

Media Coverage for "On the Brink: Weak States and US National Security"

A current overview of print media coverage for the "On the Brink: Weak States and US National Security" Commission Report includes:

The Associated Press
The New York Times
The Christian Science Monitor
The Financial Times
The Washington Post
The Houston Chronicle
Miami Herald
Minneapolis Star-Tribune
OneWorld
Inter Press Service News Agency
SouthScan.net



Group: Poverty a Security Threat to U.S.
BARRY SCHWEID; AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON, June 8, 2004 - Poverty and disease in places such as Afghanistan, Haiti and Somalia pose serious threats to U.S. national security but are frequently overlooked by American policy-makers, a group of former U.S. government officials said Tuesday.

"U.S. foreign policy must break its habit of inertia toward weak states," the Center for Global Development, a private group formed four years ago, said in a report. Among the potential signs of danger is when basic rights are not protected in weak countries, providing an opening for violent political opposition and corruption, it said.

"The situations in Iraq and Afghanistan warn of the serious consequences for our security when we allow governments to collapse and chaos to reign," the report said.

Among the recommendations were establishing a single Cabinet-level agency that that consolidates U.S. support for development for poor countries.

"Weak and failed states pose a 21st century threat to U.S. security, interests and values," the report said. "But the U.S. government institutions charged with meeting this threat are relics of the mid-20th century."

Nancy Birdsall, president of the center, said "it is news to no one that the U.S. is vulnerable." She said "the flash is that the sleeping giant of threats exists in the form of countries like Bolivia, Nigeria, Indonesia and Kenya."

Former Undersecretary of State Stuart E. Eizenstat and former Rep. John Edward Porter were the co-chairmen of the study. Members of the panel included former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and former U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering.

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The New York Times

Expect the World®

Report Says Aid to Weak States Is Inadequate

By Elizabeth Becker

New York Times

June 9, 2004

WASHINGTON, June 8 - Even though the Bush administration has identified failed states for acting as breeding grounds for terrorists, it is doing very little to improve those countries and reduce the risk they pose to national security, according to a report released on Tuesday.

Timed to coincide with the meeting of the Group of 8 industrial nations in Sea Island, Ga., this week, the report, produced by the Commission on Weak States and U.S. National Security, warns that if the United States fails to come up with a new development strategy, it will undermine its national security.

"The underlying premise is we have to act now," said Stuart E. Eizenstat, co-chairman of the commission and the former chief domestic policy advisor for President Carter. The commission included 30 Republicans and Democrats who are experts in development and national security.

This is not the first effort to tie an improvement in development aid to national security threats. But since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the administration has moved in different directions on development aid, said the report, commissioned by the Center for Global Development, a Washington nonprofit institute.

Rather than focus development aid on failed states, it has created a new development account to help qualified poor nations with a proven track record for fighting corruption and supporting democracy. Failed states - those that generally cannot provide security for their citizens or their territory, and that are corrupt and illegitimate in the eyes of their citizens - are not eligible for this aid.

In this year's budget, the administration has asked for an increase of more than \$1 billion for H.I.V./AIDS and assistance to the poorest nations, while it has requested a \$21 billion increase for the Defense Department, not including supplemental requests for military operations in Iraq.

That gap exemplifies the commission's fears that the administration and Congress rely too heavily on military force and not enough on development aid to fight terrorism.

The commission recommended that a new cabinet-level secretary of development be appointed to coordinate development efforts.

While saying that there should be far more attention and resources for countries on the brink of collapse, the group resisted putting a price tag on what was needed. But the report noted that the United States was one of "the least generous of all donors in its public spending on development assistance as a proportion of the economy."

The report also reiterated several traditional development remedies, including better trade opportunities for poor nations and more debt relief.

Over all, the report said that current aid policy is better suited to fighting the cold war than to the battle against networks of terrorists without armies or national capitals.

"It is the weakness of our enemies that is the threat today, not their strengths," said Nancy Birdsall, president of the Center for Global Development.

Same article under different title appeared in *The Houston Chronicle*



COMMENT: Failed states are a danger we cannot afford to ignore

By Martin Wolf

Financial Times (UK)

June 9, 2004

The world is both more interconnected and more divided than it has ever been before. It contains a billion people who live lives of unprecedented prosperity and security. It also contains another billion who live lives of desperate poverty and insecurity. No greater challenge confronts the politicians who lead the former group than tackling the plight of the latter. It is a moral challenge. But it is also a practical one. The misery spread by what are too often failing states spreads far beyond their borders. Today, no country is an island.

