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Back to the future? The limits of neo-Wilsonian ideals of exporting democracy

DAVID CHANDLER

Abstract. International state-building has become central to international policy concerns and has marked a clear neo-Wilsonian shift in international thinking, spurred by the leadership of the United States and the European Union. Today's approaches insist on the regulatory role of international institutions and downplay the importance of locally-derived political solutions. This privileging of 'governance' over 'government' is based on the assumption that the political process can be externally influenced through the promotion of institutional changes introduced at the state level and pays less attention to how societal pressures and demands are constitutive of stable and legitimate institutional mechanisms. This article questions this approach and analyses the transformation in the assessment of the importance of the societal sphere. It considers how this shift has been shaped by current understandings of war and conflict, and how the prioritisation of governance has fitted with critical and post-positivist trends in academic thinking in international relations and security studies. The discussion is illustrated with examples drawn largely from the Balkans and the international regime in Bosnia–Herzegovina in particular.

Introduction

George W. Bush's second term inauguration speech on 20 January 2005 may well be looked back upon as marking the historical rejection of realism in post-Cold War United States foreign policy.¹ Far from being deterred by the debacle in Iraq, the US administration has embraced a neo-Wilsonian idealism of exporting democracy and liberal values in even more strident tones than that achieved by the Clinton administration's earlier forays into this domain.² Just as Wilson challenged the 'Old Diplomacy' of pre-World War I views of the balance of power, secret treaties and imperial rule, the guiding principles of the Bush administration, mark a radical rejection of Cold War realist approaches which were guided by policies of containment, narrow views of national self-interest and formal support for sovereign

¹ G. W. Bush, Inauguration Speech transcript: 'No justice without freedom', Washington, 20 January 2005. Available at: (<http://www.cnn.com/2005/ALLPOLITICS/01/20/bush.transcript/>).

² There has been a much commented-upon shift away from the *realpolitik* of the Cold War under the Clinton and Bush administrations: see for example, A. Lieven, *America Right or Wrong: An Anatomy of American Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); A. J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of US Diplomacy* (New York: Harvard University Press, 2004); J. S. Blackton, 'Neo-Wilsonianism in the Middle East: Democracy-Lite', *The National Interest*, 2:43 (5 November 2003), available at: (<http://www.inthenationalinterest.com/Articles/Vol2Issue43/Vol2Issue43BlacktonPFV.html>); D. C. Hendrickson and R. W. Tucker, 'The Freedom Crusade', *The National Interest* (Fall 2005), available at: (<http://www.nationalinterest.org/ME2/>)

equality and non-intervention.³ The desire for a more activist and interventionist foreign policy in order to encourage other governments to reform and the willingness, if necessary, to undertake military intervention in the cause of 'liberty and freedom' confirms that questions of post-conflict state-building and international attempts to prevent and manage the consequences of state failure are set to remain at the top of the international policy agenda. In the wake of 9/11 and the problems of international intervention and administrative regulation in Afghanistan and Iraq, the international engagement in, and management of, state capacity-building initiatives has become a central problem to be addressed by international policymakers engaged in democracy-promotion.

In the words of George W. Bush, the needs of national security and the desire to promote American values across the globe call for one and the same policy: 'The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.'⁴ Not only are democracy-promotion and international state-building measures held to be necessary to ensure the protection of peoples from the threat of human rights abuse but also to prevent terrorist cells from operating with impunity where states are too weak to police their borders and enforce the rule of law.

This shift towards a neo-Wilsonian internationalism has been welcomed by liberal commentators, albeit warily, and as the UK liberal broadsheet, *The Observer* editorialised: 'If it had been John Kerry, the words would have been heard as a welcome return to reality and an indication that the US wanted to engage with the rest of the world rather than retreat into isolation'.⁵ By the end of 2005 there was a much more cohered attempt to highlight the progressive potential of neoconservative foreign policy with the London-based Social Affairs Unit's publication of *The Times* columnist Oliver Kamm's *Anti-totalitarianism: The Left-wing Case for a Neoconservative Foreign Policy* in October and the November 2005 Westminster launch of the Henry Jackson Society with cross-party support for a similar foreign policy position.

This proclaimed shift away from narrow national security towards global values fits much more easily with European sensibilities, and the European Union has for some years worked towards a similar international projection of power based on liberal values rather than self-interest in the formulation of European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). For example, Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for the CFSP has argued that European states' unique capacities to overcome national interests and cooperate peacefully through democratic institutions, gives the EU a similar capacity to export freedom, democracy and good

dirmod.asp?sid=&nm=&type=Publishing&mod=Publications::Article&mid=1ABA92EFC8348688A4EBEB3D69D33EF&tier=4&id=27A11FC02EE349F79C030D5B59AF8260); L. H. Gelb, D. Pipes, R. W. Merry and J. S. Nye Jr. 'The Freedom Crusade Revisited', *The National Interest* (Winter 2005/6), available at: (<http://www.nationalinterest.org/ME2/>

dirmod.asp?sid=&nm=&type=Publishing&mod=Publications::Article&mid=1ABA92EFC8348688A4EBEB3D69D33EF&tier=4&id=0BE693A9C9454A399042A6383A50C4A3).

³ See further, T. J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

⁴ Bush, 'Inauguration Speech transcript'.

⁵ 'Bush's New World View is Welcome', editorial, *The Observer*, 23 January 2005, p. 28.

governance to the near (and not so near) abroad.⁶ This idea of the ‘real added value’ that EU expertise and guidance can offer states outside the European Union has been central to the legitimisation of a wide range of ‘democracy-exporting’ mechanisms through the EU accession and the Stabilisation and Association processes.⁷

This interventionist desire, on the part of leading Western states, to shape the political process to further democracy and reconstruct state institutions where states are perceived to be ‘failing’ is in marked contrast to the internationally accepted political norms and possibilities of the Cold War period where the geopolitical divide between the Soviet Union and the United States meant there was little international consensus on how states should be governed or on which policies they should follow in the domestic arena. In the second half of the twentieth century, the reaction against colonial practices meant that the United Nations upheld the formal political equality of all sovereign states, regardless of their level of political, economic or social development or of the capacity or willingness of their regimes to uphold the rights of their citizens.⁸ Changed international power relations and changed political sensibilities have meant that today there is much less of a divide between how states are treated internationally and what they do domestically.

Despite the emergence of this new normative framework of international regulation of, and intervention in, the domestic affairs of states, there is a concern – even in leading policymaking circles – that the development and assessment of the effectiveness of international practices in democracy-promotion and state-building has lagged far behind this demand that international actions be undertaken.⁹ This article seeks to analyse the most striking, and potentially the most worrying, aspect of current international state-building policy practices whose goal is in whole or in part the export of democracy – the downplaying of the centrality of broad social engagement in the political process.¹⁰

⁶ J. Solana, ‘A Secure Europe in a Better World’, European Council, Thessaloniki, 20 June 2003. Available at: (http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/76255.pdf).

