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Fragile States:
Securing Development

Robert B. Zoellick

In 1944, delegates from 45 countries gathered at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, to consider the economic causes that had led to the world war that was then raging. Their vision was not only to achieve military victory, but also to secure the peace, unlike their predecessors in Paris in 1919.

That generation – like any other – had its parochial attitudes, differences in perspectives and inability to foresee what was to come. But it perceived one big idea: the nexus among economics, governance and security.

Those who gathered at Bretton Woods agreed to create the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the original institution of what has become the World Bank Group. As the delegates noted, 'programs of reconstruction and development will speed economic progress everywhere, will aid political stability and foster peace'.[1] The IBRD approved its first loan to France in 1947. That $250 million investment remains, in real terms, the bank's largest loan to date.

Over 60 years later, the 'R' in IBRD has a new meaning: reconstructing such places as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Iraq, Kosovo, Liberia, the Palestinian territories, the Solomon Islands, Southern Sudan, Timor Leste and other conflict-affected or broken states. In fiscal year 2008, the World Bank Group committed over $3 billion in development assistance to countries affected by fragility and conflict.

When states are breaking down or overcome by conflict, the consequences can be severe: death and disease, economic stagnation, and environmen-

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tal degradation. One billion people, including about 340m of the world's extreme poor, are estimated to live in fragile states. These countries lag behind in meeting all the Millennium Development Goals. They account for about a third of the deaths in poor countries from HIV/AIDS, a third of those who lack access to clean water, and a third of children who do not complete primary school. Half of all the world's children who do not live to the age of five are born in fragile states. And fragile states have poverty rates averaging 54%, compared to 22% in other low-income countries.[2]

Fragile states' neighbours are also at risk, often suffering the hardships caused by refugee flows, warring groups, contagious diseases and transnational criminal networks that traffic in drugs, arms and people. As we have seen most recently in South Asia and Africa, fragile states can create fragile regions. It is much harder for economies to prosper if they cannot sell to, buy from, invest with or even transit through their neighbours. Landlocked countries with failed or failing neighbours can lose access to the world economy. And as the world witnessed seven years ago on 11 September, broken states can be the weak link in the global security chain if they are infiltrated by terrorists who recruit, train and prosper amidst devastation.

The trauma of fragile states and the interconnections of globalisation require our generation to recognise anew the nexus among economics, governance and security. Most wars are now conflicts within states, and fragile states account for most of them. But our knowledge about how best to respond remains thin.

We maintain this ignorance at our peril. The disease, outflows of desperate people, criminality and terrorism that can spawn in the vacuum of fragile states can quickly become global threats. Moreover, they represent a terrible loss to the world: leaving one billion people in destitution represents a tragic waste of human energy, creativity, invention and possibility.

Fragile states are the toughest development challenge of our era. Those who have struggled with this problem on the ground are no doubt correct when they caution that 'no one size fits all'. As one expert warns, the worst thing the development community could do is develop a step-by-step handbook for dealing with fragile states.

Yet that warning is true for any security, diplomatic, political or economic problem. Without being formulaic, we can and need to do better, learning from experience. As Mark Twain prudently cautioned, history may not repeat itself, but sometimes it rhymes.

Too often, the development community has treated states affected by fragility and conflict simply as harder cases of development. No doubt new aspects of globalisation, such as climate change, rapid urbanisation and greater levels of inequality within countries can become entwined with fragility and violence. Yet these situations require looking beyond the analytics of development to a different framework of building security, legitimacy, governance and economy. This is not security, or development, as usual. Nor is it about what we have come to think of as peacebuilding or peacekeeping. This is about *securing development* – bringing security and development together first to smooth the transition from conflict to peace and then to embed stability so that development can take hold over a decade and beyond. Only by securing development can we put down roots deep enough to break the cycle of fragility and violence. The stakes are very high. That's why I identified states emerging from conflict or seeking to avoid breakdown as one of the World Bank Group's six strategic challenges shortly after becoming president last year.

Understanding fragile states

Academic analysis of how to measure, categorise or rank fragility vary, but three main characteristics stand out: ineffective government, poverty and conflict.