As an excellent report out today from a commission established by the Washington-based Center for Global Development puts it: "The fundamental foreign policy challenges of our time - terrorism, transnational crime, global poverty and humanitarian crises - are diffuse and complex, with wildly varying causes. Yet a common thread runs through all of them. They originate in, spread to and disproportionately affect developing countries where governments lack the capacity, and sometimes the will, to respond."*

How does one define a failing state? The report lists three "capability gaps": failures to ensure security, to meet the basic needs of citizens and to maintain political legitimacy.

Many states have failed on all three counts over the past decade: examples are Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan. The report suggests that as many as 50 countries are deficient in at least one of these dimensions. Thirty-one low-income countries have been affected by significant armed conflict in recent years. A larger number of countries fail to provide basic services. Many governments are no more than gangsters with flags. In some countries, government barely exists.

Why do states fail? Poverty is always a part of the reason. Poor countries have weakly resourced governments and feeble institutions. A vicious spiral of poverty, instability, conflict and so greater poverty can ensue, making nonsense of pious talk of "development". Many countries, alas, have been going backwards, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

What then is to be done? The answer given by the commission is: fill the capability gaps. This is an ambitious and, in important respects, quite different strategy from those now most in vogue.

The Bush administration's imaginative (though underfunded) Millennium Challenge Account provides additional assistance to the best, not the worst, performers. The World Bank's strategy of giving most help to countries with good policies and

institutions has much the same effect. Even the challenge of meeting the Millennium Development Goals focuses on meeting basic needs rather than on creating effective national institutions. Yet without the latter, resources spent on the former are quite likely to be wasted.

The challenge is called "nation-building". It is difficult and controversial. It is also inescapable. The alternative is letting large swaths of the globe fall prey to destitution, disease and devastation.

The commission has four suggestions on how to achieve this end: invest in prevention; respond swiftly to signs of failure; reorganise the US government for these purposes; and enhance its co-operation with allies.

Under prevention comes promoting growth and poverty reduction through opening markets to trade, increasing aid, deepening debt relief and helping poor countries cope with economic shocks. Also included are supporting the institutions of legitimate government, assisting the development of police and military forces and tackling "the debilitating links between extractive industries and corruption".

Under swift response comes the capacity to act as soon as crises occur, the ability to reward governments trying to behave well, the provision of enhanced support for regional peacekeeping capacities and active diplomacy in regions of instability. The underlying idea is that policies should cut out the poison before it festers.

Under reorganisation of the US government, the commission urges creation of an integrated development strategy under the control of a single, cabinet-level development agency. It also calls for the creation of a directorate within the National Security Council to focus on weak and failed states.

Under international co-operation comes encouraging the Group of Eight leading high-income countries to develop common strategies, engaging important developing countries in the same aim and supporting the efforts of the World Bank, the United Nations and UN agencies. An example of a multilateral programme deserving of support, the commission says, is the World Bank's Trust Fund for Low-Income Countries under Stress.

In all, this is an impressively well worked-out set of recommendations, even though the commission's belief that democracy must always be a part of the solution seems naive.

Nevertheless, if the US were to do what the commission recommends, it would play precisely the leadership role that it alone can in its own interests and those of the world.

What is being demanded here is revolutionary: a reconsideration of the basis of the world's political order. Acceptance of the sovereignty of governments rests on the assumption that they possess a reasonable degree of benevolence and competence. The US has decided that it cannot, in the modern age, tolerate the survival of malevolent governments. But, urges the commission, it should be just as unwilling to tolerate failing ones.

Other liberal democracies should share a similar view, for both moral and security reasons. The post-colonial assumption that national sovereignty would prove

compatible with international stability and widely shared prosperity has proved wrong. Where national sovereignty is a label for anarchy or predation, it does not deserve to be sacrosanct.

The challenge is to intervene not just effectively but also legitimately. If we fail to meet it, we shall not achieve the goals we proclaim. This report provides useful suggestions. The G8 leaders, meeting this week, should respond with all the urgency they can muster.

* "On the Brink: **Weak States** and US National Security", www.cgdev.org
martin.wolf@ft.com

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The Washington Post

Grappling With State Failure

Washington Post

June 9, 2004

NATION-BUILDING, a cause derided by George W. Bush in his last presidential campaign, now rides on a large bandwagon. The Pentagon has proposed an initiative to train peacekeeping troops from Africa in preparation for future crises, and Mr. Bush is airing this idea at the Group of Eight summit this week in Sea Island, Ga. The State Department is planning a new office to coordinate post-conflict reconstruction, partly in response to a bill sponsored by Sens. Richard G. Lugar and Joseph R. Biden Jr. that would require such a unit. Yesterday a panel of foreign policy heavyweights convened by the Center for Global Development called for the creation of a Cabinet-level department to deal with post-conflict crises and with the challenge of heading off state failure. The idea that weak states can compromise security -- most obviously by providing havens for terrorists but also by incubating organized crime, spurring waves of migrants, and undermining global efforts to control environmental threats and disease -- is no longer much contested.