⁷ European Commission, ‘The Stabilisation and Association Process and CARDS Assistance 2002 to 2006’, p. 9. Available at: (http://www.seerecon.org/region/documents/ec/ec_sap_cards_2000-2006.pdf). See also, D. Chandler, ‘Governance: the Unequal Partnership’, in W. van Meurs (ed.), *South Eastern Europe: Weak States and Strong International Support, Prospects and Risks Beyond EU Enlargement*, vol. 2 (Opladen: Leske and Budrich/Bertelsmann Foundation, 2003), pp. 79–98.

⁸ See for example, United Nations General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, ‘Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples’. Available at: (http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/c_coloni.htm).

⁹ See for example, R. Caplan, *International Governance of War-Torn Territories: Rule and Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Oliver P. Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005); RAND Corporation, *America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003); The Conflict, Security and Development Group, *A Review of Peace Operations: A Case for Change* (London: Kings College, 2003); M. Lund, ‘What Kind of Peace is Being Built?: Taking Stock of Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Charting Future Directions’, discussion paper for the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada, January 2003. Available at: (http://web.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/10527469720lund_final_mar_20.pdf).

¹⁰ By political process, I am referring to the process of social engagement in the making of policy and in the legitimation of government; the existence of a public sphere, through which the state’s relationship with society is cohered. This takes place at a variety of levels and through a number of different mechanisms from media discussion, public debate and civil society engagement to more formal political campaigning and the party competition for representation. It is through these mechanisms that individual interests and concerns coalesce and a broader social and political consensus is developed and variously expressed.

Whereas in the post-1945 era of decolonisation there was an assumption that state-building could not be accomplished by external powers but depended on state sovereignty and political solutions decided by local actors – that, in fact, democracy promotion meant less external regulation – today there is an opposite starting-point. Today's international state-building and democracy-promoting approaches insist much more strongly upon the regulatory role of international institutions and suggest that purely locally-derived political solutions are likely to be problematic. There is a clear assumption that there are right and wrong approaches to the problems of government – there is 'good governance' and by implication bad or wrong governance – the assertion of a new 'political correctness' or of the benefits of political science is one which seeks to legitimise the external regulation of states held to be 'incapable or unwilling' to govern according to the accepted norms of those states which consider themselves to have mastered the problems of the political sphere.

One consequence of this is that the frameworks of 'good governance', overseen and regulated by international bodies, are increasingly seen to take precedence over the domestic political processes of *government*.¹¹ This privileging of 'governance' over 'government' is based on the assumption that the political process can be influenced by institutional changes introduced at the state level and pays less attention to how societal pressures and demands are constitutive of stable and legitimate institutional mechanisms. In terms of state-building, democracy and political autonomy are then seen to be the end goal, rather than crucial aspects of the process of state-building itself. The export of democracy is seen not merely to involve the removal of a tyrannical or repressive regime but, in addition, the externally-guided reconstruction of the political sphere of states intervened in.

The following sections consider this transformation in the assessment of the importance of the political sphere for state-building, consider how this shift in perspective has been shaped by a changed – and de-politicised – understanding of war and conflict, and how the prioritisation of governance over government has fitted with critical and post-positivist trends in academic thinking of international relations and security studies. The article concludes with a more detailed discussion of the limits of this approach with reference to Bosnia–Herzegovina, which has been under an international administration tasked with state-building and democracy-promotion for over a decade with the ten-year anniversary of the Dayton agreement in November 2005.

State-building without politics?

Prior to the end of the Cold War, the domestic political process was generally understood as key to the creation of stable and viable states. Samuel Huntington's

¹¹ Governance is a term which gives priority to the framework of regulatory controls, or the 'rules of the game', established at an institutional level; government, on the other hand, expresses the importance of the political process, 'the game itself', played out and mediated at a societal level. See further, for example, P. Fudulu, 'The Weak Institutions Syndrome as the Effect of the Cultural-Institutional Gap', Indiana University Workshop Papers, 2003. Available at: (http://www.indiana.edu/~workshop/papers/fudulu_041703.pdf).

pioneering late 1960s' study, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, was regarded as the leading contribution to political development studies during the last thirty years of the twentieth century.¹² His concern was not the creation of states which had the stamp of international approval, because the ruling clique supported the policies of those in power in Washington, nor was he trying to design the perfect constitution for export around the world, with a bill of rights, a separation of powers and human rights protections.¹³ For Huntington, the key to state stability was a political question of building a domestic consensus, a sense of political community, and establishing a government with popular legitimacy. Huntington argued that bureaucratic rule or government by isolated cliques may be able to produce stability in simple pre-industrialised societies but that modernisation and democratic, participatory societies depended on the strengthening and institutionalisation of the political sphere.

Political institutions could only cohere society if they emerged out of existing social forces, if they represented real interests and real clashes of interests which then led to the establishment of mechanisms and organisational rules and procedures which were capable of resolving those disagreements.¹⁴ It was the links between political institutions, political parties and individuals which were considered key to strengthening the state, both institutionally and in terms of its popular legitimacy. Although seen as a conservative by many commentators today, Huntington is worth returning to by those who argue that international administrators can draw up all the necessary legislation for state-building, democracy promotion and post-conflict reconciliation. He argued that powerful rulers would always be tempted to bypass the political sphere and present themselves as able to solve problems without the need for politics:

Inevitably a ruling monarch tends to view political parties as divisive forces which either challenge his authority or greatly complicate his efforts to unify and modernise his country . . . The modernizing monarch necessarily sees himself as the 'Patriot King' who is 'to espouse no party, but to govern like the common father of his people'.¹⁵

The desire of those in power to avoid popular accountability and to legitimise their authority on the basis of being above politics and instead being a direct representative of the 'public interest' will sound familiar to anyone who has read the statements of the succession of internationally-appointed administrators charged with state-building and democracy-promotion in the Balkans, for example, the international High Representative in Bosnia or the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo. Bosnia's High Representative Carlos Westendorp saw the Bosnian Presidency, Council of Ministers and Parliamentary Assembly as 'painfully cumbersome and ineffective' when compared to the alternative possibility

¹² S. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968).

