors and benefactors (Chesterman 2004; Doyle & Sambanis 2006; Orr 2004).

Another explanation faults the peacebuilders, failing to realize that their goal of transplanting a liberal-democracy in war-torn soil has allowed former combatants to aggressively pursue their existing interests to the point that it rekindles the conflict. In their effort to radically transform major aspects of state, society, and economy in a matter of months, complex peacebuilding missions are subjecting these fragile societies to tremendous stress. States emerging from war do not have the necessary institutional framework or civic culture to absorb the potential pressures associated with political and market competition. Consequently, as peacebuilders push for instant liberalization, they are sowing the seeds of conflict, encouraging rivals to wage their struggle for supremacy through markets and ballots (Paris 2004; Zakaria 2003). Shock therapy, peacebuilding-style, undermines the construction of the very institutions that are instrumental for producing a stable peace.

In this chapter we offer an alternative explanation: peacebuilders have adopted strategies that have reinforced previously existing state-society relations - weak states characterized by patrimonial politics and skewed development.² Specifically, we develop a model of peacebuilding operations that helps explain why peacebuilders transfer only the ceremonies and symbols of the liberal-democratic state. The model, in brief, is as follows. We begin with the preferences of three key actors: peacebuilders (PB), who want stability and liberalization; state elites (SE) of the target country, who want to maintain their power; and subnational elites (SNE), who want autonomy from the state and to maintain their power in the countryside. The ability of each actor to achieve its goals is dependent on the strategies and behavior of the other two. Peacebuilders need the cooperation of state and subnational elites if they are to maintain stability and implement their liberalizing programs. State elites are suspicious of peacebuilding reforms because they might usurp their power, yet they covet the resources offered by peacebuilders because they can be useful for maintaining their power; and they need local subnational elites and power brokers, who frequently gained considerable autonomy during the civil war, to acknowledge their rule. Subnational elites seek the resources provided by international actors to maintain their standing and autonomy, yet fear peacebuilding programs that might undermine their power at the local level and increase the state's control over the periphery.

Because peacebuilders, state elites, and subnational elites are in a situation of strategic interaction, where their ability to achieve their goals are dependent on the strategies of others,

² See also the chapters of Roberts and Sisk in this volume, which both argue that electoral processes may, under some circumstances, reinforce rather than change existing social differences.

they will strategize and alter their policies depending on (what they believe) others (will) do.³ Peacebuilders will have to adjust their policies and adapt their strategies to take into account their dependence on state elites, adjustments and adaptations that are likely to incorporate their preference for arrangements that safeguard their fundamental interests. State elites will have to acknowledge the legitimacy of peacebuilding reforms if they are to receive the stream international resources.

Their strategic interactions will shape the peacebuilding agenda and hence the outcome of the peacebuilding process. For heuristic purposes, we argue that the logic of their strategic interactions – the game – can lead to one of four possible outcomes: cooperative peacebuilding: local elites accept and fully cooperate with the peacebuilding program; compromised peacebuilding: local elites and peacebuilders negotiate a peacebuilding program that reflects the desire of peacebuilders for stability and the legitimacy of peacebuilding and the desire of local elites to ensure that reforms do not threaten their power base; captured peacebuilding: state and local elites are able to redirect the distribution of assistance so that it is fully consistent with their

³ In this following discussion, we distinguish between state elites and subnational elites. We acknowledge that in many situations the two are virtually indistinguishable to the extent that subnational elites are part of the central government. However, we will insist on their differentiation in order to highlight that there are frequently (at least) two independent sets of elites in any country and that those outside the capital city often have independent powers that enable them to either block or frustrate any dreams of centralization by state elites. Finally, at times we will speak of local elites, a shorthand for a situation when state and subnational elites can, for analytical purposes, be treated as one.

interests; or, conflictive peacebuilding: the threat or use of coercive tools by either international or domestic actors to achieve their objectives.

We argue that compromised peacebuilding is the most likely outcome because of the nature of their preferences and constraints and because once both parties arrive at this result they have little incentive to defect. Compromised peacebuilding, with its allocation of roles and responsibilities to each of the parties, represents something an implicit or tacit contract – a peacebuilder’s contract. Peacebuilders recognize the interest, power and authority of local elites, although this may not be compatible with the objective of building the good peace. State elites acknowledge the legitimacy of the reforms proposed by peacebuilders, but are intent to minimize the possible risks to their fundamental interests. Peacebuilders and local elites pursue their collective interest in stability and symbolic peacebuilding, creating the appearance (and opening up the possibility) of change while leaving largely in tact existing state-society relations.⁴

⁴ Cooley 2005 advances an ambitious theory of hierarchy that offers potential insight into the relationship between peacebuilding and state-society relations. He observes two kinds of hierarchical governance structures, a U-form and an M-form, and argues that the latter “tends to institutionalize patrimonial institutions in peripheries” (57). Although we predict similar outcomes, we do not develop his argument as an alternative explanation for several reasons. One, it is not clear whether the structure of peacebuilding operations conform to a U or M-form. There is an argument that its centralizing characteristics tend to resemble the latter form yet this probability gives it more coherence than probably exists. Two, although his model takes into account the different actors that are part of each governance structure, there is little consideration of the interaction between the actors.

This model has several advantages over existing explanations for why peacebuilding fails to accomplish its stated goal of transformation and tends to reinforce the existing pattern of power relations. To begin, it brings “domestic politics” back into the explanation. Existing approaches tend to be systemic-centric, focusing on the international actors, treating domestic politics as “constraints,” and thus failing to incorporate fully the preferences and strategies of local actors. Relatedly, by treating the interactions between external and local actors as game we are able to offer a model that is applicable to diverse regional settings and has leverage over divergent outcomes. Third, because we treat peacebuilding as a form of statebuilding, we are able to identify why the “degree of the state” is possibly strengthened (and thus helped to contribute to stability) but there is little transformation of the “kind of state.” Fourth, our model provides not only an explanation for these post-conflict outcomes, but also insight into how international peacebuilders might change the terms of the contract to further real, and not faux, transformation.⁵

The paper has three sections. Section I argues that peacebuilding is statebuilding, offers a distinction between the degree of the state and the kind of the state, and then discuss statebuilding in the post-colonial, postconflict context, highlighting the patrimonial politics that

⁵ In their impressive book on peacekeeping, Doyle and Sambanis (2006) argue that the success of peacebuilding is a function of international capacity, local capacity and the level of hostility and war destruction. Our argument is consistent with theirs, but modifies it by examining the bargaining process between SEs and PBs, which is influenced by their capacities *and* their preferences.

characterizes these states. Section II develops the peacebuilder's contract. We begin with a simple model in which there are two actors, peacebuilders and state elites, that eventually coordinate their actions around coopted peacebuilding. Afterwards we complicate the game by introducing a third actor – subnational elites, suggesting that it might lead to coopted peacebuilding between peacebuilders and state elites but captured peacebuilding between peacebuilders and subnational elites.

Section III illustrates the utility of our model in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Although these cases arrived at similar outcomes, they differ considerably with regard to the duration and nature of the war and the scope and intrusiveness of the peacebuilding project. Afghanistan is arguably one of the most intrusive, ambitious and well-funded missions ever and the international coalition clearly aims at building-up a modern democratic state from the scratch, in a few years time, with the help of about 30,000 troops and annual aid of around \$2.5 billion. By contrast, the mission in Tajikistan is very small in scope and much less intrusive. It was established in 1994 to monitor the ceasefire agreement between the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition. Following the signing by the parties of the 1997 general peace agreement, UNMOT's mandate was expanded to help monitor its implementation. The mission nevertheless helped to attract considerable flows of aid, which amounted to the single most important resource flow in Tajikistan. We conclude by speculating as to whether and how this contract might be changed so that the development of a more responsive and accountable state might be nurtured, whether compromised peacebuilding is such a disappointing outcome, and how compromised peacebuilding might be consistent with a reasonably successful outcome –

putting into place an institutional framework that can promote a more deliberative, inclusive, and accountable state.

Peacebuilding and Statebuilding

As can be expected with any recently invented concept, peacebuilding exhibits an impressive range of definitions. Yet underlying this diversity is a unity. There is general agreement regarding what peacebuilding is not. It goes beyond the attempt to strengthen the prospects for internal peace and decrease the likelihood of violent conflict. Instead, it involves an effort to eliminate the root causes of conflict, to promote the security of the individual, societal groups, and the state, and to nurture features that create the conditions for a stable peace. “Ultimately, peacebuilding aims at building human security, a concept which includes democratic governance, human rights, rule of law, sustainable development, equitable access to resources, and environmental security.”⁶ This multidimensional and highly intrusive undertaking, involving a reconstruction of politics, economics, culture, and society, leaves no stone unturned.