The question is whether the new resources that are likely to be spent on this challenge will be used effectively. The proposal to create a Cabinet-level department to coordinate the effort reflects a concern that without coordination resources may be wasted. At present, U.S. engagement with weak states is spread among various departments: the Pentagon trains peacekeepers, the Justice Department trains police officers, the Treasury sends out economic advisers, the U.S. Agency for International Development funds projects and the new Millennium Challenge Account backs successful developing countries. A new Cabinet department may not be the right solution, but there ought to be a new way to coordinate disparate development and post-conflict efforts.

Another debate will revolve around the balance between multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program, which have considerable experience in post-conflict reconstruction as well as in development work, and the U.S. government's own efforts. There is a case for putting U.S. resources into U.S. agencies to cement America's global leadership. On the other hand, increasing contributions to multilateral bodies creates pressure on U.S. allies to do the same, so that U.S. money is leveraged. There is also some diplomatic benefit to the multilateral route. If the coming decade is to bring an increase in peacekeeping operations and interventions to prevent conflict, these are less likely to provoke resentment if they are organized under the flag of the United Nations or some other multilateral body.

There will be other debates too -- for instance, on the balance between preventive intervention in weak but not yet failed states and post-conflict reconstruction. A recent paper by Paul Collier of Oxford University suggests that preventive efforts spread across many potentially conflict-prone developing countries are likely to be less cost-effective than military interventions in countries that have already experienced wars and may suffer a relapse in the absence of help with their security. As the debate on failed states matures, the answers to these dilemmas may grow

clearer. The good news is that the United States has begun to think seriously about a challenge that has sometimes not been acknowledged.

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Bolivia an example of a nation that needs lots of help to survive

Andres Oppenheimer
THE OPPENHEIMER REPORT
The Miami Herald
Jun. 10, 2004

What?! A potential narco-terrorist anarchic state in the heart of South America, which could spread instability to the rest of the region and pose a serious security threat to the United States?

Well, not quite. But a report released this week by the Center for Global Development, a mainstream Washington, D.C., think tank, says Bolivia is one of the dozens of "weak" and "failed" states around the world -- alongside Afghanistan, Haiti, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Indonesia -- that are on the verge of collapse and require urgent U.S. attention.

TERM USED LOOSELY

In dozens of developing countries, the term "state" is a misnomer, the report says. Governments are unable to perform basic duties, such as protecting their citizens from internal and external threats and delivering basic health and education services.

"The collapse of governments often spawns wider regional conflicts," it says. "Even governments lingering weakly in power can create massive refugee flows, uncontained violence and uncontrolled epidemics that threaten regional stability."

Bolivia is a typical case of U.S. inattention to "weak" states, which may become a costly security risk in the future, says the report by the center's 30-member Commission on Weak States and U.S. National Security, chaired by former Clinton administration Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat and former Republican U.S. Rep. John Edward Porter of Illinois.

The report cites the case of Bolivia's democratically elected President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, who was toppled in a violent 2003 revolt by coca growers and radical leftist unions. His forced resignation came after he failed to get \$150 million in emergency funds from President Bush to make up for losses Bolivia had suffered from a massive U.S.-sponsored coca eradication effort.

As the ousted Bolivian president told me when he arrived in the United States on his first day in exile, he had told Bush at a meeting in Washington weeks earlier that he needed the money urgently to make the payroll that month or he would be back in Washington soon as a political exile. Indeed, Sánchez de Lozada was back in Washington soon -- as an exile.

The current democratic government of President Carlos Mesa is hanging by a thread, threatened by ultra-leftist coca growers and radical Indian groups.

"This is a case where the United States, for a paltry amount of money, could have helped secure a country in Latin America," says Center for Global Development Director Nancy Birdsall. "If Bolivia turns into a narco state, it would be a risk not only for Bolivia, but also for Brazil, for Venezuela, for the corruption of all neighboring countries, and ultimately a risk for the United States."

RECOMMENDATION

To prevent the collapse of "weak" and "failed" states around the world, and save the United States from costly military invasions and uphill nation-building operations, the authors of the report recommend creation of a cabinet-level "U.S. development secretary" -- like in Britain -- to identify endangered states and coordinate foreign aid programs among 12 U.S. agencies.

"Right now, the State Department does crisis management, and long-term development gets a short thrift," the Center's project director Jeremy Weinstein told me. "And the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) has basically become an institution that programs and spreads money. Its authority to make policy and develop strategies has been taken away."

My conclusion: the report rightly points out that the U.S. government is making a mistake by focusing only on "failed" states, such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Haiti, while not paying enough attention to "weak" states, such as Bolivia. It is a distinction that hasn't been made this clear in U.S. foreign policy circles until now, and that should help focus efforts on propping up endangered states before they fail.