¹³ Huntington's work was a response to the prevailing orthodoxy of 1950s modernisation theorists who focused on the importance of economic reform at the expense of political concerns. In many ways, his concerns have been revived in the 'state-building' literature, which has developed, in part, as a response to the destabilising consequences of market-led economic reform programmes under the 'Washington consensus' of the 1980s and early 1990s, which similarly neglected the importance of state institutions and the political sphere. See, for example, F. Fukuyama, *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Profile Books, 2004), pp. 6–7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

of the swift signature of his administrator's pen.¹⁶ Westendorp thrived on being the unaccountable judge of his own policymaking, arguing that: 'You do not [have] power handed to you on a platter. You just seize it, if you use this power well, no-one will contest it.'¹⁷ Lord Paddy Ashdown, Bosnia's High Representative from May 2002 to January 2006, used very similar phraseology, for example, in his inaugural speech, where he argued:

I have concluded that there are two ways I can make my decisions. One is with a tape measure, measuring the precise equidistant position between three sides. The other is by doing what I think is right for the country as a whole. I prefer the second of these. So when I act, I shall seek to do so in defence of the interests of all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, putting their priorities first.¹⁸

For Lord Ashdown, as for his predecessors, rather than facilitating consensus-building between the three main political parties – representing Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats – his own personal perspective of 'what I think is right' was held to directly coincide with the interests of the population as a whole.

This high-handed approach, which has marked the ten years of international regulation in the tiny postwar Bosnian state, is at the centre of the neo-Wilsonian state-building dilemma discussed here: the dilemma that imposing 'good governance' policy practices, alleged to be in the interests of all, inevitably means restricting the importance of the political sphere of political party competition and policymaking by elected representatives. This dilemma is increasingly posed in the post-Cold War era when international actors have a much freer hand to impose conditions upon, and to directly intervene in, states which are judged to be at risk of failure or to have failed. The imbalance of power between intervening actors and those on the ground has meant that while this dilemma has been acknowledged, there is currently little thought given to the problems caused by this marginalisation of the domestic political sphere. For international administrators and policymakers, it is well nigh inconceivable that local actors could be better placed to take their own societies forward than international 'experts'.

For the international state-builders in Washington, London and Brussels, the political sphere is a problem for strengthening state-capacity rather than central to it. To return to Huntington:

The administrator opposed to parties accepts the need to rationalize social and economic structures. He is unwilling, however, to accept the implications of modernization for broadening the scope of popular participation in politics. His is a bureaucratic model; the goal is efficiency and the elimination of conflict. Parties simply introduce irrational and corrupt considerations into the efficient pursuit of goals upon which everyone should be agreed. The administrative opponent of parties may wear any dress, but he is less likely to be in mufti than in uniform.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Office of the High Representative Bulletin*, no. 62, 11 October 1997.

¹⁷ J. Rodriguez, 'Our Man in Sarajevo', *El Pais*, 29 March 1998 (trans. Office of the High Representative).

¹⁸ Paddy Ashdown, 'Inaugural Speech by the new High Representative for Bosnia & Herzegovina', Bosnian State Parliament, 27 May 2002. Available from: (http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/presso/presssp/default.asp?content_id=8417). See also discussion in D. Chandler, 'Bosnia's New Colonial Governor', *Guardian*, 9 July 2002. Available at: (<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,9115,751918,00.html>).

¹⁹ Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, p. 404.

For Huntington, leaving aside the acuteness of his observation on the link between the military-mindset and the administrative one – captured well by Lord Paddy Ashdown’s appointment to Bosnia, the ex-Royal Marine Commando never having enjoyed elected government office – the point is that hostility to the political sphere is essentially counterproductive. While kings and bureaucrats, who understand their legitimacy as existing independently of society, are resistant to acknowledging it, historically the engagement of the public in the political process, through party formation and competition in particular, has been crucial to binding society beyond its disparate component social groups, and to creating a broad social loyalty to a state-based project which transcends parochial and particularist groupings.²⁰ Against pre-democratic, hierarchical approaches of interest coalition, which institutionalise social fragmentation through patronage or the grant of private rights, modern democratic states rely on the autonomy of the political process: the contest for representation thereby forces political parties and interest coalitions to overcome the fragmented nature of their societies and build links between different social constituencies. The more restricted the political sphere is, the less responsibility and accountability elected representatives have and the less likelihood there is of political institutions being able to build social bonds in divided societies.²¹

Huntington’s defence of the autonomy of the political sphere is rarely seen as relevant to today’s policy practices in international administration. In fact, where his 1960s’ work is referred to, his points about the importance of strong state institutions are taken out of context and these institutions are seen as being able to develop in isolation from real political processes. A leading example of this latter approach is that of Roland Paris in his influential book, *At War’s End*, published in 2004.²² Paris critiques the ‘liberal peace’ thesis on the basis that international policy, which sees a market economy and liberal democracy as the two preconditions for a stable peace, misunderstands the process of transition from war to peace. Paris argues that it is necessary to have ‘Institutionalization before Liberalization’, that is, to focus on strong institutions, the rule of law and human rights protections before giving post-conflict societies the right to have a say in their own affairs. He argues that the political process of democratic competition in a weak or failing state, or one making a transition from war to peace, is likely to be counterproductive. This is because party political competition is based on the idea of a conflict of interests, so this process tends to exacerbate conflict and tension in society rather than ameliorating it, in a context where fragile or failing states do not have the social, economic and legal mechanisms necessary for ensuring that conflicts can be managed and contained.

Paris argues that democracy is fine for developed stable states but is destabilising for states which are failing or are making the transition from war to peace. He asserts that elections are important – the goal is the promotion of democracy after all – but to achieve this end, elections must come second to state-building processes instituted from the top-down. The process of political reconciliation and the development of a shared sense of political community should precede competitive elections: ‘Peace-builders should proceed with elections only when there is evidence that “moderate

²⁰ Ibid, p. 405.

²¹ This point is drawn out in more detail in D. Chandler, ‘Anti-Corruption Strategies and Democratization in Bosnia-Herzegovina’, *Democratization*, 9:2 (2002), pp. 101–20.

²² R. Paris, *At War’s End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

parties” . . . have sufficient popular support . . . to prevail over “immoderate parties” at the polls.”²³ This interventionist project attempts not merely to reconstruct a state but also to transform the mindsets of the inhabitants of a post-conflict state. This latter task is to be undertaken through a number of means: civil society-building; the encouragement of cross-cutting links and interests; international attention to educational curricula from primary school through to university level; the strict control and regulation of the media; trauma counselling and other therapeutic practices; and through punishing political parties or elected representatives held to be ‘obstructing’ progress. Clearly this state-building agenda is an ambitious one, but one that in many ways reflects the existing policy practices of international institutions, states and non-governmental organisations on the ground in many parts of the world.²⁴

Before engaging in a discussion about the efficiency of such interventionist measures,²⁵ the point to be stressed is the increasingly common-place assumption that democracy is good for the Western powers but tutelage (‘the export of democracy’) is better for states judged to be ‘under stress’, at ‘risk of failure’ or in post-conflict ‘recovery’. This assumption rests on a number of prior assumptions regarding the role of the political process. The argument that it is possible to create the institutional framework of a strong and stable state before liberalisation – that is, opening up the political process to democratic competition – suggests that states and citizens can be socially-engineered by correct practices of external regulation. The assumption is that the problems of politics can be resolved outside the realm of the political, in the realms of law, social policy and administration.²⁶ It would seem, as Alejandro Bendaña notes, that ‘good governance or state-building . . . has deep ideological presumptions which purport to offer technical solutions to what in essence are political problems’.²⁷

It is this view of ‘peace without politics’ that imbues much of the current discussion around state-building practice which aspires to democratic ends.²⁸ In Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and other parts of the world, international administrators argue that the rule of law and even ‘respect for democracy’ can be developed before elected representatives can assume political responsibility. In the wake of the US-led Iraq occupation, Bosnia’s High Representative Paddy Ashdown toured Western

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 189–90.