Standing behind peacebuilding is statebuilding. 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” (Giddens 1993: 309). Statebuilding concerns

⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Canadian International Development Agency 2002. See Barnett et al., 2007, for a review of how different organizations use the term of peacebuilding.

how the modern state comes into existence, that is, how this process is accomplished. Most discussions of statebuilding generally attend to one of two elements. 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 that have 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 to the organizing principles that structure the state's rule over society. Two distinctions are particularly important for conceptualizing postconflict statebuilding. One is between mediated and unmediated states. Mediated states exist when state elites rule through alliances with local notables. In this context, rule (or, more accurately, stability) is accomplished through indirect means as the state elite broker deals with and rule indirectly through local elites. Unmediated states exist when state institutions replace state elites in governing central features of the economy and society. In this context, state institutions are now more involved in providing public goods for local populations and state elites are no longer essential "middle men" (Waldner 1999: 2). The other distinction is between inclusionary and exclusionary regimes. Regimes can be distinguished according to whether or not they contain institutions that are designed to incorporate diverse views, hold the state accountable, and safeguard basic individual rights and liberties. Those that do are inclusionary; those that do not are exclusionary.

Because we are interested in post-conflict peacebuilding activities, operations that nearly always occur in the Third World, it is important to address what are the fundamental characteristics of the Third World state and the post-conflict politics that shape the statebuilding challenge. Although statebuilding exhibits tremendous variation depending on the global context, the economic structure, patterns of authority relations and political power, and elite networks, what distinguishes Third World statebuilding from Western statebuilding is the attempt to create centralized, legitimate, bureaucratic states in a post-colonial context. Colonialism had a profound effect on the Third World state. The colonial state was a creature of foreign forces and much of the internal apparatus, political system, and political economy was designed to protect the interests of foreign actors and those local elites that were given a cut. Consequently, the state was fundamentally alien to the society that it was charged with overseeing and controlling. The result, following Michael Mann's distinction, was that the colonial state was simultaneously strong and weak. Its infrastructural power was nonexistent, unable to mobilize or extract from society because it had little legitimacy. Its despotic power was high because of its authoritarian style (Mann 1984).

These characteristics of the colonial state frequently survived the transition to independence. Famously, Robert Jackson argued that many newly independent states were "quasi-states" because while they had juridical statehood they lacked empirical statehood (Jackson 1990). This lack of "empirical reality" led Third World governments to develop a Janus-faced survival strategy. They viewed the international system as containing a set of normative, political, economic, and security resources that might help them further their goal of regime survival. Sovereignty became a normative shield to guarantee their borders. During the

cold war they might play up to and off the superpowers to extract strategic rents. They might rely on the former colony or great power patrons for security assistance and survival in the last resort. These international resources proved crucial for domestic survival; because they ruled states that had little legitimacy and state capacity, the government was unable to undertake extractive measures such as taxation. Regime stability was produced by a narrow coalition and various forms of patrimonial politics. Toward this end, state elites engaged in the costly process of building and monitoring networks, distributing payoffs and perks to contenders, and providing some public goods to particularly important coalitions (especially in the urban areas).⁷ To pay

⁷ Here is how one student of Soviet state formation characterized the 1920s: “Personal networks originated in the prerevolutionary underground, but became better defined and more cohesive in the civil war. The major battle fronts of the civil war gave rise to informal groups of fighter organizers, who used their personal network ties to carry out territorial conquest and political consolidation. When hostilities finally ended, these wartime networks were not dismantled but adapted to the new challenges of the post-revolutionary regional administration. During the 1920s, center-regional relations were hampered by poorly developed bureaucratic lines and institutional incoherence. Consequently, the center was reconnected to the regions through personal network ties. In the regions, rival networks competed over access to and control over scarce organizational and material resources distributed by the center. Those networks that were most successful in that competition eventually came to dominate the administrative apparatus in their region. In the process, their network rivals in the region were either displaced or subsumed by these dominant networks” (Easter 2000: 12). Easter’s description of the post civil war Soviet Union captures much of the “post conflict” processes; the only important difference is that in the

for these activities, they not only attempted to extract resources from the international environment but also to use the state as a private good, hence encouraging forms of corruption, and to create shadow networks and tolerate illicit economies.⁸

Postconflict statebuilding is distinguished from “normal” statebuilding by the existence of a dual crisis of security and legitimacy. What makes postconflict statebuilding postconflict, obviously, is the prior existence of conflict. Indeed, postconflict is frequently a misnomer for societies that are still experiencing periodic flashes of violence. Moreover, the history of violence and the continuing climate of fear means that individuals and groups are unlikely to trust that the state will be an impartial force that can provide credible security guarantees. Until that happens, individuals will continue to seek security from alternative security organizations and militias will be unlikely to demobilize.

States after conflict also face a crisis of legitimacy. This is not terribly surprising. Domestic conflict largely erupts in illegitimate states and the subsequent conflict rarely invests the postconflict state with legitimacy. The challenge, then, is to create public support and a modicum of legitimacy for the postconflict institutions. Their effectiveness depends on it. The willingness of individuals to comply with the government’s decisions depends on whether they believe it is legitimate. Moreover, the lack of legitimacy can contribute to the resumption of violence.

“new wars” these peripheral networks are sustained by shadow economic networks, thus giving them a fair bit of autonomy, power, and control.

⁸ For discussions of the post-colonial state, see Ayoob 1995, Clapham 1996.

International peacebuilders are intervening in a post-colonial and post-conflict context as they attempt to socially engineer the post-conflict statebuilding process. Simon Chesterman defines international activities for statebuilding as “constructing or reconstructing institutions of governance capable of providing citizens with physical and economic security. This includes quasi-governmental activities such as electoral assistance, human rights and rule of law technical assistance, security sector reform, and certain forms of development assistance” (Chesterman 2004: 5) In our terms, peacebuilding is designed to enhance the degree and develop a particular kind of state. The state’s effectiveness is defined by its ability to provide basic services and deliver public goods. Its legitimacy (and effectiveness) is also related to the development of a particular kind of state, a liberal-democracy (Sens 2004; Paris 2004). Consequently, unlike European state formation, where there did not exist a hegemonic image of the ideal state, in the contemporary period the presumption is that modern states should have rule of law, democratic institutions, and market-driven development.⁹

The Peacebuilder’s Contract

⁹ Akin to the postcommunist experience, “those making institutional choices thus face not only greater time constraints but also more intense international scrutiny. In contrast to previous episodes of statebuilding, international influence has not only become more acute, but it has had a profound effect on the very nature of statebuilding by changing the formal institutional requirements for becoming a full-fledged member of the international system.”(Gryzmala-Busse & Luong 2002: 529-554).

The concept of the peacebuilder's contract is intended to capture why peacebuilders begin with grand notions of transformation but nevertheless adopt strategies and strike implicit contracts with local elites that reinforce the existing state-society relations. Before proceeding, a few words about the nature of the modelling exercise and our application to peacebuilding. The intent is to understand the origin and development of peacebuilding strategies in a range of postconflict cases and examine some of the consequences of these strategies. The premise is that these strategies and the strategic interactions that unfold between the interveners and the intervened is an important but neglected explanation for the relative successes and failures of contemporary peacebuilding operations. Moreover, similar to other strategic approaches, we are interested in the "connection between what actors want, the environment in which they strive to further those interests, and the outcomes of this interaction" (Lake & Powell 1999: 20). Our model, therefore, is intended to identify the conditions that lead peacebuilders to adopt strategies that reinforce (or possibly even transform) existing arrangements. The intent, in other words, is to be able to understand the origin and development of peacebuilding strategies in a range of postconflict cases and examine some of the consequences of these strategies. Moreover, similar to other strategic approaches, we are interested in the "connection between what actors want, the environment in which they strive to further those interests, and the outcomes of this interaction" (Lake & Powell 1999: 20). In other words, we are in the realm of strategic interaction.