To be fair, the Bush administration has increased U.S. aid to the poorest countries in the world, many of them "weak" states, with its \$5 billion Millennium Challenge Fund. But to qualify, countries have to adhere to U.S.-styled free market policies and other economic standards that many of them can't meet, precisely because they are so weak.

Perhaps it's time to relax these conditions for some "weak" countries, before they become much more costly international security risks, and their presidents end up as exiles in Washington D.C.



Weak states 'threat to global security'

By Mark Huband

Financial Times (UK)

June 10, 2004

LONDON - Weak states that lack the capacity to confront terrorists or criminal gangs should be seen as a big threat to global security and given financial and other aid, a US development think-tank said yesterday.

A report* by the Washington-based Center for Global Development (CGD) called on the Bush administration to incorporate development strategies for these countries into US national security strategy. It also argued for the creation of a cabinet level development agency and a new directorate within the National Security Council which would address the security impact of such states.

Concerns that countries with weak or non-existent governments will continue to be a source of insecurity have intensified since the Bush administration shifted its focus towards the war in Iraq despite the continued threat from terrorists based in Afghanistan.

Nancy Birdsall, CGD president, said that countries such as Bolivia, Indonesia, Nigeria and Kenya "find themselves weakened to the point where their instability threatens to derail political and economic progress and, in some cases, they have become attractive to the entities...who would wish to see harm visited on the US and other nations of the developed world."

The report said development aid was "not in and of itself a strategic imperative" for US security or economic interests.

"As a result, in this new environment the US is ill-equipped for rapid action to recognise state weakness or failure, respond to its immediate consequences, and prioritise and finance long-term interventions necessary to help and prevent it."

Despite recruits to terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda being as likely to come from prosperous backgrounds as from poor communities, a concern among security officials and military planners is that weak states have been used for meetings and as training grounds, as well as being sources of weapons.

The CGD, which includes several former senior officials from the Clinton administration, acknowledges the Bush administration's recognition in the 2002 National Security Strategy of the security implications of state collapse.

However, it argues that by focusing on rewarding governments that implement successful reforms with funds from the US Millennium Challenge Account, the Bush administration is failing to address the issues posed by severely weakened states that are incapable of reform and are receiving little aid.

These states "are the most prominent sources of poverty, disease and disaster - and a key source of threats to US interests," the report said. *
[http://www.cgdev.org/docs/ Full_Report.pdf](http://www.cgdev.org/docs/Full_Report.pdf)

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How helping weakest can stave off terror

J. Brian Atwood

Minneapolis Star-Tribune

June 8, 2004

The war on terrorism has preoccupied the American government for the past two years. Yet, new ideas for countering the threat have been limited to protecting our homeland and using the blunderbuss of military force.

Today in Washington, D.C., a report is being released that offers a compelling new approach.

The report, titled "On the Brink," is a product of a bipartisan "Commission on Weak States and U.S. National Security" that studied the relationship between poor, developing world nations and national security. The message is that these poverty-stricken countries are the "sleeping giant" threat to our safety. Why is that?

Poor nations are targeted by terrorist networks and transnational criminal groups. As we know, Al-Qaida has tentacles around the world. It has found fertile ground in places like the Horn of Africa, the Pan Sahara region of Northern Africa, and both Central and South Asia.

The key to avoiding the collapse of these nations, according to the commission report, is "to offer them the tools to improve their institutions, better the lives of their citizens, and partner with the United States in fighting instability and insecurity."

The problem is that the U.S. government's capacity to deliver effective assistance of this type is limited. The commission has an answer for that as well.

It recommends that we place renewed focus on two requirements: prevention of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Our government today is horribly weak in both areas, to the detriment of our national security and to the disadvantage of the taxpaying public.

The collapse of a society comes at a tremendous cost: in lives, in deeply ingrained ethnic tension, in the destruction of infrastructure and economic capacity, and in lost hope.

It takes many years and billions of dollars to overcome these problems. The price tag assigned to Iraq reflects the huge costs involved.

We owe it to the American taxpayers to do what we can to prevent costly nation-building exercises by acting sooner to stop the breakdown of states.

Conditions matter. When the gap between rich and poor widens, as it has, to more than 10 to 1, and when nearly half the world's population lives below the poverty line, anger and alienation are the byproducts. When 30,000 children die each day of

diseases that are curable in the West, envy, guilt and desperation are the byproducts.

Not many of the poor are terrorists and not all terrorists are poor, but we should understand that poverty is an enemy of the United States.

In the next 15 years another billion people join the world's population. Ninety-five percent will be born in the developing world as our western populations age and contract. How many of these people will be workers and consumers? How many will choose the short life of a terrorist?