²⁴ See, for example, the state-building agendas laid out by the UN advisory panels, for example, the Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations (Brahimi Report), A/55/305-S/2000/809 (August 2000). Available at: http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/. See also the Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001).

²⁵ For a more detailed examination of some of the problems with regard to Bosnia, see, for example, D. Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*, 2nd edn. (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

²⁶ The potential hubris of the desire to externally reshape ‘failed states’ in isolation from social forces, is captured in the RAND Corporation recommendations for Iraq, which suggest that rather than co-opt existing Iraqi institutions, the sounder approach is that of a ‘root and branch overhaul of state and political structures’, involving ‘the creation of wholly new organizations at the local and national levels and the recruitment, training, and management of new staff’, *America’s Role in Nation-Building*, p. 205.

²⁷ A. Bendaña, ‘From Peace-Building to State-Building: One Step Forward and Two Backwards’, presentation at ‘Nation-Building, State-Building and International Intervention: Between ‘Liberation’ and Symptom Relief’, CERL, Paris, 15 October 2004. See also, J. Demmers et al., *Good Governance in the Era of Global Neoliberalism: Conflict and Depoliticisation in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa* (London: Routledge, 2004).

²⁸ See, D. Chandler, ‘Introduction’, in Chandler (ed.), *Peace without Politics? Ten Years of State-Building in Bosnia* (London: Routledge, 2005).

capitals arguing that the 'rule of law' had to precede elections and political liberalisation.²⁹ This view of 'sequencing', which relegates the political process behind that of law, policing and administration, inverts the traditional understanding of the modern 'rule of law', derived from liberal democratic contract theory of consent, in contrast to the arbitrary and unaccountable rule-making of elites.³⁰ While laws could be issued by right-wing or Soviet-style dictatorships, that also had the prisons and the police to enforce them, these societies were not understood to be operating under the 'rule of law' as law did not derive from popular consent but the power of coercion. The assertion that the rule of law should come before political liberalisation heralds a fundamental critique of one of the cornerstones of liberal democratic theory.

This is the dilemma of exporting democracy. Democracy understood as premised on 'good governance', the rule of law and the protection of human rights leaves little room for the autonomy or self-determination of those to whom democracy is being brought. Democracy is often presented as a solution to the problems of the political sphere rather than as a process of determining and giving content to the 'good life'. It is ironic that government reforms imposed through the pressure of sanctions or regime change from without tend to marginalise the capacity for choice of those who are the ostensible subjects of these claims. The export of democracy in the context of the low expectations, and indeed perceived dangers, of political autonomy has meant that democracy promotion is increasingly seen as an ongoing process of regulation and international control rather than one of 'liberation' or independence. Because 'liberation' in this instance is a grant of power rather than the recognition of a claim of autonomy, the export of democracy goes hand-in-hand with greater regulatory controls by international institutions or regulation by ad hoc groups of self-selecting coalitions of the willing, such as the Contact Group, Stability Pact or Peace Implementation Council (the ad hoc coalition to whom Bosnia's 'international' High Representative is accountable) .

War without politics?

The new international dispensation for military intervention and the undermining of state sovereignty in the case of gross human rights abuses and the growing demand for intervention to address the threats posed by 'failed states' has been reinforced by a tendency for international theorists and international security actors to perceive internal conflicts in the non-Western world as crimes to be judged and righted rather than as political conflicts to be mediated.³¹ Kalevi Holsti captured this new perception of conflict as 'wars of the third kind' where non-Western actors fought,

²⁹ See, for example, Ashdown, 'What Baghdad can learn from Bosnia', *Guardian*, 22 April 2003; and 'Broken Communities, Shattered Lives: Winning the Savage War of Peace', speech to the International Rescue Committee, London, 19 June 2003. Available at: (http://www.ohr.int/print/?content_id=30130).

³⁰ See further, D. Chandler, 'The Problems of "Nation-Building": Imposing Bureaucratic Rule From Above', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 17:3 (2004), pp. 577–91.

³¹ See the excellent discussion in A. Columbo, 'Asymmetrical Warfare or Asymmetrical Society? The Changing Form of War and the Collapse of International Society', in A. Gobbicchi (ed.), *Globalization, Armed Conflicts and Security* (Rome: Cernuschi-Rubbettino, 2004), pp. 111–27.

not for social and political interests, as traditionally understood, but the desire for different community boundaries and a strengthening of a particularist identity. He made the key point that these conflicts could not be dealt with in the traditional manner of dealing with interstate conflict: 'In these wars, ordinary cost-benefit analyses that underlie wars as a "continuation of politics by other means" no longer apply'.³² War in the non-Western world³³ is seen as distinct from war waged by Western powers; in the former case war no longer serves a legitimate political purpose, it is not a means to an end, rather it is an end in itself.³⁴

According to Antonio Cassese, former president of the international war crimes tribunal at The Hague, for the people of non-Western states it is apparently 'less a noble clash of soldiers than the slaughter of civilians with machetes or firing squads, the mass rape of women in special camps, the cowardly execution of non-combatants'.³⁵ As a human rights campaigners' handbook *Crimes of War: What the Public Should Know* asserts in its introduction:

Wars [involving non-Western states] today increasingly are fought not between armies where officers are bound by notions of honour but by fighters . . . who are not soldiers in the conventional sense of the word. The goal of these conflicts is often ethnic cleansing . . . not the victory of one army over another.³⁶

No longer connected with rational political interests, it appears that conflict has a dynamic of its own. Sussex University professor Martin Shaw makes the point that for non-Western societies 'genocide may be discerned, therefore, in relatively limited mass killing'.³⁷ He argues that 'the concept of "genocidal massacre" should be proposed to cover smaller incidents, which are often a prelude to a larger-scale genocide'.³⁸ The use of the emotive term 'genocide' to describe these conflicts establishes them as qualitatively different from the slaughter of wars in which Western states are involved. Unlike war, which appears relatively more civilised in comparison, 'genocide' is regarded as either inherently atavistic and irrational or as morally evil.