The United Kingdom's Department for International Development defines fragile states as 'those where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor'.[3] Ashraf Ghani and his colleague Clare Lockhart refer to a 'sovereignty gap' – a disjunction between the state's capacity to govern by law and its capacity to provide for the needs of the people in practice. What is missing in fragile states, they argue, is 'a process for connecting citizens' voices to government and making government accountable to citizens for its decisions'.[4]

Fragility does not just mean low growth, but a *failure* in the normal growth process, such that poverty becomes a persistent condition. Weak governance, corruption and insecurity combine in a downward spiral.

Fragile states also run a higher risk of conflict than other developing countries. Fragility and poverty alone do not necessarily lead to conflict, but low and stagnant incomes, unemployment and ineffective government can create an environment that sparks violence. They may increase the opportunity for predators to tempt young, disconnected men with the allure of achieving power and criminal gains through brutality. Fragile states with natural-resource wealth are especially vulnerable, because these riches can give dangerous people something valuable to fight over.

Fragile states with natural-resource wealth are especially vulnerable

Paul Collier has put particular emphasis on the cycle of failed government, persistent poverty and civil war. He argues that fragile states are caught in a 'conflict trap' whereby violence in turn weakens security and institutional capacities, reduces growth by about 2.3% per year, lowers incomes, destroys infrastructure and redirects resources from development. This unwinding reverses development gains. It makes the post-conflict state even more vulnerable to collapse than it was pre-conflict. 'Civil war', Collier asserts, 'is development in reverse'.[5] Collier estimates that post-conflict countries are twice as likely as other developing countries to fall into conflict, and that about half of countries recovering from conflict relapse within the first decade.

A recent study by RAND examines the problems of fragile states in terms of the overlaps among government, the economy and security. Breakdowns in any of these areas, say the authors, reinforce breakdown in the others. The result is not just a conflict trap, but a web of unfit government, economic collapse and insecurity that breeds violence.[6]

Looking across the analytical frameworks for understanding fragile states, we can see a number of common threads, and also some gaps.

Firstly, we need to look beyond the state to the state of society. The development community is used to dealing with sovereign countries. We talk

about state-building and building the capacity of accountable and legitimate governments. But when state functions collapse, citizens are often compelled to look elsewhere to fill the sovereignty gap, not only to the international humanitarian community, but to religious authorities, clans, ethnic or tribal groups, warlords, criminal or terrorist organisations, and others. Political, social, military or economic networks may operate at local, regional or sometimes global levels, challenging the capacity of the fragile state apparatus to be effective, and hence its legitimacy.

When the state loses the ability to deliver the most basic functions, such as security and legal order, or sustains itself through illicit sources of revenue, calling it a fragile 'state' may be a misnomer – the state as an entity does not really exist. Witness Somalia.

It may therefore be more appropriate to think about fragile states as countries enmeshed in fragile situations. Not only can external actors contribute to fragility, but so can social, economic and environmental factors such as demographic pressures, mass movements of refugees, severe economic decline and desertification, as well as a lack of a sense of nationhood. To help countries caught in fragile situations, we need to understand the state of their societies and the external forces bearing upon them. In some parts of the world, notably Africa, the challenge is nation building as well as state building.

Secondly, the linkages and overlaps among weak governance, poverty and conflict help to explain how states can remain fragile over decades. They also suggest that if we want to help these countries – first and foremost by preventing a resumption of conflict – we need to have a much better understanding of the interconnections among these conditions.

An initial step should be to look more closely at possible predictors or indicators of civil violence, such as historical divisions, ethnic and tribal grievances, environmental factors such as drought, or economic conflicts. If conflict is often the reoccurrence of past violence, then we need to give greater attention to stopping the cycle of conflict.

Today, post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts have received the bulk of development assistance. This is understandable. It is hard to get donors to pay attention to something that has not yet happened.

But conflict *prevention* must be a better way to ensure stability and peace than picking up the pieces after conflict has destroyed societies, institutions and lives. Prevention should not just be about last-ditch efforts to avert violence, but about making peace settlements stick through sustained security and support. When risks of conflict increase, those that may be able to avert it need to act quickly. If mediation is possible, we may need more flexibility to offer prompt economic support.

Thirdly, the most critical challenges are concentrated where governance, economy and security intersect. We need to integrate a variety of tools – military, political, legal, developmental, financial and technical – and a variety of actors, including states, international organisations, civil society and the private sector. This will not be easy.