We have learned from Iraq how difficult postconflict transitions can be. Unfortunately, no government department truly embraces the nation-building mission. This has led to as much nonviolent conflict in Washington as there is violent conflict in Iraq.

The Defense Department has carried the ball but has no real talent for the work. The State Department wants the mandate but has precious little operational capacity. USAID has the only units specifically created for transitional situations but has a weak policy voice and too few resources.

"On The Brink" recommends a new Cabinet-level department whose missions would include preventive development and nation-building. This department would coordinate the U.S. government approach to both development and post-conflict reconstruction.

The commission also recommends a National Security Council directorate to conduct early warning and create a coherent interagency response, preferably on a pre-crisis basis. It also would invest in an effective information strategy that would help to identify and monitor the progress of countries on the brink.

These are refreshing ideas in a capital city that is mired in the stories of government's failure to preempt the attacks of 9/11.

Our government was not equipped for the challenge of terrorism because the missions of its departments relate to old Cold War threats. It is time for new thinking, and the report released today provides it.

J. Brian Atwood, dean of the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, is a former director of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

OneWorld United States

Weak States Pose Major Threat to U.S. Security

Jim Lobe
OneWorld US
Jun. 9, 2004

WASHINGTON, D.C., Jun 9 (OneWorld) - The United States must adopt a multi-faceted strategy in dealing with threats posed by weak or failed states that gives as much or more priority to promoting development and nation-building as the Bush administration has given to military solutions, according to a new report released by a bipartisan commission here Tuesday.

Almost three years after the Sep. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and the Pentagon, the United States is still falling short in its ability to deal with the challenges posed by failing states, which increasingly threaten U.S. national security, according to the commission.

In particular, Washington must do far more both to prevent countries from collapsing and to help them, hopefully in concert with other powers, to stabilize and recover, according to the 76-page report, 'On the Brink: Weak States and U.S. National Security'.

Calling the 9/11 attacks a "wake-up call" to the new realities of international threats to the U.S. and its allies, commission co-chair and former Republican Rep. John Edward Porter, noted that, "(t)errorist organisations, transnational crime networks, disease and violence flourish in these countries."

"Not only do the citizens of these nations suffer, but the world community is imperiled by this general instability and the opportunity for safe haven it provides for those who wish to destabilize other fledgling democracies and the industrialized world," he added.

The report, whose recommendations stress the importance of prevention through sound development policies, upgrading U.S. expertise in quickly stabilising and reconstructing countries; and enhancing international co-operation in peacekeeping and nation-building, was produced over nine months and signed by nearly 30 commission members.

It appeared designed to re-frame the debate over how best to carry out the "war on terrorism" in ways that encourage policy makers to stress the importance of economic development as opposed to the almost exclusively military and security approach taken by the administration of President George W Bush.

"It is news to no one that the U.S. is vulnerable", said Nancy Birdsall, president of the Center for Global Development (CGD), which organized the commission.

"The flash is that the 'sleeping giant' of threats exists in the form of countries like Bolivia, Indonesia, Nigeria and Kenya -- places (which) ... for various reasons now

find themselves weakened to the point where their instability threatens to derail political and economic progress and, in some cases, they have become attractive to the entities, some known others unknown, who would wish to see harm visited on the United States and other nations of the developed world."

Commission members included two former U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) administrators -- J Brian Atwood, who served under former President Bill Clinton and M Peter McPherson, who worked with President Ronald Reagan - as well as a more than a dozen former officials who worked in the National Security Council, the Pentagon, or the State Department.

"For far too long, the United States has allowed weak states -- such as Afghanistan, Haiti and Somalia -- to be on the periphery of U.S. foreign policy concerns," said Stuart Eizenstat, another commission co-chair, who served in top economic positions under Clinton and President Jimmy Carter. "As a result, we have had to ultimately engage in military intervention and costly 'nation-building' activities."

"The U.S. needs a fresh strategy that identifies weak states before they fail, organizes the U.S. government to address the challenges and opportunities these weak states pose, and utilizes on a sustained basis the entire panoply of development, diplomatic, and political tools necessary to succeed," he added.

The report said three gaps distinguish troubled or weak states from others: If a state cannot control its own territory or protect its citizens from internal or external threats, it suffers a security gap that can easily be filled by terrorists, criminal groups or insurgents.

Similarly, if a state cannot meet the basic needs of its people, it suffers from a capacity gap that leaves its people vulnerable to epidemics and other humanitarian crises.

Finally, a legitimacy gap -- where the state fails to maintain institutions that protect the basic rights of its citizens -- will likely invite violent political opposition and corruption that are both destabilizing, according to the report.

These gaps are best addressed through healthy economic, social and political development, it adds, noting that the traditional U.S. foreign-policy apparatus was created for a world in which development was not seen in and of itself as a strategic imperative for U.S. security but was instead considered largely expendable compared to the overwhelming objective of thwarting military and security threats from other states.