We assume that the actors are unitary and goal-oriented. Although there is probably little controversy regarding the claim that actors are goal-oriented, potentially problematic is the notion that these actors are unitary in any way, shape, or form. We readily acknowledge that this contrivance masks what invariably are important cleavages, cleavages that frequently derive

from different conceptions of interests and alternative rank orderings of these preferences. Most international peacebuilding operations include an assortment of international actors, including UN peacekeepers, troop contributing countries, regional organizations such as the African Union and the European Union, international financial institutions such as the World Bank, and nongovernmental organizations such as Oxfam and World Vision International. State elites that are part of the post-conflict government also will evidence divisions. Not only can we expect all politicians to disagree on basic issues, these divisions might be greater in a postconflict government where there frequently is a power-sharing arrangement between former combatants and shotgun coalitions that include rival politicians that represent distinct identity-based populations. Subnational elites also can have divergent interests, generated by distinct relationships to different socio-economic conditions and groupings. In addition, we assume that there is no overlapping relationship between state and subnational elites, when, in fact, subnational elites are frequently directly or indirectly represented in the post-conflict government. Finally, our model is elite-centric to the extent that we do not consider mass publics a significant independent actor that needs to be considered as part of the equation. These simplifying assumptions are crucial to the modelling exercise and justified to the extent that they help us capture critical dynamics and divergent outcomes. Later, in fact, we will suggest that relaxing these assumptions does not weaken our analysis and observations, and possibly strengthens them.¹⁰

¹⁰ A separate paper with Songying Fang “The Game of Peacebuilding,” upgrades the “heuristic” model into a full-blown formal model.

The ability of these goal-oriented actors to achieve their preferences is dependent on the strategic choices and behavior of others. Although not all strategic interactions will gravitate toward a focal point, indeed, in many games they do not, we are particularly interested in developing a model that can help us understand the underlying logic that might lead to an equilibrium outcome.

A final, critical, comment about the setting. We assume that this game unfolds against the backdrop of a peace agreement that is accepted by the key parties on the ground; reflects the balance of political forces in the country at the time of the cessation of hostilities; and probably contains provisions that are designed to safeguard their power. We acknowledge that there is considerable variation in the domestic setting in any post-conflict process; sometimes there is a stable peace agreement and at other times there is a peace agreement existing alongside a continuation of the fighting. Different backdrops, of course, will have quite different implications for the dynamic interactions between the actors. But, we have to make choices in order to get the model up and running, and we assume that there is a peace treaty that represents a turning point from the conflict to the post-conflict setting. Still, violence is hardly a distant memory. Not only are there daily reminders there also are patterns associated with a security dilemma, including, most importantly, the inability of foes to distinguish between behavior driven by lack of trust and behavior driven by predatory ambitions, are likely to persist (Jervis & Snyder 1999; Kasfir 2003; Walter 2002). Still, the simultaneous presence of a signed peace agreement and international actors signify that the parties have moved into a post-conflict stage and the peace accord typically includes “a set of mutually-agreed benchmarks to guide the process and that can be used to assess progress” (Goodhand & Sedra 2006: 5). Furthermore, we

assume that the parties are generally committed to the implementation of the peace agreement. The parties might have signed the treaty for a variety of sincere and insincere reasons. They might have reached a hurting stalemate and concluded that because they cannot win through violence there is no rational alternative to a brokered deal. They might have decided to use the peace agreement to try to achieve through politics what they could not achieve through violence; in other words, the peace treaty does not signal the end of elite competition but rather a new phase. Consequently, we make no assumptions about the motives of the signatories but do assume that they are reasonably committed to their agreements. Although we do allow for the presence of spoilers who would prefer to fight than compromise, we assume that they do not have the political or military strength to act unilaterally to undermine the political process.

What They Want: Peacebuilders and Local Elites

Although peacebuilders (PBs) can have a variety of preferences and preference ordering, in our model they have two critical preferences. They want to implement reforms that lead to a liberal peace. In other words, they want to deliver services and assistance that will create new institutions that (re)distribute political and economic power in a transparent and accountable way. However, they operate with limited resources and seek to minimize casualties. Hence, they desire, first and foremost, stability, and, secondarily, liberalization. Stability, that is, the absence of war and a stable partner in the capital, is an important precondition for the security of the peacebuilders and their ability to implement their liberalizing reforms. Consequently, peacebuilders prioritize stability over the kinds of structural reforms that are posited to produce the kind of liberal peacebuilding they desire.

State elites (SEs) and subnational elites (SNEs) want to preserve their political power and ensure that the peace implementation process either enhances or does not harm their political and economic interests. As we have already argued, the political and economic survival of SEs depends on their ability to co-opt or deter challengers from the periphery; their complicity usually does not come cheaply, which means that they must finance their patronage system. SEs will thus try to balance the opportunities that peacebuilders offer with the threats that the implementation of liberal peacebuilding poses to their survival strategy.

SNEs generally want to maximize their power and their autonomy from the central government. In fact, the war might have strengthened their hand. A typical consequence of war and the collapse of state services (if they ever really existed) is that individuals and groups looked beyond the state and toward their local communities and parallel organizations for their basic needs. Consequently, subnational elites can be a relative beneficiary from the conflict. In any event, they will want to make sure that they do not lose in any peace dividend or post-conflict statebuilding process. Like state elites, subnational elites will attempt to capture the resources offered by peacebuilders while minimizing the costs reforms might pose to their local power and autonomy vis-à-vis the central government.

The ability of peacebuilders, state elites, and subnational elites to achieve their preferences is dependent on the behavior, strategies and perceived power of others. There are significant material and normative international constraints on peacebuilders. They are condemned to get results with limited resources, under high time pressure, and with minimal casualties. The

international community has rarely spent lavishly on peacekeeping or peacebuilding exercises; indeed, the higher the projected cost the less likely is the UN Security Council to authorize the operation. Not only are peacebuilders expected to perform near miracles without requisite resources, but they are expected to do so with amazing speed because the international community suffers from attention deficit disorder and will quickly lose interest and patience. There also are normative constraints (Paris 2003). Indeed, peacekeepers and peacebuilders operate according to the principles of consent; they are expected to negotiate with and gain the cooperation of the targets of their intervention in order to ensure that the intervened gain “ownership.” In fact, the more necessary are enforcement mechanisms to achieve the mandate the greater are the costs of the intervention; and as the costs increase so, too, does the likelihood of the cessation of the peacebuilding operation. These constraints generate a strong desire by peacebuilders for security on the cheap. Consequently, local actors (SEs and/or SNEs) who are necessary for the production of stability will have a strengthened hand. Furthermore, the ability of peacebuilders to enact their liberalizing reforms also is highly dependent on the cooperation of local elites. Peacebuilding will succeed only if elites cooperate with a process that they are presumed to own.

The ability of state and subnational elites to achieve their preferences is dependent on the actions of peacebuilders and each other. The resources that peacebuilders can allocate, however limited, usually dwarf those of the state budget of the target country, and their allocation can have important consequences for the distribution of political and economic power.¹¹

Consequently, state elites will treat the international presence not only as a potential constraint

¹¹ On this point, see Boye 2002: 367.

but also as a potential opportunity. This is not a new development. During the age of imperialism local actors frequently attempted to attract international attention and resources in order to enhance their political position vis-à-vis local rivals, and during the Cold War state elites attempted to attract the attention of Cold War in order to garner strategic rents that they, in turn, can distribute domestically to bolster their political support.¹² Moreover, peacebuilders can confer legitimacy on local elites, choosing to treat some as important political powers or as agents of political communities, thus enhancing their bargaining power over rivals.¹³ Yet in a situation of elite competition, what is viewed as a positive externality by one party is likely to be treated as a negative externality by another. Consequently, state elites will attempt to steer international peacebuilders in a direction that furthers their interests.

A Simple Game: Peacebuilders and State Elites

The game begins when the peacebuilders (PB) undertake a set of activities that can generate negative or positive externalities for populations in the country. PBs bring highly needed resources that can be life-saving in many instances and critical for rebuilding the country. PBs also can have goals that are diametrically opposed by local elites, especially when PBs encourage the pluralization of politics or enhance the position of rivals. Thus, externalities, in their intensity and in their sign, will differ depending on how they are viewed by distinct constituencies. Local elites can respond to these externalities in a variety of ways,. At one

¹² For the case of imperialism, see Curtin 2000, Robinson 1986. For cold war see Clapham 1996, Ayoob 1995.

¹³ On impact of aid, see Boyce, Terry 2002.

extreme, they might intimidate, threaten or carry out violence against PBs. At the other extreme, they might actively cooperate with PBs, contributing manpower, resources, and time. It is beyond our capacity to delineate an exhaustive list of responses. Nor is it necessary. For our purposes here the crucial issue is whether local elites accept the peacebuilding reforms as presented or insist on a modification.