This re-representation of non-Western conflict as driven by atavistic desires of ethnic identity, economic crime and human rights abuse, rather than rational political causes, has been held to illustrate the incapacity of non-Western states and peoples and the need for international intervention. Mary Kaldor developed Holsti's themes with the concept of 'New Wars', which has become the ideological template for current international security regimes.³⁹ The concept of 'new wars' takes the politics out of armed conflict in two ways, firstly the conflict or crisis in the non-Western state is held to be the product of domestic or internal problems which are exacerbated by

³² K. Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³³ Here I would include the Balkans, where conflict in the region has long been understood as a product of cultural or civilisational attributes, which make the political process less rational and shaped more by communal, ethnic or premodern identities. See, for example, M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); A. Burgess, *Divided Europe: The New Domination of the East* (London: Pluto, 1997).

³⁴ See also M. Shaw, *On Slaughter: From War to Genocide* (London: Polity Press, forthcoming), chapter 1 (draft). Available at: (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/hafa3/slaughter1.htm>).

³⁵ A. Cassese, 'Reflections on International Criminal Justice', *Modern Law Review*, 61:1 (1998), p. 5.

³⁶ R. Gutman and D. Rieff, 'Preface', in Gutman and Rieff (eds.), *Crimes of War: What the Public Should Know* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), p. 10.

³⁷ Shaw, *On Slaughter: From War to Genocide*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ M. Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (London: Polity Press, 1998).

rapacious or criminal elites which have no political legitimacy. Therefore the United Nations' Cold War approach of neutrality and respect for peace agreements drawn up by the parties to the conflict no longer stands; instead, international actors are held to be necessary to create and safeguard a just peace.

Secondly, and more importantly, politics is taken out of conflict by portraying the intervention (military or otherwise) of Western powers as above politics. There is alleged to be no self-interest at work in external intervention, rather it is equated with the neutrality of policing; merely enforcing international or 'cosmopolitan' norms and laws. Rather than war, there are crimes and human rights abuses (conflict in the non-Western world) or there is policing and law enforcement (armed conflict undertaken by Western powers).⁴⁰ Neither non-Western state 'failure' nor the international response to this are conceived in traditional terms of political interests. This discursive dichotomy, between the failed state and the post-national or post-political intervention, in one move, delegitimizes the political process of the state intervened in while at the same time setting up the intervening powers as being beyond or above political interests.

Rather than the former UN position of being the Cold War neutral observers to a legitimate conflict of interests, today's international interveners assume on the ground the self-appointed roles of judge, jury and administrator in a situation where there are now alleged to be no legitimate interests which should be taken into account. The 'export of democracy' depends on an assumption that greater external regulatory power is disinterested, is purely facilitating the self-determination of those to be 'freed'. In the words of President Bush: 'The rulers of outlaw regimes can know that we still believe as Abraham Lincoln did: "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves; and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it."' ⁴¹ Without the assumption of disinterestedness the power of liberation easily becomes a licence for tyranny which can 'deny freedom', rather than grant it.

The relationship between external intervening powers (increasingly seen as legitimate) and domestic political actors (now increasingly portrayed as pursuing illegitimate interests) has been transformed through a succession of innovative international policy shifts since the end of the Cold War. At the heart of this transformation has been the United Nations itself, which has extended its remit and reinterpreted the formal restrictions of the UN Charter while increasingly giving free reign to self-selected 'coalitions of the willing' to set their own conditions on when and how interventions should take place and be formally brought to an end.⁴² This transformation in international practice has been shaped by the demands of the US and its allies for a more interventionist remit from the UN, with UN Security Council resolutions depending on the willingness of major powers to take action as a precondition for UN resolutions in this sphere rather than following as a consequence of them. The dangers of extending UN mandates and redefining the parameters of Chapter VII interventions without securing member state consensus

⁴⁰ See further, D. Chandler, *From Kosovo to Kabul: Human Rights and International Intervention* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

⁴¹ Bush, 'Inauguration Speech transcript'.

⁴² Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War*, pp. 190–1. For an excellent survey see S. Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace? Humanitarian Intervention and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

has resulted in the fraying of the international legal order and the undermining of the Security Council's role in legitimising acts of military intervention.

The UN's role has been transformed from that of 'preventing war' to the post-conflict task of 'constructing peace'. Over the last fifteen years, a process of international administrative oversight and intervention, which developed in a relatively arbitrary and ad hoc way, has been increasingly institutionalised. At the end of 2004, the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, advised the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission to oversee the international administration of failing and post-conflict states.⁴³ According to the UN advisers and the Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a select committee of the 'great and the good' from around the world, acting under UN auspices, should have the requisite skills to help coordinate a panoply of international intervention, from early warning, through preventative action and onto post-conflict transitional administrations, where states are 'under stress or recovering from conflict'.⁴⁴ While individual states and ad hoc coalitions have been happy to unilaterally lead diplomatic and military interventions, they have been less willing to unilaterally shoulder the costs of post-conflict state-building, often leaving the UN to carry on the long-term work of democracy-exporting and bear the blame for the failure of intervention to live up to its justificatory promises.

The 'ethical turn' in international theorising

The rejection of the domestic political sphere as a vital constitutive sphere, in which social and political bonds are constituted and strengthened, and the re-representation of this sphere as essentially one of division and conflict, has received relatively little critical evaluation from academic commentators involved in international relations and international security studies. In fact, since the end of the Cold War, new approaches to theorising security have stressed that states are part of the problem rather than part of the solution to conflict and political and social division.⁴⁵ Many of these critical approaches draw on post-positivist theorising and follow Foucault's widely cited inversion of Clausewitz, seeing 'politics as a continuation of war by other means'.⁴⁶ The existence of states, in this reading, is the result of war and domestic social conflict, with the domination by victorious elites being enforced and reproduced by political processes of representation rather than military force. For these

⁴³ Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* (New York: United Nations, 2004). Available at: <http://www.un.org/secureworld/>.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁴⁵ See for example, K. Booth, 'Security and Emancipation', *Review of International Studies*, 17:4 (1991), pp. 313–26; K. Krause and M. C. Williams (eds.), *Critical Security Studies* (London: UCL Press, 1997); K. Booth (ed.), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

⁴⁶ M. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–76*, trans. D. Macey (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2003).

theorists, states inevitably engage in war and internal conflict as they are based on domination and relations of exclusion and exclusivity.⁴⁷