"The view of this commission is that U.S. leaders must commit to using their political capital and channeling the nation's institutional power so that the development challenges of weak states can be effectively managed before they produce security crises," says the report.

Its recommendations include actions in four areas.

First, it calls for promoting increased access to the U.S. market for developing-country exports, greater debt relief, and U.S. direct investment; encouraging sound development policies, including government transparency and democratic reform; and providing greater U.S. assistance to police and military forces of weak states.

Second, Washington should increase the tools it has had its disposal for helping quickly failing states recover, including special aid accounts and civilian expertise that can be made deployed immediately without going through normal bureaucratic channels; a greater commitment to building regional peacekeeping capacities for early intervention; and more "active and sustained" diplomacy on the ground in troubled regions in order to better orchestrate international and local responses to crises.

Third, U.S. government institutions for gathering information, moving analysis to key decision makers and developing comprehensive strategies for dealing with failing states need to be updated, the report said. At a minimum, the government should establish both a cabinet-level development agency and a directorate within the National Security Council to deal specifically with the problem.

Finally, the United States can no longer afford to act on an ad hoc and unilateral basis in dealing with crises but should actively enlist the help and the advice of other nations, beginning with the Group of Eight most industrialized countries, as well as major developing countries, such as the Group of 20, whose own resources and attention can be leveraged toward a common goal.

At the same time, Washington should work actively to improve the rapid-response capacities of other existing international institutions, notably the United Nations and the World Bank.

"I hope this report marks the beginning of the end of the 'dissing' of international institutions," said Senator Joseph Biden who spoke at the release. "Without allies, without friends, without the added resources (they bring), I don't believe the U.S. can succeed."

Biden, the ranking Democratic Party member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is considered a favorite to be appointed secretary of state if Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry defeats Bush in the November elections. With the Committee chairman, Sen. Richard Lugar, Biden has sponsored legislation that would address a number of the recommendations included in the report.

Weak States Are 'Sleeping Giants' for U.S. Security

Jim Lobe

Inter-Press News Service Story

<http://www.ipsnews.net/interna.asp?idnews=24097>

WASHINGTON, Jun 8 (IPS) - Almost three years after the Sep. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and the Pentagon, the United States is still falling short in its ability to deal with weak, failing or failed states, which increasingly threaten U.S. national security, says a major report released here Tuesday by a bipartisan commission.

Washington must do far more both to prevent countries from collapsing and to help them, hopefully in concert with other powers, to stabilise and recover, according to the 76-page report, 'On the Brink: Weak States and U.S. National Security'.

"Terrorist organisations, transnational crime networks, disease and violence flourish in these countries," said the commission's co-chair, former Republican Representative John Edward Porter, who called the 9/11 attacks a "wake-up call" to the new realities of international threats to the United States.

"Not only do the citizens of these nations suffer, but the world community is imperilled by this general instability and the opportunity for safe haven it provides for those who wish to destabilise other fledgling democracies and the industrialised world," he added.

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The commission included two former U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) administrators -- J Brian Atwood, who served under former President Bill Clinton and M Peter McPherson, who worked with President Ronald Reagan (1981-89).

"For far too long, the United States has allowed weak states -- such as Afghanistan, Haiti and Somalia -- to be on the periphery of U.S. foreign policy concerns," said Stuart Eizenstat, another commission co-chair, who served in top economic positions under Clinton and President Jimmy Carter (1977-81). "As a result, we have had to ultimately engage in military intervention and costly 'nation-building' activities."

"The U.S. needs a fresh strategy that identifies weak states before they fail, organises the U.S. government to address the challenges and opportunities these weak states pose, and utilises on a sustained basis the entire panoply of development, diplomatic, and political tools necessary to succeed," he added.

The report said three gaps distinguish troubled or weak states from those that are simply poor. If a state cannot control its own territory or protect its citizens from internal or external threats, it suffers a security gap that can easily be filled by terrorists, criminal groups or insurgents.

Similarly, if a state cannot meet the basic needs of its people, it can be said to suffer from a capacity gap that leaves its people vulnerable to epidemics and other humanitarian crises.

Finally, a legitimacy gap -- where the state fails to maintain institutions that protect the basic rights of its citizens -- will likely invite violent political opposition and corruption that are both destabilising, according to the report.

These gaps are best addressed through healthy economic, social and political development, it adds, noting that traditional U.S. foreign-policy architecture was created for a world in which development was not in and of itself considered a strategic imperative for U.S. security but was instead largely seen as expendable goals compared to the overwhelming objective of thwarting military threats from other states.

"The view of this commission is that U.S. leaders must commit to using their political capital and channelling the nation's institutional power so that the development challenges of weak states can be effectively managed before they produce security crises," says the report.