We posit four different kinds of outcomes: cooperative peacebuilding, co-opted peacebuilding, captured peacebuilding, and confrontational peacebuilding (see Table One). If the SEs accept and support the peacebuilding program, then the game ends at cooperative peacebuilding. In this situation peacebuilders are able to design and implement their programs with the knowledge that they will receive the cooperation and assistance from local elites. More likely, however, local elites will attempt to alter the content and implementation of these programs so that they are consistent with their interests. If PBs accept these conditions, then the outcome is captured peacebuilding. Peacebuilders become little more than the agent of local elites and international resources are transferred from international to local actors, who have control over its allocation and use.¹⁴

It is doubtful, though, that peacebuilders will accept a situation in which they become the patron of a transitional government, especially one that is comprised of warlords and former combatants. Consequently, they are likely to present conditionality criteria that demand that

¹⁴ This situation is more likely in situations of extreme violence and instability, when peacekeepers and aid workers are dependent on local warlords, militias, and combatants in order to carry out their mandates and for access to populations at risk.

local elites accept the legitimacy of local reforms in return for international support (Goodhand & Sedra 2006: 3). If state elites accept these conditions, then they and peacebuilders are engaged in what we call compromised peacebuilding: both peacebuilders and local elites have altered their policies and strategies in order to accommodate the preferences of the other.

There is the possibility, though, that peacebuilders and state elites are not able to reach a compromise, continue to resist the demands of the other, and begin to consider more coercive instruments. Although peacebuilders have few coercive measures available to them, in rare circumstances they might threaten to go to the Security Council and ask for enforcement action or armed protection; more likely peacebuilders will threaten either to curtail their activities or withdraw altogether. State elites might resist the incursions of peacebuilders or attempt to modify their policies by resorting to a range of coercive tactics, from intimidation to the threat and use of violence. In such a scenario, the game turns confrontational and possibly deadly. We name this outcome confrontational peacebuilding.

Given the preferences and constraints typically confronted by each actor, we argue that compromised peacebuilding is likely to be the equilibrium outcome (see Table Two). This is so because, in terms of preferences over outcomes, PBs prefer cooperative peacebuilding to compromised peacebuilding to conflictive peacebuilding to captured peacebuilding, and SEs prefer captured peacebuilding to compromised peacebuilding to conflictive peacebuilding to cooperative peacebuilding (see Table Three).

Neither will be able to achieve its preferred outcome of either cooperative or captured peacebuilding (these are ordinal rankings); both would prefer conflictive peacebuilding to either captured or cooperative peacebuilding because it would distort (in the case of peacebuilders) if not threaten (in the case of state elites) their core interests. Compromised peacebuilding, therefore, becomes the equilibrium outcome because the parties have little incentive to defect.

There are various reasons why peacebuilders and state elites will be satisfied with this outcome. Peacebuilders achieve security alongside an acknowledgement of the legitimacy and desirability of reforms. They have developed a culture of principled pragmatism, ready to make compromises in the face of hard realities. They have an organizational interest in demonstrating success, especially once they have committed resources to the operation. Finally, they know the preference rankings of state elites and thus can anticipate that if they defect and attempt to revise the bargain then state elites are likely to resist. There are various reasons why state elites also will be satisfied with this outcome. They receive international resources that they can use to maintain their support at home. They receive international recognition of their political standing. Finally, they know the preference rankings of peacebuilders and thus can anticipate that if they defect and attempt to revise radically the bargain in their favor, peacebuilders might depart.

Compromised peacebuilding becomes something of a peacebuilder's contract – they have negotiated an arrangement in which each party has specific responsibilities and receives specific rewards. Peacebuilders agree to provide international resources and legitimacy for state elites in return for stability and acknowledgement by state elites of the legitimacy of peacebuilding reforms. Consequently, this contract reinforces the status quo even as it leaves open some

possibility for reform. In other words, the reforms that do take place will unfold in a way that protects the interests of local elites. This outcome also can be seen as symbolic peacebuilding. In this way, it resembles what sociological institutionalists call “ceremonial conformity.” The actor, or organization, wants to maintain the stream of material and normative benefits required for its legitimacy and survival, but fears that full compliance will be too costly (Meyer & Rowan 1977: 50). Consequently, it adopts the myths and ceremonies of the organizational form, but maintains its existing practices (and in this way organizational form and practices become decoupled). It is symbolic, or ceremonial, peacebuilding therefore, in that the symbols of reform have been transferred and thus there is the surface appearance that there has been a transformation of the kind of state, that is, toward a liberal-democracy, even though the existing power relations have largely emerged unscathed. That said, symbols can matter. Once state elites have committed themselves to certain principles these public commitments can be used by liberalizing elements at home and abroad to try and force them to keep their word. Moreover, these symbols can encourage existing actors to reprioritize their interests and develop new networks of associations that can, over time, build support for liberalization.

A More Complicated Game: Subnational Elites Want Their Cut

It is now time to introduce some complexity into the model in order to increase its utility and reality. In most postconflict settings subnational elites are critical to stability and thus their presence is likely to affect the outcome. Accordingly, let us now consider a second game, which is an extension of the first. Imagine that peacebuilders and state elites converge on a contract

that is closer to the liberal agenda than it is to the status quo. Now assume that SEs propose this peacebuilding agenda to SNEs. If SNEs accept, the game ends with all actors agreeing on a cooperative peacebuilding agenda. However, subnational elites might very well fear that this arrangement will threaten their goals of preserving their power and maintaining their autonomy from the central government. Why? Peacebuilders are pressing reforms that are intended to pluralize power and recentralize the state. Consequently, subnational elites might respond by playing the spoiler or using their power to raise the cost of peacebuilding and threaten the regime's survival.¹⁵ (Indeed, because frequently subnational elites are strengthened by a collapsed state, their bargaining leverage might be higher after the war than before). In short, subnational elites are likely to resist an arrangement that might come at their expense. SEs now have now two options. Fearing that subnational elites are about to gain relative power, they might strike out against the subnational elite. This is, however, extremely unlikely, because SEs in post-conflict setting are usually too weak to confront opposing elites without the consent or even support of PBs, and PB will be extremely reluctant to become engaged in a new round of civil war. Because this first option is unlikely, SEs are likely to opt to try and renegotiate the agenda with the peacebuilders in ways that better incorporate the preferences of the SNEs. In order to justify their desire to re-open negotiations, SEs might argue that at the present moment they do not possess the capacity to implement a liberal agenda, and that more patience and more resources are needed. If PBs accept these modification, the game ends, and the outcome will be compromised peacebuilding.

¹⁵ On spoilers see Stedman, 1997. For a formal modelling of veto players, see Tsebelis, 1991.

There is another possibility. Upon realizing that SNE may play spoiler, SEs may try to directly engage them, hoping that subnational elites might accept the legitimacy of peacebuilding in exchange for resources and recognition from peacebuilders. While this is a theoretical possibility, it is highly unlikely because PBs are usually extremely unwilling to deal with subnational elites who lack democratic legitimacy and often have dubious war time records, and fear the costs and the logistical challenges that accompany any effort to establish a robust presence in the provinces. However, if PBs decide to directly engage SNEs, the outcome may well be captured peacebuilding (see Figure Three). There are several reasons why subnational elites might be able to achieve what state elites could not. To begin, in comparison to state elites, subnational elites might have greater bargaining leverage. Peacebuilders are increasingly and notoriously out of their depth the further they get from the capital city, tend to be more isolated and thus more dependent on subnational elites to provide security, and are more dependent on subnational elites to provide critical information and protection. Peacebuilders might be willing to be “captured” for what they believe are tactical reasons, betting that a bad agreement is better than no agreement and might be renegotiated at a later date. They also might not even know how captured they truly are, because the costs of monitoring programs in the provinces are so high.

In sum, our models suggest that given the resources, commitments, and preferences of the players, the most likely outcome - and the best that liberal peacebuilders usually can hope to achieve -- is compromised peacebuilding. Cooperative peacebuilding is possible if and only if peacebuilders come in with tremendous resources and a strong commitment to liberalization. Even then, they will have to anticipate that local elites, both in the capital and in the countryside,

will resist or attempt to change the peacebuilding program so that it more fully incorporates their preferences. In fact, we anticipate that captured peacebuilding, especially between subnational elites and peacebuilders, is more likely than cooperative peacebuilding. For these and other reasons, liberal peacebuilding is more likely to reproduce than transform existing state-society relations and patrimonial politics.

