

## State Failure

Political Science W3961  
Columbia University  
Fall 2007  
Wednesday, 2:10-4:00

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Office Hours:  
Monday and Wednesday, 4-5pm

The role of weak, failing, and collapsed states in the international system has changed dramatically over the past several years. Previously a generally ignored and perhaps even rare phenomenon, state failure has become a critical security issue both for those living in failed states, and for more distant powers who fear that failed states may provide a haven for terrorists. In this course, we will explore the nature, causes, and consequences of state failure by focusing on the general issues surrounding state failure as well as specific cases. We will begin by studying the state as an historical institution, then move to a more theoretical discussion of general causes and consequences of state failure. We will also discuss policy instruments that have been proposed to remedy or prevent state failure. Students will write a research paper and present their paper to the class.

### Course requirements:

The primary requirement for this seminar is that you author a quality research paper on state failure. The other class requirements are meant to help you select a topic and write your paper. To this end, you are required to have completed the readings before class and to participate in discussion. You are also expected to contribute information from your own research project to class discussion.

A one-to-three page paper proposal – with a proposed bibliography appended – is due the fifth week of class. During the last four weeks of class, students will present (briefly) drafts of their papers to and receive comments from other students in the class. **Therefore, a draft of your paper will be due during one of the last five weeks of class.** All class members will read all student paper drafts; further, each student will write a one-page critique of each draft. I will also read and comment on the draft papers.

### **Research Papers**

**The final version of your paper is due at my office (1330 IAB) by 5 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12. Students will be penalized one-third of a grade for each day a paper is late. Extensions will be given only in cases of emergency (death of a family member, hospitalization, etc.).**

Your research project should focus on a specific research question or hypothesis, should draw on concepts and themes of the course, and should employ empirical

evidence from cases of actual or potential state failure. Typically, the strongest papers examine two or more cases, drawing comparisons among them, but many students have also written excellent papers focusing on a single case.

### *Grading*

Participation	15%
Proposal	5% (no more than 3 pp., not including bibliography)
Paper presentation	5%
Critique(s)	15% (1 p. each – one copy to me, one copy to author)
Research Paper	60% (25-30 pp.)

### Course Materials

The following required books are available for purchase at Labyrinth Bookstore:

- Rotberg, Robert I, ed. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).
- Reno, William. *Warlord Politics in African States*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999).
- Rubin, Barnett R. *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State formation and Collapse in the International System*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

The reading packet does not include assignments that can be obtained electronically. These readings are marked with an "E". Readings are also available through Courseworks.



<sup>E</sup>Widner, Jennifer. “States and statelessness in late twentieth-century Africa.” *Daedalus* (124: 3) Summer 1995, pp. 129-53.

<sup>E</sup>Cliffe, Lionel and Luckham, Robin. “Complex political emergencies and the failure of the state: failure and the fate of the state.” *Third World Quarterly* (20: 1) February 1999, pp. 27-50.

## **September 26            International Causes of State Failure**

<sup>E</sup>Atzili, Boaz. When Good Fences Make Bad Neighbors: Fixed Borders, State Weakness, and International Conflict. *International Security* (31: 3) Winter 2006/07, pp. 139-173

Clapham, Christopher. “The Global-Local Politics of State Decay.” Chapter 3 in Rotberg, *When States Fail*.

<sup>E</sup>Jackson, Robert and Rosberg, Carl. “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist.” *World Politics* (35: 1) October 1982, pp. 1-24.

### Suggested:

Hironaka, Ann. *Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.

## **October 2                Domestic Causes of state failure (proposals due)**

Rotberg, *When States Fail*, Chs. 2, 4-6

<sup>E</sup>Marten, Kimberly. Warlordism in Comparative Perspective, *International Security* (31: 3) Winter 2006/07, pp. 41-73

<sup>E</sup>Young, Crawford. “Deciphering Disorder in Africa: Is Identity the Key?” *World Politics* (54) July 2002, pp. 532-57.

Kahl, Colin. *States, Scarcity, and Civil Strife in the Developing World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. Chs. 1-2.

### Suggested:

*Political Instability Task Force Phase IV Findings*, available through:  
<http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/>

<sup>E</sup>King, Gary and Langche Zheng. “Improving Forecasts of State Failure.” *World Politics* (53: 4) July 2001, pp. 623-58

## **October 9                      Consequences of State Failure**

<sup>E</sup> Menkhaus, Ken. Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping, *International Security* (31: 3) Winter 2006/07, pp. 74-106

<sup>E</sup> Holmes, Stephen. "What Russia Teaches Us Now: How Weak States Threaten Freedom." *The American Prospect* (8: 33) July/Aug 1997, pp. 30-39.

Ayoob, Mohammed. "State-Making, State-Breaking and State Failure: Explaining the Roots of 'Third World' Insecurity." in van de Goor, Luc et. al, eds. *Between Development and Destruction: An Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post-Colonial States*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Kline, Harvey F. "Colombia: Lawlessness, Drug Trafficking, and Carving up the State." in Rotberg, Robert I. *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2003.

Barak, Oren. "Lebanon: Failure, Collapse, and Resuscitation." in Rotberg, Robert I. *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2003.

### Suggested

Chs. 7-11 in in Rotberg, Robert I. *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2003.

## **October 16                      Solutions to State Failure**

<sup>E</sup> Krasner, Stephen D. "Sharing Sovereignty: New Institutions for Collapsed and Failing States." *International Security* (29: 4) Fall 2004, pp. 85-120.

<sup>E</sup> Ottaway, Marina. "Rebuilding Institutions in Collapsed States." *Development and Change* (33: 5), 2002, pp. 1001-1023.

Callaghy, Thomas M. "From Reshaping to Resizing a Failing State? The Case of the Congo/Zaire" in Brendan O'Leary, et. al, eds. *Right-Sizing the State: The Politics of Moving Borders*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Rotberg, *When States Fail*, Chs. 7, 11, 14

### Suggested:

<sup>E</sup> Fearon, James D. and David Laitin. "Neotrusteeship and the Problem of Weak States." *International Security* (28: 4) Spring 2004, pp. 5-43.

Lustick, Ian S. "Thresholds of Opportunity and Barriers to Change in the Right-Sizing of States" in O,Leary, Brendan et. al, eds. *Right-Sizing the State: The Politics of Moving Borders*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

**October 23 State Failure in Africa**

Reno, William. *Warlord Politics in African States*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999.

Suggested

Reno, William. *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

**October 30 Afghanistan then and now**

Rubin, Barnett R. *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State formation and Collapse in the International System*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

<sup>E</sup>"A Geographical Expression in Search of a State." *The Economist*, July 8, 2006.

<sup>E</sup> Greaves, Rose L. "Themes in British policy towards Afghanistan in its relation to Indian frontier defence, 1798-1947." *Asian Affairs* (24: 1) March 1993, pp. 30-46.

Suggested:

Goodson, Larry P. *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001.

**November 7 Presentations**

**November 14 Presentations**

**November 28 Presentations**

**December 5 Presentations**

**December 12, 2007: FINAL PAPER DUE at 1330 International Affairs by 5p.m.**