Its recommendations include actions in four areas.

First, preventing failed states means promoting increased access to the U.S. market for developing-country exports, greater debt relief, support for U.S. direct investment; promoting sound development policies, including government transparency and democratic reform; and greater U.S. assistance to police and military forces.

Second, Washington should bolster its ability to provide help to states on the brink of collapse with: special aid accounts and civilian expertise that can be made deployed immediately without going through normal bureaucratic channels; a greater commitment to building regional peacekeeping capacities for early intervention; and with more "active and sustained" diplomacy in the field for orchestrating complicated political responses to crises.

Third, U.S. government institutions for gathering information, moving analysis to key decision makers and developing comprehensive strategies for dealing with failing states need to be updated, the report said. To do so, the government should establish both a cabinet-level development agency and a directorate within the National Security Council to deal specifically with the problem.

Finally, the United States can no longer afford to act on an ad hoc and unilateral basis but should recognise the importance of coordinating with other nations, beginning with the Group of Eight most industrialised countries, as well as major developing countries, such as the Group of 20, whose own resources and attention can be leveraged toward a common goal.

At the same time, Washington should work actively to improve the capacities of other existing international institutions, notably the United Nations and the World Bank.

"I hope this report marks the beginning of the end of the 'dissing' of international institutions," said Senator Joseph Biden who appeared at the release. "Without allies, without friends, without the added resources (they bring), I don't believe the U..S. can succeed."

Biden, the ranking Democratic Party member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is considered a favourite to become secretary of state if Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry defeats Bush in the November elections.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Mark Malloch Brown said the report's release signals, "clearly something is changing" on the issue of how Washington should deal with "failed states" and the causes of terrorism. Echoing Biden, Brown said, "the real lesson of Iraq is that you cannot do most of this bilaterally". (END/2004)

Pressure grows on US to aid 'weak' states to curb terrorism

By Howard LaFranchi

The Christian Science Monitor
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A commission recommends revamping aid programs to help nations solve problems before terrorism takes root.

WASHINGTON - After the controversy over President Bush labeling three nations an "axis of evil," some experts are urging the US to turn its focus to a larger and perhaps just as worrisome club of "weak" states as a way to curb global terrorism.

Moreover, this group - including security experts and congressional leaders - believes the way to address the threats is through the "soft power" of development assistance, something that has not had the same attention as military might.

What is needed, they say, is an overhaul of US aid and development programs to raise the profile of these countries and to make clear their role in battling terrorism. Such a move could prove a boon to the Bush administration by highlighting a shift from confrontation to diplomacy - a post-Iraq penchant observers say was already on display at last week's G-8 summit.

The challenge of global development was recently addressed by a bipartisan Commission on Weak States and US National Security. It concluded that a reorganization is needed to give the US an effective tool for addressing a growing 21st-century threat. It recommended that one cabinet-level agency be created out of the many development programs currently spread out over a dozen departments.

"9/11 showed us how weak and failed states are the threat that puts our security most at risk, and creating Homeland Security and talking about a major intelligence reorganization are a direct response to that," says Stuart Eizenstat, cochair of the commission. Rethinking strategies for aid "is the third leg of that stool."

Looking at the challenge a little differently, cochair John Edward Porter, a former GOP congressman from Illinois, says: "We have zeroed in on the need to find and destroy terrorists, and we have worked to provide better protection for the American people at home. But we haven't really looked at the third track - how we reach out to even our potential enemies and engage with states that are losing ground in ways that can stop them from becoming a threat to our security."

Acting earlier is the kind of "preventive work that could put off the military action, the huge expenses that entails, and loss of American life," says Mr. Porter.

Creation of a superagency for foreign aid, long dismissed by critics as a type of international welfare, would no doubt be as contested as the Homeland Security reorganization. But even some experts focused more on military matters say the time for heightened attention to weak states has come. "Over the last half-century

we have set up 120 new states, and not all of them are working," says John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.com. "There are large patches of this planet that don't have real states. We lack a systematic way to deal with this, and, as 9/11 showed us, we fail to take up the problem before it gets worse at our own risk."

The Bush administration has acknowledged the link between development and terrorism since 9/11. It said eradicating the seedbeds of terrorism was one of the aims of its "millennium accounts," an approach to foreign aid that rewards developing countries for good government. The terrorist threat is also behind the administration's Greater Middle East Initiative endorsed by the G-8 group of developed countries at their summit in Georgia last week.

But aid experts note that the millennium accounts largely focus on successful states, while the Middle East initiative fails to encompass most of the "weak" states prone to becoming terrorist havens. Those states, the commission notes, are focused in Africa and Central Asia.

Aware that talk of any kind of intervention in problem states could find quick rejection among Americans weary of Iraq, Mr. Eizenstat says the idea is to solve problems earlier so the American habit of "rushing in and then abandoning a place to future troubles" can be broken.