Coopted and Captured in Kabul and Dushanbe

We now illustrate our model in the cases of Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Both countries are difficult cases for peacebuilding. They lack local capacities and emerged from disastrous wars. Both are landlocked, mountainous, and largely rural and least developed countries and both emerged from disastrous civil wars.¹⁶ The civil war in Tajikistan resulted in 41,400 deaths between 1992 and 1998, while the war in Afghanistan claimed some 75,000 lives between 1989 and 2001 (Bethany & Gleditsch 2005). In terms of population size this means that roughly 7.1 out of 1000 Tajik citizens died in battle between 1992 and 1998, while 2.4 out of 1000 Afghan

¹⁶ There is only scarce reliable economic data for Tajikistan and almost none for Afghanistan. Estimates published in the annual *CIA World Factbook* put the GDP per capita in purchasing power parity (PPP) in Afghanistan at 700 USD in 2003 (rank 221 in global comparison) and 800 USD in 2007 (rank 219 in global comparison). For Tajikistan, the GDP per capita in PPP was estimated to be 1,250 USD in 2003 (rank 196) and 1,300 USD in 2007 (rank 203). See Central Intelligence Agency (2007). *CIA World Factbook*. Available online at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

citizens died between 1989 and 2001, which places both wars among the bloodiest after 1945. The fault lines along ethnic, regional and religious identities also complicated a peace process and post conflict reconstruction project. They do differ in an important respect. Because of geopolitical circumstances, Afghanistan commanded considerable international attention; it experienced one of the ambitious peacebuilding missions ever. The mission was well-manned, well-financed, equipped with a robust mandate and intrusive. By contrast, the peacebuilding mission in Tajikistan was rather small, with a limited mandate, and less intrusive. Afghanistan did not necessarily fare better than Tajikistan, notwithstanding its relatively greater international support. In both cases, international actors entered with a broadly liberal agenda, proposing to reform the state, society, and economy in order to promote a durable peace.¹⁷ Yet, in both cases, the result of the peacebuilding mission is, from the perspective of liberal peacebuilders, similarly disappointing. Although the strategic interactions between peacebuilders and local elites differed, both Afghanistan and Tajikistan travelled down a path of compromised peacebuilding as international peacebuilders traded stability for a more genuine commitment to liberal reforms, and state elites accepted the legitimacy of liberal reforms in return for a continuation of international assistance. Consequently, in both cases there was a modest increase in the degree of state while the kind of state had a liberal shell atop a mediated, exclusionary, and patrimonial state.¹⁸

¹⁷ We treat these cases as illustrative and suggest that future research select on the critical variables in order to see whether and how a change in the preferences and constraints might lead to different outcomes.

¹⁸ There are, of course, various alternative explanations for these results, including the lack of coordination among the peacebuilders, which increased the autonomy of local elites and thus

Tajikistan

There are several features of Tajikistan's history that are important for understanding the challenges faced by peacebuilders. On the economic front, it was heavily agrarian, had been the least developed Soviet republic, and had been dependent on Moscow for 40% of its budget. On the political front, akin to other central Asian republics, Tajikistan had a hybrid political system that resulted from a Soviet state and party institutions that aspired to create a centralized rule that penetrated society down to the village level but nevertheless relied on informal middlemen and one particular regional grouping ("clan"), the Leninabad in northern Tajikistan. On the socio-cultural front there were very strong regional identities, due in part to the very mountainous terrain and poor infrastructure that hindered communication and strong ties between different regions.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 meant the end of its generous subsidies support for the ruling Leninabadis, which, in turn, triggered a civil war. Although the war involved a clash of ideologies – communism and secularism versus Islamism; democracy/liberalism versus authoritarianism – the main divisions were between regionally based clans (Akiner 2001; Atkin

gave them the ability to escape any kinds of control mechanisms that might have been established; the American obsession with the war on terrorism; the American invasion of Iraq, which consumed the kinds of international military and financial assistance (and attention) that might otherwise have gone to Afghanistan.

1999; Rubin 1998). The civil war brutalized the country, destroying infrastructure, reportedly killing 50,000 people, and leaving homeless hundreds of thousands (Akiner & Barnes 2001).

The international reaction to the war began in late 1992. In January 1993 the UN established the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT), a skeletal operation tasked with helping to coordinate humanitarian assistance. It would take another two years and a radical change in the region's strategic context before there would be further international action. What grabbed everyone's attention was the successful consolidation of the Pakistan-backed Taliban over large swathes of Afghanistan and the prospect that its influence, politics, and violence might spill over into Tajikistan. Alarmed by this possibility, in 1995 the UN and the CIS, with Russia as its driving force, increased their efforts to establish a political settlement. The UN undertook a fairly intensive shuttle diplomacy between Tajik leader Emomali Rakhmonov (leader of the Kulyob grouping) in Dushanbe and opposition leader Sayed Abdullo Nuri in Kabul that led to negotiations, but little else. In 1996 the fighting resumed.

In the aftermath of the war, Russia and Uzbekistan increased their military cooperation and their support for Emomali Rakhmonov. On December 23, 1996 Rakhmonov and Nuri met in Moscow. This time they crafted a comprehensive agreement which laid the foundation for a peace treaty. After considerable international pressure and further internationally-sponsored negotiations, in June, 1997, President Rakhmonov and the leader of the UTO, Nuri, signed the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. Among its more important features, the agreement called for: the creation of a Commission of National Reconciliation; the incorporation of UTO representatives into the government on the basis of a

30% quota; an end to the ban on UTO party activities; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of UTO forces; and a general amnesty for all combatants.

To support the signed agreement and the post-conflict process, in June 2000, the United Nations disbanded UNMOT and created in its place the United Nations Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP), which had a mandate to: provide the political framework and leadership for post-conflict peace- building activities of the United Nations; promote an integrated approach to the development and implementation of post-conflict peace-building programmes; foster reconstruction, economic recovery, poverty alleviation, good governance, democracy and the rule of law; and organize the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program.¹⁹ Although there were no explicit statements about the need to establish a liberal democracy in Dushanbe, the UN's mission included the standard checklist of activities that suggested this very goal.

In the wake of 9/11 and the US war against the Taliban, the peacebuilding mission in Tajikistan acquired a new strategic significance. UNTOP became the centrepiece of a booming peacebuilding industry, INGOs flocked to Tajikistan, NGOs mushroomed, and an impressive flow of money streamed into the country. Aid as a percentage of the central government's total expenditures climbed from 5% in 1993 to 27% in 2001 and then to a staggering 37% in 2004.²⁰ Official development assistance reached \$240 million in 2004, compared to \$180 million for the

¹⁹ UNTOP: <http://www.untop.org/> (02/06/2006).

²⁰ World Bank Development Indicators.

government's outlays. Aid, together with revenues from labor migration²¹ and drug trafficking, became Tajikistan's blood and oxygen (IOM 2003; Makarenko 2002).

What quickly emerged was compromised peacebuilding. President Rakhmonov had a clear preference for maintaining political power, ensuring stability throughout the region, and continuing the flow of international resources that was so critical for regime survival and stability. Toward that end, he cooperated with peacebuilders when there was a convergence of preferences, but when they did not converge he favored symbolic peacebuilding. He was not alone in his stated preference for stability over all other goals. All parties feared a resumption of hostilities (arguably exaggerated by Rakhmonov's regime in order to attract aid money and to ensure domestic compliance), and Rakhmonov's policy of stability was strongly supported by the population. Rakhmonov could play the "stability" card for political purposes, and during his national campaigns urged national reconciliation and portrayed himself as Tajikistan's best hope for stability.

The central government cooperated with the peacebuilding operation in various areas. It supported the DDR process, which, accordingly, was a relative success. A resource-starved government gladly outsourced welfare services in the subnational areas to an eager INGO community. The result was a major increase in basic goods as international actors became the major provider of food security, basic infrastructure, energy supply, education and health care in the countryside, especially in the former oppositional regions of Garm and Badakhshan.

²¹ Business & Economics: Russie, Tajikistan Spar Over Illegal Labor Migration, 1/09/03.

(<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav010903.shtml> 3.1.2004)

There was little more than symbolic peacebuilding, though, when the preferences of state elites diverged from the international peacebuilding program. UNTOP attempted to promote the very idea of pluralizing politics and establishing a culture of dialogue and peaceful dissent. Toward that end, it initiated the Political Discussion Club (PDC) project, which brought “together representatives of central and local government, heads of political parties, citizens, NGOs, and representatives of private business and the independent mass media in sessions across the country.... Topics for discussion rotate each year, and have included the themes of democratization, economic transition, security, local governance, and electoral laws and procedures”²² All well and good, but this arguably represented more ceremony than substance. Tajikistan, has no independent media, no robust political party system, no civil society outside of the fledgling and internationally-supported NGO community, and no meaningful institutions for local government.²³ Little wonder, then, that the Political Discussion Club had difficulty “promoting political tolerance and dialogue.” In a country without an independent media or electricity in the rural areas, it is difficult to accept the conclusion that “coverage of discussions in local and national mass media, multiplied the effect of each session, increased the outreach in distant regions.”²⁴

²² <http://www.untop.org/> (02/06/2006)

²³ See Bertelsmann Transformation Index BTI, country report Tajikistan 2006, [http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/157.0.html?L=1\(2006/06/26\)](http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/157.0.html?L=1(2006/06/26))

²⁴ Ibid.