I was struck how an observation of former US National Security Advisor Anthony Lake parallels my own experience:

> Mention the deleterious political effects of a sound economic policy at a meeting of economic planners and watch their fingers drum impatiently on a table. Talk about the economic details at a conference of diplomats working on a political settlement and watch their eyes glaze. Tell a politician about the importance of painful economic sacrifice now for the sake of economic health later and watch his or her eyes widen in alarm.[7]

Ten priorities

To assist in drawing the disciplines together, let me suggest ten considerations to help figure out what to do – or at least what questions to ask – in fragile situations.

(1) Focus on building the legitimacy of the state

In all things, one should keep in mind the need to build the legitimacy of the fragile state. In the terms of Clausewitz, building legitimacy is the *Schwerpunkt*, the centre of gravity, of the strategy.

Of course, achieving security is fundamental, but even that activity must be connected to realising the strategic purpose. The counter-insurgency

model of 'clear, hold and build' can only succeed if security is combined with effective governance and development.

Legitimacy in fragile situations is not just achieved through elections or agreements that share power among factions. In some cases, premature elections may actually trigger a new cycle of violence. Legitimacy must be achieved through performance. It needs to be earned by delivering basic services, especially visible ones. Clean up the garbage. We build institutional capacity by doing things: supplying clean water and sanitation; creating simple roads to connect territories that may have been cut off from one another; providing electricity for at least part of the day; offering basic preventative health care such as immunisation; getting boys and girls into school quickly, as in Afghanistan.

Legitimacy must be earned by delivering basic services

New governments, especially ones elected amidst continuing political division and fragility, need to deliver tangible benefits – not grandiose plans – and fast. As President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia reminded us at a recent meeting, 'a dollar today is worth more to us than $50 in three years time'.

In some cases, the state may have actually had a malignant role, so a new government must demonstrate a benign face. Practical improvements can offer people hope, create a sense of progress, build governmental account-ability and demonstrate how to manage even limited resources, all of which builds confidence and trust.

Project sustainability is important, but in some cases – such as delivering seeds, fertilizers and tools to farmers for the first planting – sustainability concerns may need to take second place. This is difficult for some develop-ment donors to accept.

To achieve legitimacy, it is not only the services that matter, but who per-forms them: they should be undertaken by the government and local people as soon as is feasible. This strategic consideration should guide both the handoff from humanitarian aid to development and the design of transition services. Outsiders can share international experience of what has worked, while the new government and community groups can decide what to do and how to customise programmes to local conditionswhile implement-

ing. Even as donors pursue short-term objectives, they need to begin to strengthen and transfer responsibilities to ministries and local authorities.

Transparent management of resources is vital. Fragile situations are rife with rumours and spoilers. The best antidote is clearly and repeatedly communicating what the government is doing and why. In Liberia, I travelled with President Johnson-Sirleaf to one of the 'town halls' she holds throughout the country to explain the government's goals, introduce ministers, take questions and build a sense of patriotic enthusiasm for rebuilding. President René Préval of Haiti led by example and passed a law requiring his ministers to disclose their financial assets as a public check on corruption and conflict.

(2) Provide security

The first among equally important services for a fragile situation is establishing a relatively safe and secure environment. The debates I have listened to between equally well-meaning security and development specialists have reflected different training, expectations and attitudes about systems built on command versus those reliant on incentives and markets. Given the linkages between breakdowns in the economy and stability, security and development need to go hand in hand, mutually reinforcing each other. It may make more sense to think of 'securing development' in terms of simultaneity rather than sequencing.

In practice, this means more interaction on the ground between security and development staff so they can communicate their respective interests, capabilities and limitations. As one Canadian development official in Afghanistan pointed out to me, even the term 'security' may have different meanings to a soldier in body armour and a female NGO worker living in a village. Too often, the leaders of the relevant professions have kept their distance from one another, but I have found a great deal of mutual respect among the people in the field. The provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in Iraq and Afghanistan offer a good example.

Soldiers may not wish to – or think they cannot – defend fixed points or lines, such as villages or power lines, pipelines and roads. But without some strategy to minimise danger and disruptions, development may be impossible, and a fragile state's legitimacy undermined.

Clearly, one lesson is that numbers matter: as many as 15,000 military personnel are authorised to keep the peace in Liberia for a population of 3.6m, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo has roughly the same number of peacekeepers but a population of more than 50m in a country the size of Western Europe. The United States learned it needed more forces to succeed in Iraq, and NATO needs more troops in Afghanistan today.

