

**SHORT**  
**OF THE**  
**GOAL**

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# SHORT OF THE GOAL

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U.S. POLICY AND  
POORLY PERFORMING STATES

Nancy Birdsall  
Milan Vaishnav  
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*editors*

CENTER FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT  
*Washington, D.C.*

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## *Preface*

In July 2004, the Center for Global Development released a report entitled *On the Brink: Weak States and U.S. National Security*. Prepared by a high-level, bipartisan commission of former officials and scholars of U.S. foreign policy and of development, the report emphasized that the economic and political well-being of the world's many weak states is a security as well as a moral imperative and offered concrete recommendations for changes in U.S. foreign policy and development architecture to address the challenge weak states pose for their own peoples and for the global system.

*On the Brink* was informed by a series of studies commissioned by Robert Ayres, one of the coeditors of the present volume. The completed studies, prepared in 2004 by leading scholars with expertise in particular countries or in policy issue areas such as trade and aid, make up this volume. *Short of the Goal* serves as a worthy companion piece to the commission's 2004 report, which, by necessity, was tightly argued, heavily focused on policy recommendations, and short on illustrative background.

The publication of *Short of the Goal* is certainly timely. In a January 2006 speech on transforming U.S. foreign policy, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice underlined the challenge the United States faces in helping to transform the world's many weak or poorly performing states into "responsible sovereigns." Providing in-depth reviews of individual countries, the authors detail the complexity of that challenge. In their frank assessments of past mistakes,

they suggest many lessons for readers interested in assessing current U.S. efforts at nation building.

The first chapter by Jeremy Weinstein and Milan Vaishnav in an initial section serves as a primer for academics, policymakers, and students interested in the developing world's weak states. They discuss the definition of weak states, the causes and consequences of their weakness, and the options in foreign policy terms for the United States. The second section consists of a series of case studies by contributors with regional and country expertise covering Central America, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Yemen. These chapters highlight the roots of state weakness and the role of the United States and the international community in addressing (or in some cases, exacerbating) the origins of their weakness. In the third and final section experts explore the potential—exploited and unexploited—of various policy instruments for addressing the problems weak states pose. The policy instruments addressed include the potential role of foreign assistance, trade and market access, foreign direct investment, security assistance, and democracy promotion.

An early and ongoing project of the Center has been the analysis of the implementation of the U.S. Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), a foreign aid program for reasonably well-governed but poor developing countries. In many ways, weak states are a more daunting development challenge. In addition to the work reflected in this volume and in the Commission's report, ongoing analysis by Steven Radelet of nation building in Liberia under that country's newly elected president and by Stewart Patrick on the links between weak state capacity and global threats are adding further to our stock of expertise and, we hope, the Center's ability to be helpful in the search for effective policy and better practice—in the interests of improving people's lives in poor countries as well as improving global security.

I am particularly grateful to three people for their work on this volume. Robert Ayres is a veteran of the World Bank and a senior fellow at the Center in 2002–03 before going to American University. I thank him for his willingness to take on what was then virtually uncharted territory for development economists. Jeremy Weinstein, a postdoctoral fellow at the Center in 2003–04 and currently on the faculty of Stanford University and a nonresident fellow of the Center, directed our project that led to the Commission's report on weak states and U.S. national security. He made central contributions to this volume in his comments to contributors on their draft essays, in his advice to me, and, of course, as coauthor of the initial chapter. Milan Vaishnav, who

assisted Jeremy on the work of the Commission and is now a graduate student, shepherded this volume to its final stages. Without each one of these three collaborators, there would be no volume.

My coeditors and I thank Lawrence MacDonald, the Center's director of communications and policy, and his publications team. Yvonne Siu, our publications coordinator, and her predecessor, Noora-Lisa Aberman, deserve special credit for coordinating with the publisher and the contributing authors and anticipating and preparing for every detail, major or minor, in the publication process. We also thank all the contributors for their collaboration and in some cases their patience with what has been a long but worthwhile process.

Last, but certainly not least, I and my coeditors thank the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for its generous support of this volume and our Chair of the Board and founding benefactor, Edward W. Scott Jr., for his interest in and support of our work on this central development issue.

NANCY BIRDSALL

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