There were various other reforms that were intended to increase public security, but in many cases they were undermined by the half-hearted and foot-dragging behaviour of local elites. UNTOP instituted training seminars for state officials and community leaders on conflict prevention and resolution, but there is little evidence that such training was anything but pro forma and perfunctory. To promote the rule of law, UNTOP supported local capacity-building for law enforcement agencies, seeking to accelerate their reform, combat corruption, and increase professionalism. In the realm of human rights, a needs assessment mission of Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) concluded that “although Tajikistan was party to all major human rights conventions, it lacked national capacities in treaty reporting and had not established the necessary mechanism to implement its obligations.”²⁵ As a remedy, it recommended that UNTOP assist in providing technical support in the area of treaty reporting and human rights education. Although it is quite possible that the primary obstacle toward improvement in this area is “technical,” there is ample alternative evidence that it is fundamentally political.

The new government also demonstrated very little interest in promoting power-sharing or the pluralization of political power. There have been a series of elections - parliamentary and presidential elections in 2000 and a referendum in 2003 on whether Rakhmonov should be allowed to serve two consecutive seven-year terms when his current term ends in 2006 – but they were hardly free or fair. Moreover, the government slowly reversed the key point of the peace agreement that had assured UTO 30% representation in the government. Today, most of the key positions are occupied by loyal followers of President Rakhmonov’s home region of Kulyob. All

²⁵ <http://www.untop.org/> (02/06/2006)

of these reversals have been tolerated by the peacebuilders because Rakhmonov is viewed as a guarantor of stability in a country which appears to be vulnerable to internal cleavages and external destabilization. In fact, rather than using aid as a lever for greater democratization, aid has increased as democracy has become a more distant possibility.

Peacebuilding in Tajikistan has increased the degree, but not altered the kind, of state. Rakhmonov's regime has gained considerable strength (enough to rig two elections and a referendum) and successfully compromised or sidelined oppositional state elites. World Bank indicators reflect the institutionalization of one-party rule, patrimonial politics, and authoritarianism. The voice and accountability indicator, an aggregate measure of civil liberties, has declined since 2002, while indicators measuring government effectiveness have improved.²⁶

The current political system in Tajikistan is characterized by highly entrenched patron-client networks supported by an increasingly coercive and arbitrary state apparatus. Governance is exercised mainly through informal channels. Civil society is weak and hardly existent beyond the village communities. Nevertheless, the institutional framework for democracy and market reforms is formally in place and Tajikistan's high dependence of international cooperation makes it - theoretically - more responsive to incentives for policy changes than, for example, isolationist Uzbekistan. In general, while there are important symbolic differences between the

²⁶ The figures are for Voice and Accountability: 2000: -1,76; 2002: -1,31; 2004: -1,35; for government effectiveness: 2000: -1,39; 2002: -1,13; 2004: -1,05. (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi 2005).

Tajikistan that was a Soviet republic and the sovereign state of Tajikistan, many of these differences are ceremonial and not substantive.

The international community has contributed to this outcome. It has generously funded a regime that is maintained more by “by raw power” than by “institutions” (Ottaway 2002). State elites have continuously renegotiated the peacebuilders contract in their favor, emphasizing stability over liberal reforms, and peacebuilders were willing to renegotiate because they, too, ranked stability over liberalization.

Afghanistan

When in 2001 international peacebuilders launched one of the most ambitious peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations ever, Afghanistan was a poor, highly fragmented country that had just emerged from more than two decades of disastrous wars. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989, fighting continued among the various Mujahidin factions, eventually giving rise to a state of warlordism. The chaos and corruption that dominated post-Soviet Afghanistan in turn spawned the rise of the Taliban. After several years of further fighting, the Taliban laid claim to Afghanistan in fall 1996.

The possibility and desirability of an international peacebuilding in Afghanistan was the obvious result of the September 11th attacks on the United States and the American-led response the following month that successfully routed the Taliban government and al-qaeda forces. US forces supported heavily the Northern Alliance, a military-political coalition of various Afghan

groups fighting against the Taliban. With extensive U.S. military assistance, the Northern Alliance captured most of Afghanistan from the Taliban in early 2002. The defeat of the Taliban led to the broader debate about how to both promote a government that would join in the war against terrorism and create the structural underpinning for a stable peace. While the former objective might have suggested something of a devil's bargain between the U.S. and whomever emerged victorious in Kabul, the latter insisted on a broader peacebuilding operation. Although the victorious Northern Alliance, which represented mainly the Tajik and Uzbek population of Afghanistan, heavily influenced the new transitional authority, the international coalitional forces insisted on a broad coalition that would also represent the Pashtu population. In fall 2001, various representatives of influential Afghan groups under the auspices of the UN convened in Bonn, Germany, to discuss the future of the country.

Liberal peacebuilders confronted enormous challenges. After two decades of war, peacebuilders had to start from scratch and confronted considerable obstacles as they imagined beginning a statebuilding and peacebuilding project. Most infrastructure had been destroyed by the wars. The state, which barely existed even in the "golden age," was now decimated and had little capacity. The union of military forces that produced the victory could not mask the significant political cleavages that threatened to boil to the surface. The Taliban continued to exist and could play spoiler. Most societal groups were mistrusting of any statebuilding process. Society was largely organized around regional, ethnic and religious ties, and the subnational elites—large landowners, religious leaders, and Jihadi commanders—were content with a decentralized arrangement (Rubin 2002).

The emerging game between peacebuilders and state elites was influenced by a number of factors. To begin, peacebuilders were willing to make Afghanistan a flagship project; toward that end, they committed significant resources (manpower, soldiers, and money). Furthermore, the new state elites owed their positions to the victory over the Taliban and the subsequent peacebuilding operation; consequently, their preferences corresponded with those of the international peacebuilders. That said, they were in no great position to command anyone to do anything because the governing elites had little leverage over competing elites, especially outside Kabul. Regime survival, and presumably their physical survival, depended on whether they successfully accommodated their rivals. Finally, the U.S.'s focus on the war against terror led it to support individual warlords and local strongmen who, in its view, were instrumental for hunting down the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters; consequently, the U.S.'s preference of security over liberalization strengthened the power of those parties that opposed the creation of a liberal, democratic state. The weakness of state elites, the strength of subnational elites, and the ambiguous policies of the main peacebuilder, the U.S., explains why the peacebuilding game in Afghanistan veered down two different paths: cooperative peacebuilding between the new Afghan government and the peacebuilders, and captured peacebuilding between the subnational elites and peacebuilders.

The cornerstone of the political process emerged in the Bonn agreement of December 5, 2001. Under the auspices of various international sponsors, four central Afghan factions met in Bonn, Germany, in late Fall, 2001, to discuss the country's interim political authority and the process of establishing a new government. The resulting agreement created an Afghan Interim Authority and a road map for political and economic prosperity. The agreement's explicit goal

was to produce a state that would be democratic, efficient, rational, and limited, committed to Islamic values, social justice, and market-led growth, and contain a single army (Suhrke 2006). A major task of the Afghan Interim Authority was to convene an Emergency Loya Girga (Grand Assembly of Elders), which would select a transitional government until national elections for a permanent government.²⁷ Furthermore, while the agreement did contain transitional benchmarks and a timeframe, these were vague and disconnected from formal conditionalities. The reluctance to impose conditionalities owed to the international community's priority of stability and fear that these conditionalities might exacerbate the already existing divisions within the government (Suhrke 2006). The agreement's vagueness and unwillingness to undertake a set of actions that might threaten stability was particularly evident regarding the militias and warlords. The agreement presented a 'declaration of intent' but no details about the mechanisms for the transfer of authority, the composition of future state apparatus, or clear timelines (Suhrke, Harpviken, & Strand 2004). In marked contrast to elaborate and detailed political agenda, the vagueness of the language in the security protocols suggests that peacebuilders wanted to avoid getting caught up in costly and dangerous struggle against subnational elites and thus chose to give the Northern Alliance maximum room for manoeuvre and politico-military freedom (Ibid).

²⁷ Bonn, formally known as the "Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Reestablishment of Permanent Government Institutions," was brokered by the four major Afghani factions. For discussions of the Loya Jirga, see Giustozzi 2004, Saba & Zakhilwal 2004, Thier 2004, Thier & Chopra 2002. For a critical commentary, particularly the centralization of power in the hands of a few cliques, see International Crisis Group 2003; Johnson & Jolyon 2004, chaps 7, 8.

Because of its perceived importance to the new security agenda and the war against terrorism, the international community immediately provided support for the political process. In comparison to its funding for other operations, the international community was muscular and generous. Although its exact numbers have varied since late 2001, it has typically had around 35,000 troops. In terms of aid, the relative generosity became apparent at the first donors conference in January 2002, when \$4.5 billion was pledged for postconflict reconstruction; at a subsequent donors conference in March 2004 in Berlin, there were pledges of \$12 billion through 2007.