For critical, post-positivist and normative theorists of international relations and international security, the political sphere is the problem to be addressed, not the sphere where solutions are to be found. Rather than starting from politics, from social forces and the clash of interests in society, many theorists start from ethics and norms and then seek to derive (non-exclusionary) political frameworks from this basis.⁴⁸ The approach of privileging ethics above the political process, central to the 'ethical turn' in international theorising, fits closely with international state-building practices which privilege bureaucracy, law and administration above the political and may in part explain why there is little critical focus on these developments in many academic circles.⁴⁹ Where 'realist' theorists often highlighted the autonomy of the political and the limits to bureaucratic attempts to impose law and administration over clashes of power and interest, today's intellectual fashion is to focus on the indeterminacy and socially constructed nature of power and interest, emphasising the importance of norms and law.⁵⁰

For realist theorists such as Edward H. Carr the extension of international law to address international issues where there was no political consensus merely 'debased and discredited' international law by bringing power relations into formal relations of legal equality.⁵¹ As Milan University International Relations professor Alessandro Colombo notes, the growth of international law has institutionalised the inequalities of power:

... the just party always wins. Instead of the previous formal equality among states, the tribunal-war dictates a clear asymmetry between the sanctioner and the sanctioned. The party who acts in the name of law, democracy or, in extreme cases, mankind, cannot be put in the same conditions as the party who is brought to trial.⁵²

The advocacy of new international norms and of 'cosmopolitan' law has gone hand-in-hand with the creation of a new international legal subject, usurping the primacy of the sovereign state. This new legal subject is proclaimed to be the same

⁴⁷ See, for example, D. Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); R. Keane, *Reconstituting Sovereignty: Post-Dayton Bosnia Uncovered* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

⁴⁸ See, for example, R. Falk, *On Humane Governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); D. Archibugi and D. Held (eds.), *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); A. Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

⁴⁹ Kenneth Minogue highlights the despotic dangers of 'political moralism', which sees autonomy and independence – that is, the political sphere – as a barrier to ethically-derived notions of justice, and argues that this approach to politics is especially strong in discussions of international relations. See, for example, his *Politics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 104–5.

⁵⁰ For 'realist' critiques of the privileging of law and administration above the political, see, for example, the classic texts: E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); and H. J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 1992), see especially ch. 3. For a more in-depth discussion, see D. Chandler, *Constructing Global Civil Society: Morality and Power in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004).

⁵¹ Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 188.

⁵² Colombo, 'Asymmetrical Warfare or Asymmetrical Society?', p. 121. See also D. Chandler, 'International Justice', *New Left Review*, 2:6 (2000), pp. 55–66.

subject as that of domestic law – the individual person – but as the bearer of human rights rather than civil or democratic rights.

Human rights are at the centre of new ‘human security’ doctrines where the focus is no longer on the defence of states but upon the rights of individuals wherever they might be in the world. This is construed to be a moral or an ethical duty placed upon the powerful to take responsibility for the protection of the rights of those elsewhere.⁵³ The 2004 Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe’s Security Capabilities, *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe*, argues, for example, that: ‘A human security approach for the European Union means that it should contribute to the protection of every individual human being and not focus only on the defence of the Union’s borders, as was the security approach of nation-states’.⁵⁴ Here the double-move of depoliticisation central to the export of democracy under the rubric of ‘good governance’ can be clearly seen.

On the one hand, there is the creation of a new externally-constituted rights subject, the object of the export of democracy, selectively judged to be ‘freedom-loving’ or democratic. In Bush’s words: ‘it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world’.⁵⁵ This is the same rights-subject as that advocated by earlier proponents of Wilsonian internationalism under the Clinton administration. Mary Kaldor, for example, in her call that international interveners should base their policies on the ‘bottom-up’ demands of the same selected ‘freedom-loving’ subjects, asserts: ‘it is always possible to identify local advocates of cosmopolitanism, people and places which refuse to accept the politics of war – islands of civility’.⁵⁶ The grant of rights from external actors does not, of course, give the appointed or selected ‘freedom-loving’ people the right to hold these external actors to account, or a right to assert their claims to political autonomy, as can be seen in the international protectorate and semi-protectorate regimes in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq.

On the other hand, it is assumed that the EU (making the same claim to the projection of power as the US) has risen above the politics of state interests and that, as a post-national or post-political constellation, it is capable of judging upon and acting in the interests of ‘every individual’ regardless of which state they happen to be a citizen. The EU is granted the right to decide which states are failing or denying rights to their subjects and which people deserve support or intervention in their name. This is in effect, a right of unilateral intervention. The doctrine of ‘human security’ imposes a duty or ‘responsibility’ of intervention which legitimises intervention independently of the consensus-building mechanisms of the UN, one which ultimately relies on power rather than traditional interstate mechanisms of international law. What appears to be a radical relation of empowerment and capacity-building is, at heart, a new relationship of trusteeship or dominion.

⁵³ See, Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.

⁵⁴ Study Group on Europe’s Security Capabilities, *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe* (Barcelona: 15 September 2004), p. 9. Available at: (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Human%20Security%20Report%20Full.pdf>).

⁵⁵ Bush, ‘Inauguration Speech transcript’.

⁵⁶ Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*, p. 120.

Robert Cooper, policy advisor to UK prime minister Tony Blair and the EU High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana, has most successfully translated the projection of power into non-political ethics in his assertion of the division of the world into postmodern, modern and premodern states. Postmodern states, such as European ones, and to a certain extent the US, are held to have rejected the idea of national interests as a motivation for foreign policy and be driven instead by domestic concerns of the values of the 'good life', such as democracy and justice – they have no traditional political interests at stake in intervention. At the same time, the parts of the world where states are failing and democracy needs to be exported cannot be treated as political equals. As Cooper states, the postmodern state:

... needs to get used to the idea of double standards. Among themselves, the post-modern states operate on the basis of laws and open co-operative security. But when dealing with more old-fashioned kinds of state outside the post-modern limits, Europeans need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era – force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary ... In the jungle, one must use the laws of the jungle.⁵⁷

Cooper uses the language of post-political, post-national foreign policy based on global ethics and neo-Wilsonian values but at the same time recognises that these values – or the interventionist policies held to be a consequence of them – are not held by more than a minority of 'post-modern' states. Where realists, such as Morgenthau or Carr, would suggest that the pursuit of these values in a divided world would inflame conflict, Cooper asserts that this can be avoided as long as the postmodern states have an 'enduring strategic superiority' of the sort aspired to in the US National Security Strategy.⁵⁸

The irony of neo-Wilsonian democracy-promotion and state-building is that in the course of the struggle to prevent (non-Western) state sovereignty from giving impunity to tyrants and human rights-abusing governments other (Western/postmodern) states have acquired much greater sovereign powers to intervene in the domestic affairs of other states. Democracy-promotion rather than levelling the unequal playing-field of the global order, clearly risks institutionalising new hierarchies of power and the return to the pre-UN era of Westphalian 'might makes right'. The UN High-Level Panel Report, referred to above, in fact explicitly awards might with the badge of righteousness, suggesting that when it comes to the new tasks of external state-building, 'all those in a position to help others ... [have] the responsibility to do so.'⁵⁹