The commission, sponsored by the Center for Global Development in Washington, centered its work on the indicators of weak and failed states rather than on particular examples. Among the indicators: failures to control borders, meet the basic needs of citizens, and establish the legitimacy that comes from effective government.

But the commission notes that several countries in recent years have failed on all accounts, including Somalia, Afghanistan, and Haiti - all three of which have prompted US military intervention. Other poor performers - including Pakistan, Chad, Sudan, and Somalia - have either experienced internal conflicts that have led to outside intervention, or have failed to control their borders, leading to concerns about terrorist infiltration.

To address such threats, the commission lays out a set of recommendations, including creation of a directorate within the UN National Security Council to focus on weak states.

In addition, it calls for measures to deliver faster preventive action: creation of a rapid-response corps of technocrats to work with failing states, greater US support for regional peacekeeping capacities, and a \$1 billion contingency fund at the president's disposal to respond to signs of weakening states.

Some of the ideas are already advancing. Last week the G-8 committed to training 75,000 peacekeepers to deal with crises primarily in Africa.

GlobalSecurity's Mr. Pike goes further, saying the international community ultimately needs a way to "declare countries as failed and bankrupt, just as you would a corporation," and to put them under international trusteeship.

Already the idea of a cabinet-level superagency focused on development - mirroring a recent reorganization of Britain's development structure - would be controversial enough. "Frankly I see this [proposal] as ... difficult to get implemented," says

Porter. "But it's a way of saying to Congress and the American people, 'That's how important this issue is.' "



Development and security link made in failed states SouthScan (South Africa)

June 11, 2004

On the eve of the Sea Island G8 summit meeting this week a report was launched in Washington pressing for a radically changed US foreign policy to make the connection between national security, failed states and development. It has significant Democrat backing on Capitol Hill and may become an input into a Democrat administration's reconfigured foreign policy.

The report, by the liberal Center for Global Development, stresses the nexus between development and terrorism that had been loudly denied by the conservative establishment immediately after the September 11 attacks. Now, with policy faltering over Iraq, this view may have grown more widely acceptable. But the task set by the report's backers is substantial, and their support beyond their natural liberal allies is uncertain.

Cracks in system

At the launch in one of the senate buildings on Capitol Hill the great and the good of Washington liberal society was present to hear an introduction by Democrat Senator Joseph Biden, warning that failed state were "cracks in the very foundation of our international system" and that US institutions had to change radically to counter them.

What was needed was the reform of US institutions for the task - but in his view this would be the single most difficult piece in the problem.

The report - 'On the Brink - weak states and US national security' - proposes that the US throws itself into 'nation-building', and the commissioners involved in writing the report cited experience with rebuilding postwar Europe and Japan.

A single cabinet level development agency and a single unified budget for development was proposed. There should also be a new national security director in the National Security Council with a focus on weak states.

An overly narrow foreign policy should be changed to allow more aid and there should be support for police and military in failing states.

The US should make a major investment in peace keeping. One of the commissioners suggested that in ten years there could be a standing UN force for rapid deployment.

In particular the US needed to remake its relations with a reformed UN, said the commissioners. Mark Malloch Brown, head of the UN Development Programme, said he welcomed the notion of a single development czar in Washington and criticized the current uncoordinated investment in economic reconstruction. Instead the UNDP should be the prime country coordinator.

Altogether in the view of one commissioner, "Weak and failing states should be near the top of the foreign policy agenda".

Dealing with local elites

Controversially for current US policy toward Zimbabwe, the report concludes that "local elites cannot be evaded or wished away". Benign neglect, indulgence, or isolation seldom loosen these groups' hold on power, the report goes on. Instead US development policy needs tools to "co-opt and also to coerce, targeted packages of sanctions and incentives."

According to the report, "US foreign policy architecture was created for a world in which development policy was a low-level challenge, one in which development might have served diverse strategic purposes but was not in and of itself a strategic imperative for US security or economic interests.

"As a result, in this new environment the United States is ill-equipped for rapid action to recognize state weakness or failure, respond to its immediate consequences, and prioritize and finance the long-term interventions necessary to help prevent and mend it."

Instead US foreign policy must break its "habit of inertia toward weak states" and development challenges should be effectively managed before they produce security crises.

Recommendations

The report puts forward a set of policies.

- The US should invest in preventing states from sliding further toward failure.
- It should have ³innovative tools such as emergency surge capacities² so that it can rapidly seize opportunities to stop failure or block its consequences.
- It should reform its institutions by building a cabinet-level agency that incorporates all aspects of development policy.
- It should forge a G8 consensus and engage regional organizations, major developing countries, and international institutions.

The report is available on www.cgdev.org.