As outlined in the Bonn agreement, a Loya Jirga assembled in June 2002. The delegates were elected from 370 constituencies plus representatives from refugee groups, universities and religious elites, and the governors of all the provinces – mostly warlords. The results of the Loya Jirga were mixed: while major representatives of almost all Afghan groups agreed on the composition of the Transitional Authority, the actual negotiations were far from fair and transparent. Measured against previous deliberations, the Loya Jirga looked like a model of deliberation, but there was a general feeling that democracy was merely a façade as political power resided and decisions were taken elsewhere.

Presidential elections occurred on October 9, 2004, and Hamid Karzai, who had become the international community's critical partner, was elected with 55.4 percent of the vote. The elections were free, but the playing field was uneven, in part because Karzai enjoyed the undivided support of the international community (Gardish, 2004). To complete the Bonn agreement, parliamentary elections occurred on September 18, 2005. The winners were warlords

and women - reflecting the nature of the peacebuilders contract: subnational elites, warlords, and their followers gained the majority of seats in both the lower house and the provincial council (which elects the members of the upper house) but women, which the constitution guaranteed at least 25% of the seats in the lower house, actually won 28% of the seats.

Although Karzai and other reformers in the new government largely supported liberalization, the strong preferences of fairly autonomous regional elites for the status quo and the willingness of the international coalition to provide critical resources to them in exchange for an alliance against the remnants of the Taliban and al-Qaeda propelled peacebuilders and the state elite toward compromised peacebuilding. Consequently, symbolic politics dominated many aspects of the government's reforms. For instance, in the area of judicial reform various government institutions contrived to outwit an array of poorly coordinated international donors by constructing an obfuscatory smoke-screen around the process of reform, and by cannily provoking competition between donor agencies, thus maximising their benefits while hindering the implementation of real reforms (Bhatia, Lanigan, and Wilkinson, 2004; Goodhand and Sedra, 2006).

The weakness of state elites and the strong position of subnational elites contributed to this outcome. President Karzai had to accommodate competing elites and prominent warlords because he lacked the means to crack down on them and did not wish to narrow further his ruling coalition. Specifically, because he could not crush his opposition he tried to coopt or constrain them. Consider the cases of the warlords Rashid Dostum and Ismail Khan. Khan was initially encouraged to relinquish either his executive role as Governor of Herat, or his military role as

Commander of 4th Army Corps (Giustozzi 2003). Subsequently, in 2004, Karzai successfully accommodated Khan in the Kabul-based central Government as Minister of Mines and Industry while stripping him of his executive authority as Governor in his home province (Dietl, 2004). In 2003 Dostum was provided with the somewhat ceremonial role of Deputy Defence Minister and was granted executive powers as Karzai's "Special Envoy to the North."

Another favored mechanism for constraining the power of first-order warlords was the instrumentalisation of second-order warlords against their first-order warlord patrons. Karzai, for instance, supported the second-tier warlord, Amanullah Khan of Shindand district, to militarily oppose Ismail Khan (Giustozzi 2006). This was conducted through the proxy of Gul Agha Shirzai, a powerful militia leader and subsequent Provincial Governor of Kandahar. Shirzai is a powerful strong-man associated with the monarchist network. Importantly, Amanullah was previously an ally of the Taliban. Karzai and his modernisers are instrumentalising second-tier warlords with previous Taliban connections to weaken recalcitrant first-order warlords, using other first-order warlords as proxies.

The cooptation and inclusion of subnational elites and warlords not only limited the space for any substantive reforms but it also contributed to symbolic politics. Under pressure from international human rights groups General Rashid Dostum, one of Afghanistan's most feared and powerful warlords, became a spokesperson for human rights. In May 2002, he issued a public rebuke to human-rights abusers within his militia; however, his message lost some of its power when he threatened to to 'kill' any abusers of human rights.²⁸ Similarly Hazrat Ali, the Pashtun

²⁸ *Christian Science Monitor*, May 09, 2002.

warlord cum-Chief of Police of Nangahar, participated in the ritual of poppy eradication, (to ‘please the U.S. military’), while leaving untouched those poppy-fields that were not visible from the road.²⁹ Many analysts also have observed ritualised and empty disarmament as part of the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration process (Suhrke, Harpviken & Strand 2004). Only antiquated and worn out weapons have been turned in. Commanders have sent only the most unfit and poorly trained militia fighters to the Afghan National Army. State ministries routinely and ritualistically speak in the discourse of western developmentalism, i.e., ‘conditionalities’, ‘financial constraint’, ‘fiduciary planning,’ but there is little evidence that rhetoric matches action. Peacebuilding, in short, is symbolic and nearly empty of substance (Sedra 2005).

While peacebuilders and state elites struck upon compromised peacebuilding, peacebuilders and subnational elites quickly veered down the path of captured peacebuilding – a result of a U.S. that preferred routing the Taliban over liberalization and regional warlords who were willing to cooperate with the U.S.’s war on terror in return for resources and recognition that could strengthen their political power. In order to further its security interests, U.S. officials and military planners attempted to ‘pick winners’ that are on the ‘right’ side in the war against terror and then give them with nearly unconditional support (Goodhand & Sedra 2006). This frequently necessitated military and monetary support of warlords and autonomous militias.

Although the U.S.’s decision to trade security for liberalization would complicate the policies of all other peacebuilders that were not ready to make such a bargain, even if the U.S. had not

²⁹ *Christian Science Monitor*, September 04, 2003.

made this bargain there are reasons to believe that peacebuilders would have been at a growing disadvantage because of their lack of knowledge the further they ventured from Kabul. But the double failure of ISAF to venture outside of Kabul and the U.S.'s bargain with the warlords meant that other peacebuilders would become captured.³⁰

Most INGOs cannot help but interact with local strongmen in ways that deliver to them various benefits. They gain economically. INGOs rent offices, buildings, and storage facilities from them and their relatives, typically at prices far above local standards. They invite local strong-men to visit the headquarters of the INGOs, thus conferring on them greater legitimacy. In return, subnational elites respect the quid pro quo of the informal 'contract.' Local communities are exhorted to support and facilitate the work of the INGOs. Village leaders present a happy and welcoming face to INGO staff. Survey teams from the INGO are indulged. INGO offices, vehicles, and staff are physically secure, at least in the areas of the commanders' control.

Yet as security became more problematic INGOs became increasingly detached from local politics and more dependent on middle men and other indirect means for gathering information. The ominous security climate caused INGOS to build a fortress between themselves and the local population, discouraging first-hand contact, which, in turn, led to a decline in the quality of their information a dependence on locals and information brokers for news, second-hand reports, and secondary (and recycled) data. INGO management retreats further into a comforting,

³⁰ The following section draws on Marc Theuss (Free U Berlin), Jan Koehler (Free U Berlin) and Christoph Zuercher's (Free U Berlin) field experiences and first hand accounts from rural regions in Afghanistan. Names and details are omitted in order to avoid endangering informants and organizations working in the field.

hermetically-sealed, illusion of emails, donor reports, ‘performance appraisals’ and day-to-day operational activity. Expatriate managers, residing in larger provincial centres, operating in an office environment of laptops, satellite phones, spreadsheet, log-frames and assisted by members of the ‘modern’ English-speaking Afghan elite lack the information or the will to change their relationship with local strongmen. They often do not realize how truly captured they are.

As predicted by our model, the development of captured peacebuilding between subnational elites and peacebuilders negatively affected the more cooperative contract between state elites and peacebuilders. It had two different ramifications. One, it decreased the incentives for state elites for co-operative peacebuilding and favored a compromised peacebuilding that more greatly favored stability over reforms. Why? Because of the gathering strength of the warlords and other subnational elites, the new central government became more worried about its relative power and thus more interested in regime stability than liberalization. Two, this growing weakness of the state elite made them more insistent on rewriting the contract with the international peacebuilders. Consequently, the “paradox of weakness” was such as their relative power began to decline the more intense they became about regime stability and political power – and thus more insistent on rewriting the contract so that it more fully took into account their interest in regime stability.