If we are serious about stopping the downward spiral of violence and state breakdown, larger forces need to be kept in place longer. To build confidence, UN peacekeeping mandates and renewals should be authorised for much longer than 6–12 months. In some cases, we may need mandates that are less restrictive, so UN operations can prevent the outbreak of violence.

Development experts, in turn, need to recognise the priority of using economic progress to boost security. When soldiers discuss the economics of security, their first priority is jobs, no matter how created. When a security gain can be leveraged, development projects may need to be sub-optimal economically – 'good enough' rather than 'first-best'. When areas of a country are still insecure, development may need to be pursued piecemeal through pilot projects.

To build legitimacy and effectiveness, international partners also need to assist the fragile state to build, and pay for, its own reliable police and armed forces. Properly organised and trained, local police and military are key to securing public support, gaining intelligence and sustaining security. A good police force and army are worth the investment, because ill-trained forces or an officer corps that does not respect the government's legitimacy will perpetuate or even worsen a destructive situation. Job training and placement for ex-combatants, to help transform fighters into participants in recovery, is also a critical need – and a consistent deficiency.

(3) Build the rule of law

A fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development is an effective rule of law, including respect for property rights. A legal order is a safeguard against the serious risk of criminalisation of the state. Corruption adds to fragility and undermines legitimacy. Abuse of state power destroys confidence, and ultimately the state's core purpose. Building the rule of law is

also vital to public safety – poorly trained and paid police usually add to fragility by arming and empowering predators. In much of Afghanistan, the greatest security fear for businesspeople is kidnapping, often by the police.

Yet the international security and development communities have let the task of building justice and law-enforcement systems fall between the cracks. Successful efforts to build a police force in Bosnia seem to be the exception that proves the rule. It is not clear to me where the international capacity exists to help establish basic courts and tribunals to resolve disputes, train judges and advocates, and build prisons and police forces, all of which need to recognise local cultural and legal traditions. Efforts by the United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations to launch an Office of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions is a start, but much more needs to be done.

(4) Bolster local and national ownership

Local and national ownership in state building is fundamental to achieving legitimacy, trust and effectiveness.

Community-driven development programmes, which give control over decisions on investing modest resources to community groups and local governments, have proven successful. Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme is a good example. This programme, launched five years ago by the Afghan government with the World Bank's help, today empowers more than 20,000 elected Community Development Councils to allocate modest grants to local priorities, such as micro-hydroelectric generators, schools, roads, irrigation, erosion management and water-supply projects. The programme reaches more than 17m Afghans in all 34 provinces, and has an economic rate of return of close to 20%.

The community structures established with the help of the World Bank's Community Reintegration and Development Project in Rwanda now form the backbone of the government's decentralisation policy and have become the platform for implementing projects in multiple sectors. These types of local programmes link self-help with self-determination.

At the national level, donors need to help governments develop the capacity to employ the national budget as a transparent tool for coherent planning and accountability. This means strengthening both the Ministry

of Finance and the cabinet process. The starting point is to assist with the development of simple systems for financial management, payrolls and procurement. Otherwise, channelling resources through a national budget could be like pouring water on sand. Even worse, the aid could create an asset for people to fight over.

Unfortunately, many donors seeking 'results' – often under *their* flag, not the local government's – circumvent the national budget altogether. In Afghanistan, two-thirds of donor funds are outside the budget.

If donors cannot work with a government to build national accountability systems that donors can trust, how can one expect the public to trust its own government? Recall that the strategic centre of gravity is to build legitimacy through good and effective governance.

(5) Ensure economic stability

Macroeconomic stability is a prerequisite for effective recovery. Countries need to get the fundamentals right – fiscal, monetary and exchange-rate policies – so that there can be stable economic conditions that permit markets to expand and trade to resume, and which allow people to rely on a currency as a store of value and investors to feel more secure about saving and building.

But we also have to recognise that fragile states are just that, fragile, especially in the face of sudden shocks. They need specialised, real-time monitoring that can assess and respond to changing external conditions – such as fast-rising food and energy prices – with speed and flexible support. Reforms for economic stability need to be sequenced with political cycles to avoid triggering governance crises that will make economic reform impossible.

The international financial institutions – including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group – need tools to provide help quickly, such as by clearing arrears, and to fill gaps promptly, whether for governmental capacity, food or balance-of-payments support.