Politics as a barrier to peace

Today's export of democracy occurs in a context of much diminished expectations for non-Western states in the wake of the perceived failure (for the most part) in the

⁵⁷ R. Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), p. 62

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁵⁹ Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, p. 18; see also D. Chandler, 'The Responsibility to Protect: Imposing the "Liberal Peace"?', *International Peacekeeping*, 11:1 (2004), pp. 59–81.

experiment in post-colonial independence.⁶⁰ The dominant consensus is that this failure lies largely with the political sphere in these 'failing states' – positing the solution as one of 'good governance' overseen by external intervention. There is therefore a tendency for international interveners to separate the export of democracy and post-conflict state-building from the process of domestic politics in the state intervened in; a tendency to see state-building as a 'scientific', technical or administrative process which does not require a process of popular consensus-building to give the target population a stake in policymaking. Where the post-World War II external administrations of Germany and Japan engaged the local populations in a major project of social, economic and political reconstruction, and through doing so won a high-level of popular legitimacy and support, international administrations, such as those in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq, have excluded all but token local input into the making and implementation of policy.

In the Balkans, the international administrations have not just operated above the sphere of representative politics but have also consistently criticised the programmes and personnel of the main political parties and argued that both the Bosnian and Kosovan electorate are not yet to be trusted with a meaningful vote. In the course of 'exporting democracy', rather than deriving policy from local concerns and needs, the legislative process has been driven by technical and administrative 'experts' in Brussels and Washington. Policies have then been imposed through the international Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and the UN's head of mission in Kosovo. Locally accountable political leaders then must accede to these demands, under the threat of being dismissed on the grounds of 'obstruction'.

There has been a trend towards granting external administrative powers greater and greater remits of authority. This process is reflected in the Bosnian example, where close international oversight was intended to last for one year only, until the first state elections in September 1996. However, ten years on from Dayton, not one piece of substantial legislation has been devised, written and enacted by Bosnian politicians and civil servants.⁶¹ This is in marked contrast to Japan and West Germany where, in the first case, the external occupation lasted nearly seven years and, in the latter, there was four years of occupation and full control over industrial and security policy was returned ten years after the end of the war.⁶²

More than a decade on from the Dayton settlement of the Bosnian conflict, the lack of political autonomy for Bosnian representatives, and of political accountability for Bosnian citizens, is possibly the most remarkable feature of current state-building practices, in this tiny and fragmented state. However, the lack of democracy in Bosnia has posed little barrier in the negotiations over the accession process towards European Union membership, in fact, the European Union has

⁶⁰ See, for example, R. Jackson, *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); also Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War*.

⁶¹ For further reading on the post-Dayton international regime see the website of the international Office of the High Representative. Available at: (<http://www.ohr.int/>). See also Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*; E. M. Cousens and C. K. Cater, *Toward Peace in Bosnia: Implementing the Dayton Accords* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001); D. Sololović and F. Bieber (eds.), *Reconstructing Multiethnic Societies: The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); S. Bose, *Bosnia after Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention* (London: Hurst & Co, 2002).

⁶² For background on postwar state-building in Germany and Japan, see for example, J. W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999); D. G. Williamson, *Germany from Defeat to Partition, 1945–1963* (London: Longman, 2001).

given its formal blessing to the maintenance of a highly restricted political sphere, with the establishment of the EU's Special Representative as the 'double-hatted' international High Representative in 2002. There would appear to be a clear international consensus that, for state-building and democracy-promotion to be a success, rule by externally-appointed bureaucrats is preferential to rule by Bosnian representatives accountable to Bosnian citizens.

It could be argued that George W. Bush's second inaugural speech proclaiming the importance of the export of democracy and the ten years of state-building experience in Bosnia serves as a potent symbol highlighting the return of liberal faith in the science of law and administration, reminiscent of the interwar period of the last century. This is also evidenced in the return of the idea of conditional sovereignty, muted for Kosovo by the Independent International Commission, and the idea of 'sovereignty as responsibility', suggested by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.⁶³ The concept of unequal rather than reciprocal relations between sovereign states is reminiscent of the Versailles restrictions on the sovereignty of the new states established in central and eastern Europe. In addition, there is clearly a renewed faith in the powers of international conferences and committees to establish the borders of states (the European Community Badinter Commission did this for the former Yugoslavia), to appoint external governors (as the Peace Implementation Council did for Bosnia and the United Nations for Kosovo), and to detail exhaustive recommendations of good governance as a condition for reciprocal relations in the international sphere. There is without doubt a growing consensus that international experts and bureaucrats can better govern a country than politicians accountable to the people who have to live with the consequences of their policymaking.

There is another similarity to the era of Woodrow Wilson, the rejection of traditional ideas of empire. In our post-colonial era, there is little support for the return of direct forms of international regulation, for a new network of colonial protectorates bringing 'order' to the regions of the world threatened by failing states. Rather, new international administrative regimes are, in the terminology of Michael Ignatieff, most often run on the basis of 'Empire Lite'.⁶⁴ International administrators are loath to take any responsibility for, or to be held to account for, the policies they pursue or the outcome of their interventions into the political process.

At the same time, local actors are denied the political autonomy to reach their own compromise solutions and assume accountability themselves. Both Bosnia and Kosovo painfully highlight the contradictions of having regularly contested elections at state and provincial levels and, alongside this, the existence of a parallel administration headed by unaccountable international appointees with the power to draw up and impose legislation and sack elected officials. But these protectorate

⁶³ See, for example, Independent International Commission on Kosovo, *Why Conditional Independence: The Follow up of the Kosovo Report* (Solna, Sweden: Tryckeriet Åsbrink Grafiska, 2001). Available at: http://kulturserver-hamburg.de/home/illyria/kosovocommission.org_report_english_2001.pdf; R. N. Haass, 'Sovereignty: Existing Rights, Evolving Responsibilities: Remarks to the School of Foreign Service and the Mortara Center for International Studies', Georgetown University, Washington, DC, 14 January 2003. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/s/p/rem/2003/16648.htm>. See also, Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.

⁶⁴ M. Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation-building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan* (London: Vintage, 2003).

relations of external regulation in the cause of democracy-promotion and state-building are merely the most transparent end of a continuum of new hierarchical relations transferring the mechanisms of good governance, for example, those from Brussels to the capitals of EU candidate members and states engaged in negotiations for the precursor to accession, the Stabilisation and Association process.⁶⁵

Under new international mechanisms of democracy-promotion and state-building, the political process is squeezed from above and below. There is an increasingly diminished accountability for policymaking either domestically or internationally. In this sense the borders between the domestic and international are being effectively erased. However, democracy-promotion has done little to promote democracy. For example, the external regulation of the people of Bosnia and Kosovo as 'humans' – rather than as 'citizens' with rights of political equality – has done little to overcome the 'politics of exclusion'. Bosnian and Kosovan political representatives who have been elected are accountable to international overseers rather than to their voters, reducing political institutions to irrelevant talking shops. In this context, elections are not a judgement on government policies; in fact, the inverse relationship is in play. Elections are openly seen as educational exercises where, in the process of exporting democracy, the voters submit themselves to the judgement of the international administrators as to their political capacities as citizens.