In sum, five years of peacebuilding in Afghanistan has not furthered the establishment of a modern, democratic state. The government of Karzai became a close associate of peacebuilders. In turn, Karzai and the modernizers in the government have accepted in principle the legitimacy of liberal reforms. But the central state elite remain weak vis-à-vis the well-entrenched

subnational elites. Warlords are circumspect about engaging in long-term, enduring contracts with the central state and prefer ‘spot’ contracts, which provide opportunities for manoeuvre when international attention has waned (Suhrke 2006). This creates a self-sustaining dynamic of insecurity, which, in turn, makes Karzai and his reformer more indispensable as a partner for peacebuilders. Karzai and his government have been cautious not to alienate subnational elites. In some cases, the warlords have been temporarily “compromised.” In other cases, warlords have come to de facto control power-ministries.³¹ Decisive steps against the drug economy, widespread corruption or rent seeking by compromised members of subnational elite were avoided. State elites, who were in principle willing to engage in cooperative peacebuilding, are reluctant to implement those liberal reforms that might alienate subnational elites and endanger the fragile stability between state and subnational elites. Peacebuilders accepted these conditions because they viewed state elites as indispensable to stability, and did not want to risk a

³¹ As *The Economist*, July 8, 2006, observed, the recent introduction of NATO and its preference for stability has altered what Karzai can hope to accomplish. “This knowledge [NATO’s strong preference for security and stability] no doubt underlies Mr Karzai’s reluctance to upset the opium-cart. He seems resigned to ruling Afghanistan as it was ruled before the war descended: through weak, centralized institutions and by issuing patronage to local strongmen. Last month [June 2006] Mr Karzai floated a plan to authorize pro-government militias in several souther provinces—in effect, rearming some of those disarmed in a \$150 million UN programme. Some of their proposed commanders are unfit to hold a responsible post anywhere at all. But yet again, it is possible to see Mr Karzai’s point: Kabul carries no clout at all in those places.”

confrontation with subnational elites that might endanger domestic stability in Afghanistan and undermine the war on terrorism.

The current situation is captured by the latest big donor conference, which occurred in London earlier this year. The centrepiece of the conference was the discussion of the so-called Afghanistan Compact, a plan that was to guide international efforts in Afghanistan until 2011. Two features of this compact are particularly relevant to the peacebuilding contract. One, the phrases ‘sovereignty’, financial ‘autonomy’ and ‘Afghan ownership’ litter the document. In other words, the compact is presenting a trustee relationship between the international community and the Afghan people – a pledge to help Afghanistan not only reclaim its sovereignty but also complete a successful liberalization project. The compact also acknowledged the destructive influence of militia leaders and warlords and the increasingly ‘criminalised’ nature of the Afghan state. Although diplomatically worded, the document warns against their accommodation and stresses the need for increased mechanisms of accountability and enforcement to be imposed on such political entrepreneurs. However, it neither proposes any measures for addressing these concerns nor threatens to make future aid conditional on a different set of arrangements. However distasteful they might find this devil’s compact, it nevertheless accurately reflects the U.S.-led coalition’s preference for security over liberalization.

Renegotiating the Peacebuilder’s Contract?

Our model, in many respects, predicts the highly predictable: liberal peacebuilding has only under very rare circumstances a chance. Yet our model introduces an important but often

overlooked reason why – strategic interaction, and also identifies some of the conditions that must be in place in order to improve the probabilities. It requires government elites who are willing to risk their political survival for the goal. It helps when when SNEs are weak and cannot play spoiler. Peacebuilders can increase the odds when they are willing to truly commit to peacebuilding and willing to back up state elites that place themselves on the line. Because these facilitating conditions are unlikely in most circumstances, cooperative peacebuilding, and thus the liberal state, remains a distant possibility at best.

The problem, though, might be less with liberal peacebuilders than it is with the donors, funding agencies, and ultimately Western states, who do not give those in the field the time, money, and backing they need. In addition, the war against terrorism, as we visibly saw in the case of Afghanistan, has its occasional benefits but its more frequent costs. On the one hand, when the war against terrorism connects with the particular area of operation then Western states are likely to demonstrate more of a commitment to the operation. On the other hand, there might be a high price to be paid for this commitment, as Western states might allow their security interests to hijack their commitments to peacebuilding.³² When security interests run at a fever pitch, then peacekeepers and peacebuilders might not mind being compromised or even captured so long as their security interests are fulfilled. Because liberal peacebuilders operate with one hand tied behind their back (or in some cases both hands), local actors have greater bargaining leverage and can ensure that their interests, which in most cases are status quo oriented, are incorporated into “really, existing” peacebuilding.

³² For a similar argument with respect to humanitarianism in Afghanistan, see Donini 2004.

How might liberal peacebuilders better their hand? As we have already suggested, if they had more resources and power then their bargaining leverage would improve and presumably local elites would accept not only the symbols but also the substance of liberalization. Yet, there is always the possibility that the harder peacebuilders push and the more they demand the more likely it is that local elites will resist and conflictive peacebuilding will result. There are no easy answers.

Perhaps at the risk of gross rationalization, we are tempted to conclude that compromised peacebuilding might not be such a terrible result. Cooperative peacebuilding is unrealistic, captured peacebuilding might very well only inflame conflict dynamics, and confrontational peacebuilding would be a no-win situation. So, compromised peacebuilding does not look so bad given the alternatives. Even if local elites do little more than recognize the legitimacy of liberalization or accept the symbolic reforms, at the very least it creates new expectations and provides new benchmarks against which the performance of the central government and subnational elites can be judged. Symbols, as we said earlier, can matter. They can provide new focal points. They can become public commitments that even hypocritical reformers must take into account. They can be used by local and international reformers to continue to press for change.

Compromised peacebuilding also might be a normatively desirable outcome. Do peacebuilders truly know better? The underlying presumption of the model and many arguments in favour of liberal peacebuilding is that liberal peacebuilders are pure of motives and, in many respects, know what is best for the local population. Yet even if we grant, in a rather

paternalistic gesture, that international actors are acting as public trustees, is there any evidence to suggest that they actually know how to socially engineer a liberal peace? Not really. Instead, they are probably ignorant about how to engineer a successful postconflict operation. At present, many peacebuilders escape their uncertainty by relying on general models that frequently are developed from their most recent experiences in the field.³³ But universal models can be a false sanctuary. The only way out is for peacebuilders to confess to a high degree of uncertainty - and actively incorporate local voices into the planning process. As Noah Feldman recently warned: “The high failure rate [of nation-building exercises] strongly supports the basic intuition that we do not know what we are doing - and one of the critical elements of any argument for autonomy is that people tend to know themselves, better than others how they ought best to live their lives” (Feldman 2004: 69).

Also, compromised peacebuilding, from the perspective of local elites and societal groups, might very well look normatively desirable because it provides greater opportunity for local voices to participate and affect a process that is supposedly “owned” by them. We readily acknowledge that many elites and politicians are not great democrats and are more interested in preserving their perks and power than in pluralizing politics (and in this respect are no different from politicians all over the world), but their presence does force otherwise steamrolling

³³ In a report on Liberia and Sierra Leone, the International Crisis Group observes that peacebuilders possess an “operational checklist” that does not recognize the underlying political dynamics (ICG 2004).

peacebuilders to go slow and adopt a more incremental approach.³⁴ Compromised peacebuilding, if done right, might be the best of all possible worlds.

If cooperative peacebuilding is going to be a normatively desirable outcome, then it must do more than simply be consistent with the preferences of local elites – it also must institutionalize a set of principles that might help create a more stable and mutually consensual outcome. What sort of principles might these be? A constitution that helps to distribute political power forces groups to negotiate and compromise with one another. Deliberative mechanisms that force individuals to state their preferences in public; this publicity principle is likely to force individuals to discover and refer to more community-oriented values and interests in order to legitimate their preferences. And, principles of representation which might or might not include elections in the days immediately following the establishment of a peacebuilding operation.³⁵ The object – and thus the measure of success – of peacebuilding must not be the establishment of values that only recently and barely obtain in many advanced democracies - but instead the creation of institutions that contain principles that compel individuals to consult, deliberate, and negotiate with one another as they decide what they consider to be the good life.

³⁴ For a related argument, see Barnett 2006.

³⁵ These principles are republican, and not liberal, and are developed in Barnett 2006.

Table 2 Kinds of Peacebuilding

Outcome	Description
Cooperative Peacebuilding	Unimpeded delivery of services and assistance leading to the creation of new institutions that distribute political and economic power to new actors.
Captured Peacebuilding	Local elites are able to shift peacebuilding programs and resources so that they are consistent with their interests.
Compromised Peacebuilding	Local elites and peacebuilders jointly determine assistance activities.
Confrontational Peacebuilding	Peacebuilders and local elites develop antagonistic and conflictive relations, leading to the suspension of assistance by peacebuilders and active resistance by local elites.

Table 3 Rank Order of Preferences of Different Actors for Different Outcomes

	Peacebuilders	Target Government	Rural Elites
4	Cooperative	Captured	Captured
3	Compromised	Compromised	Compromised
2	Confrontational	Confrontational	Confrontational
1	Captured	Cooperative	Cooperative