

responsibility for managing refugee policy from sovereign states to United Nations agencies” (Kagan 2011: 1). The humanitarian aid system is designed to cover a short-term inability of states to protect their populations. However, today there is a growing phenomenon of protracted humanitarian crises. Therefore, humanitarian aid can develop into a permanent substitute for public services that should be provided by the state. In the case of a refugee crisis, for example, if a state lacks relevant administrative bodies, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees decides whether someone receives refugee status or becomes eligible for aid. In certain crises, therefore, humanitarian actors may well hold the “power over life and death” of aid recipients, which is another famous definition of sovereignty (Foucault 1977).

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Stabilization

Stabilization is ambiguous in its definition and highly politically oriented in its practice. Therefore, it is one of the most controversial notions in the humanitarian vocabulary. The term became popular in the 1990s, around the same time as civil–military cooperation (CIMIC). Both CIMIC and stabilization have been criticized for curtailing the neutrality, impartiality, and independence of the humanitarian community. The ideological and operational meaning of stabilization is embedded in American (US) military doctrine concerning

combating insurgencies with the involvement of either the country's international allies in the Western world (e.g. the Philippines, 1898–1902; Vietnam, 1967–1975; and Afghanistan, 2001–present) or national allies in the regions of insurgency (e.g. Colombia, 2004–present) (Fishel 2008; Barakat, Deely and Zyck 2010). The term has been given multiple names in US army manuals since the early 20th century, including “small wars,” “counterinsurgency or COIN,” “low intensity conflict,” “operations other than war,” and “stability and support operations,” but has come to refer to the civil–military operations of US and Western governments in asymmetric warfare with the aim of creating sustainable conditions for their own version of indigenous government and political order (Fishel 2008). After the Cold War, the notion of stabilization has been associated with state fragility. It has been defended with reference to the urgency to stabilize so-called “failed states” through international military intervention and to save human lives in the aftermath of military operations (e.g. in Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

Stabilization always involves military operations, especially in countries and regions seen to be infested with what are variously referred to as “chronic insecurities,” “fragilities,” “protracted conflicts,” and “uncertainties,” which are almost always defined without reference to the broader historical and political contexts and are framed as if domestically driven and created (e.g. Colombia, Haiti, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Iraq) (Manyena and Gordon 2015).

Stability operations mostly include security reform, good governance, institution building, public service delivery, humanitarian assistance, and development (Jackson and Gordon 2007). The increasing number of stabilization operations and their expanding scope of activities are an indication of the changing stance of the international community and the United Nations (UN) towards the principle of state sovereignty. The most recent examples of stabilization operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria represent the radical divergence from the principle of state sovereignty in the international regime that has taken place in the 21st century. The discourse of stabilization, coupled with peace-building, reconstruction, and state-building, has justified military interventions in states that are seen to be failing to protect the lives of their citizens owing to institutional collapse, while disassociating the root causes of state failure from the conditions created by the political and military conduct of the intervening states. For example, the state failure or fragility in Iraq was partly the result of the UN sanctions of the 1990s and the military intervention in 2003. However, the stabilization operations to combat insurgency, ethnic strife, and ISIS that followed the Anglo-American invasion assumed that the root causes of the violence were internally driven.

There has been a growing trend to integrate humanitarian assistance into stabilization operations, and this has raised questions not only about the

militarization of humanitarian activities, but also the ambiguous role of humanitarian assistance in terms of security benefits and conflict resolution (Bailey 2011). Stabilization operations have repeatedly failed to demonstrate any solid link between humanitarian and development aid and peace and conflict resolution. However, the deteriorating humanitarian situation in conflict zones, especially in countries such as Somalia and Yemen, means that humanitarian and development assistance are an integral part of stabilization efforts (Barakat, Deely and Zyck 2010). The UN has followed the same trend of integrating emergency and stabilization operations to achieve “coherence” across political, security, and humanitarian priorities. The UN’s humanitarian assistance activities tend to overlap with and be integrated into stabilization operations (i.e. integrated operations). In theory, the UN’s stabilization operations are expected to respect the humanitarian space. In practice, however, stabilization priorities conflict with humanitarian concerns and introduce security-mindedness and politicization into integrated UN operations (combination of military, humanitarian, and diplomatic engagements) (Muggah 2010; Bailey 2011).

Different Western states have theorized, designed, and prioritized their stabilization operations differently, depending on their level of intervention and the nature of geopolitical interests in the stabilization zones (Gordon 2006). Alternatively, stabilization operations, especially those authorized by NATO and the UN, provide mechanisms of involvement other than deployment of armies to those states that are unwilling to send conventional armed forces, but are willing to contribute to reconstruction and development efforts.

Consent-building appears to be a key aspect of stabilization programming, as opposed to a commitment to mobilize national and local capabilities, and systems and instruments to formulate stabilization priorities (Jackson and Gordon 2007). Both consent-building and development aspects of stabilization have been accused of being militarily led and economically defined by the intervening states and donors, rather than designed by locally driven political dialogues and social contracts.

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State-building

Since the end of the 20th century, state-building became an overall framework and objective of peace-building. By then, peace-building had consolidated into a large scale, standardized, and externally led transformation of war-torn societies deemed necessary to prevent the recurrence of conflict. The establishment of state-building as its overall goal was the peace-building enterprise at its most ambitious heights. As it turned out, levels of ambitions would soon waver and the goal of state-building was more or less abandoned.

State-building grew out of at least two different academic discourses and policy fields. One was a political science preoccupation with state failure—both a cause and a consequence of the inability of some states to uphold the monopoly of violence and other basic functions (Jackson 1991; Zartman 1995). With the post-9/11 war on terror, such state failure became framed as a threat to global, and in particular Western, security, specifically as a haven for terrorist groups but also as a more generalized source of destabilization of the world order. Another backdrop to the emergence of the peace-building as state-building doctrine originated in development studies and international aid practice, with the so-called Post-Washington consensus holding economic growth to be contingent on a specific kind of state, characterized by efficient and capable institutions able to implement and support liberal economic policies.

As a space where development agencies, military forces, and political missions now found themselves working alongside each other, postwar societies