A few international analysts have stood out against the view that the political process can be short-cut or replaced by bureaucratic and administrative edict. Amitai Etzioni and Francis Fukuyama have, for example, questioned 'over-ambitious societal engineering'.⁶⁶ However, for these authors, as for left-wing historian Eric Hobsbawm, the 'dangers of exporting democracy' have been held to be the over-optimistic aims of today's ideologically-driven neo-Wilsonians.⁶⁷ This critique, in fact, agrees on the essentials with the current practices of international state-building, suggesting that the process of spreading democracy is not straightforward, but differs in the importance attached to the ambitious aims involved.

Critics who argue that democracy and state-building necessarily imply autonomy – and believe that the export of democracy when translated into 'good governance' regimes is contradictory – are much thinner on the ground. Gerald Knaus and others at the Brussels-based think-tank, the European Stability Initiative, have attempted to initiate a debate on the 'Travails of the European Raj' in Bosnia, highlighting the limitations of the high-handed approach taken to post-conflict reconstruction.⁶⁸ William Bain has also challenged the 'New Paternalism' of the failed states discourse and highlighted the return of a more hierarchical world order with the institutionalisation of new forms of political inequality between states and

⁶⁵ For more information on the Stabilisation and Association process, see 'The EU's Actions in Support to the Stabilisation & Association Process', available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/actions/. See also, the powers of the new international regulatory regimes for many African states, to be established under the ten year UN Millennium Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights For All*, 2005. Chapter 2, 'Freedom from Want'. Available at: <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/chap2.htm>.

⁶⁶ A. Etzioni, 'A Self-Restrained Approach to Nation-Building by Foreign Powers', *International Affairs*, 80:1 (2004), p. 15; see also Fukuyama, *State-Building*, p. 123.

⁶⁷ E. Hobsbawm, 'The Dangers of Exporting Democracy', *Guardian*, 22 January 2005, p. 22.

⁶⁸ See, for example, G. Knaus and F. Martin, 'Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina: Travails of the European Raj', *Journal of Democracy*, 14:3 (2003), pp. 60–74; see also the European Stability Initiative website at: <http://www.esiweb.org/>.

between individuals.⁶⁹ Simon Chesterman's study of post-conflict international administrations points out that today's international rule over Bosnia and Kosovo provides even less local accountability than the last century's mandate system or that under the presently defunct UN Trusteeship Council.⁷⁰ Chesterman's in-depth comparative study also concludes that current international state-building practices are prone to a number of fundamental flaws which stem from the inequalities built into the relationship of political pedagogy and external regulation: the means are often inconsistent with the declared ends; the resources are often inadequate to achieve the ends sought; and finally, much policymaking is more declaratory than practical, being largely irrelevant to the tasks at hand.⁷¹

Conclusion

It is necessary to extend this discussion of the questions and contradictions raised by international state-building and 'democracy promotion' in the specific 'post-imperial' context of our times. In the case of Bosnia, for example, where a large amount of resources have been committed by the international community, it is undoubtedly true that external intervention has had a major impact on the political process on the ground. Without doubt, it is possible to have inter-communal peace and a high-level of refugee return⁷² without democracy or the autonomy of the political sphere.⁷³

Dayton itself established that peace could be achieved through the external pressure of military intervention and economic and political sanctions. This external pressure created a state, but one with no real basis in Bosnian society and little popular legitimacy. Since Dayton, external administrators have built some roads and schools, issued banknotes, restructured and re-structured governing institutions, provided incentives for refugee return, banned some political parties or removed their elected leaders, and pushed through a wide range of policy decisions in a multitude of spheres. The successful assertion of external influence is hardly surprising considering the small size of the Bosnian state and the relatively limited ambition of the international economic and social rebuilding programmes.

However, it is also becoming apparent that state-building requires more than the largess – and coercive power – of external benefactors. Ten years after Dayton, the Bosnian state still lacks a secure basis in Bosnian society and commands little social or political legitimacy. While the international administration has been able to institute a large number of administrative and policy reforms to meet the externally-decided needs of 'good governance', it has been unable to transform the social and economic conditions of the population or to establish Bosnian institutions of government – that is, those institutions which are crucial to legitimising the Bosnian

⁶⁹ W. Bain, *Between Anarchy and Society: Trusteeship and the Obligations of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁷⁰ S. Chesterman, *You, the People: the United Nations, Transitional Administration, and State-Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 45.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 238–49.

⁷² For figures on refugee return, see (<http://www.unhcr.ba/return/index.htm>).

⁷³ This is a best-case example: in Kosovo the internationally-administered peace has not facilitated the return of ethnic-minority refugees, as in Bosnia, while Iraq under international administration failed even to achieve peace.

state and are capable of overcoming the divisions of the war. In this respect, the international experiment in state-building without democracy, or viewing democracy as an end instead of as a means, has revealed major shortcomings.

The irony is that the shortcomings of this approach are rarely seen as inherent limitations of the framework of exporting and 'imposing' democracy. The international policymakers engaged in democracy-promotion and state-building, in fact, seem to see their limited success as evidence of the difficulties of bringing democracy to non-Western states, and in this sense justifying their work. It is this disillusionment with democracy which suggests that we are not witnessing a full return to the idealism of the interwar period. There appears to be little sense of belief that the international exporters of democracy will succeed in creating strong independent states which have a right to political and legal equality with the states that currently administer or advise them.⁷⁴

Rather than transforming the states that are the objects of democracy-promotion and state-building, international policy is more of a holding operation, designed to regulate and install mechanisms which are capable of 'trouble-shooting' should political autonomy prove problematic. Unlike the interwar period, it may be that the export of democracy says more about low expectations and a lack of US mission or desire to change the world, despite the rousing rhetoric of George W. Bush's second inaugural speech.

⁷⁴ See, for example, S. D. Krasner, 'The Case for Shared Sovereignty', *Journal of Democracy*, 16:1 (2005), pp. 69–83; R. Keohane, 'Political Authority after Intervention: Gradations in Sovereignty', in J. L. Holzgrefe and R. O. Keohane (eds.), *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 275–98; and more generally, D. Chandler, *Empire in Denial: The Politics of State-Building* (London: Pluto Press, 2006).