(6) Pay attention to the political economy

Effective efforts to address fragility and conflict must be grounded in a political economy that is capable of sustaining peace. This means taking into

account the relationships between power and wealth in society. Conflict and instability can, after all, be a lucrative business for those in power who may exploit state resources or profit from violence. If links develop between political power and illegal economic activity, they can deprive the legal economy of an opportunity to grow, the state of revenue, and both of legitimacy. This may be especially dangerous in countries where there is natural-resource wealth.

Conflict and instability can be a lucrative business

Putting in place the economic incentives for stability and peace may not be enough if donors do not have a good understanding of who wins and who loses from peace settlements. Donors need to understand the history of a country and its people, who holds power and how power is brokered and used, and the way these relationships influence formal institutions. This kind of expertise does not always come easily to those schooled in more traditional development disciplines. Yet too many perfect economic plans have foundered upon the rocks of political impossibility.

The challenge for donors increases when the technocrats who may be in charge at the start of reconstruction give way to political leaders. Unfortunately, development technocrats are too often dismissive of the arts and compromises of politics. At the same time, a new political leadership that has come of age through fighting or in exile will need support, and some patience, in learning their new roles and responsibilities.

(7) Crowd in, not out, the private sector

It is important that a focus on building state legitimacy, capacity and performance not lead us to overlook the very engine of sustainable recovery and growth: a healthy private sector.

Private-sector development and the creation of small businesses spurs investment, jobs, opportunity and hope. It empowers the market to meet local needs, whether for food, basic goods or services. A healthy private sector will eventually provide the source of sustainable revenues for a legitimate government.

To some extent, private-sector development can happen even in the absence of formal legal frameworks and financial sectors, drawing on

private remittances and transfers from abroad. Protection of property rights through traditional institutions and networks can help, as we are seeing in Northern Somalia. But early efforts to signal the value the government places on investing in the future – whether through work or capital – are important. Enforceable property and contract rights, and basic security that prevents predation on businesses, offer the foundation. Transparent and simple rules lower the costs of doing business and enable people to get started without fearing confiscations by the state.

Given the risks and uncertainties of investing in a post-conflict environment, fragile states will need a combination of public and private support. Institutions such as the World Bank Group, through its private-sector arm, the International Financial Corporation, can provide investment and advisory services, help assess the investment climate, develop basic financial services and microcredit, encourage better governance and rule of law, and enable an environment for private-sector activity.

We need to develop more innovative models for leveraging public and private capital to build basic infrastructure, such as power plants, ports, and communications, transport and energy systems. Post-conflict environments are also an opportunity for small and medium enterprises to develop.

In addition, we need to acknowledge that risk is simply a factor in dealing with fragile states. We need to be prepared for some projects to fail in these countries if the larger effort is to have a chance.

(8) Coordinate across institutions and actors

States, international institutions, foundations, NGOs and the private sector all have a role to play in helping countries in fragile situations. But without greater coordination – and even integration – of activities, we will overwhelm the very governments we seek to help.

The average developing country hosts 260 visits from donors a year. Cambodia has 22 different donors in the health sector, with 109 separate projects. In 2006, across all developing countries, donors directed 70,000 aid transactions, with an average project size of only $1.7m.[8] This overload is a huge burden for any developing country's reform team; in a fragile state it can overwhelm a small team that needs time to work with colleagues and

countrymen as well. Donors can also weaken their own hand by making it easy for national partners to play one actor against the other.

We need joint assessments that reflect an inevitably dynamic process of rebalancing security, governance and development – always with an eye on building legitimacy. We need joint benchmarks to encourage convergence of strategies. And recipient countries need donors to create greater inter-operability – for example, between the United Nations and the World Bank, and the World Bank and the European Union. Donors also need to create sensible divisions of labour, leverage synergies and share best practices.

Greater use of trust funds – where donors pool resources – could reduce the administrative burden on weak governments having to deal with so many different donor procedures. This is the source of sharp debate between the European Commission, which has supported trust funds, and some EU member states and European parliamentarians. The United States and Japan have also been reluctant to contribute to trust funds.

Furthermore, a more diverse group of partners may be able to broaden the support for these countries. Brazil is leading the UN peacekeeping opera-tion in Haiti. China's investors are a growing source of finance in developing countries, including many fragile ones, just as its peacekeepers are serving in larger numbers in UN operations. The major countries of South Asia have long contributed to Blue Helmet missions. And the development of more effective and larger African Union peacekeeping forces would be of great benefit, especially if they could be interoperable with developed-country forces and logistical networks.

(9) Consider the regional context

Successfully resolving conflict inside national borders may not be enough to build a lasting peace. States in fragile situations can be both the cause of regional unrest and the object of manipulation by neighbours. We need to recognise the consequences of cross-border ties, be they tribal, ethnic, religious, or related to some other transnational identity group. Population movements, trade and smuggling routes, narcotics and criminal rings, and political linkages can also transcend borders. These connections may under-pin hostility, or be the key to easing it.

Resolving conflict requires a regional approach that provides positive incentives to neighbours and seeks to dissuade spoilers. We have some successful examples, such as the European Union's support for reconstruction in the Balkans through the incentive of EU membership, and the role of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Sierra Leone and Liberia, including through the provision of regional peacekeeping forces. In its early days, the Bonn process for Afghanistan appeared to encourage the recognition of common interests among regional countries in lowering trade barriers, investing in energy and transit, controlling illegal narcotics, and pledging political non-interference, but that accomplishment has seriously frayed. As the new Iraqi government has strengthened its legitimacy, it has made efforts to reach accommodations with its neighbours.

(10) Recognise the long-term commitment

Fragile states are not quick-fix countries: support needs to be for the long haul. Money and humanitarian aid flood into the more fortunate countries at the beginning of a post-conflict settlement, often beyond the state's capacity to absorb it. But, as in Timor Leste in 2006, when the 'CNN moment' has passed, aid tapers off and attention shifts to other crises. In Haiti, this pattern of attention and inattention created a perception that outsiders were not really committed to long-term recovery, emboldening spoilers.

If we are serious about the problems of countries in fragile or post-conflict situations, we need to move beyond ad hoc and post hoc remedies. We need to reconsider the handling of donor conferences in the immediate aftermath of conflicts, so that we do not announce high figures that exceed absorption capacities and raise expectations that can later lead to disappointment and backlash. Funding mechanisms need to ensure continuity and stability of resources over a decade or more. This means managing the expectations of donors and, for some organisations, changing financing parameters for fragile and post-conflict states. The World Bank, for example, is constrained by the allocation formula our donors establish for the International Development Association, or IDA, our largest source of highly concessionary financing. (These are grants or long-term loans with a 10-year grace period and no interest charge.)

But this work is not just a matter of money. Commitment to helping fragile states also means sustained attention to signs of fragility and conflict, and countering the myriad risks that threaten security, governance, development and legitimacy.

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There are many pressing matters worthy of international attention: the rise of new powers; nuclear proliferation; climate change; competition over natural resources; cutting-edge technologies and military transformation. Yet the world's militaries – whether motivated by calculations of national interest, humanitarian causes, regional instabilities, filling unstable vacuums, or preventing terrorists from basing and building – are still principally engaged in conflicts involving fragile states.

Militaries have made advances in counter-insurgency strategies, operations and training. Yet the military arm is but one tool, which must be integrated with political and economic capabilities to be successful. Ultimately, the most important element in fragile or post-conflict states is the people of those countries. Those who made war need to make peace. Soldiers and aid workers need to cooperate to help the people in these countries shift from being victims to becomng the principal agents of recovery. Without this cooperation, efforts to save fragile states are likely to fail, and we will all pay the consequences.

Our appreciation of how best to secure development – to synthesise security, governance and economics to be most effective – is still modest. I have been encouraging development and finance ministers, experts and practicing professionals to think about fragile states with new perspectives and to reach out to other disciplines to better understand their experience and insights.

To expand our understanding and work on fragile states, the World Bank Group is organising 'headline seminars', convening people from different disciplines, publishing research and best-practice notes, assembling an Advisory Group, and reconsidering our operational procedures, training, resources and support. I hope that think tanks such as the International

Institute for Strategic Studies can help us strengthen the exchange among security specialists, students of governance, development practitioners and political leaders.

One of the strategic challenges for the World Bank Group is modernising multilateralism. We need to help overhaul the institutions and regimes of multilateralism, some established over 60 years ago, to meet the necessities of a very different era. The time is ripe, and the dangers – and opportunities – of fragile states will be on the agenda for all of us.

Notes

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3   Department for International Development, 'Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States', January 2005, p. 7, http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/fragilestates-paper.pdf.

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8   World Bank Group, *Aid Architecture: An Overview of the Main Trends in Official Development Assistance Flows* (Washington DC: World Bank Group, 2008), p. 19, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/Aid_Architecture-May2008.pdf.