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Publisher: Routledge

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Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:  
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t741771150>

### Editors' Introduction

Online Publication Date: 01 March 2007

To cite this Article: Chandler, David, Chesterman, Simon and Laakso, Liisa , (2007) 'Editors' Introduction', Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 1:1, 1 - 2

To link to this article: DOI: 10.1080/17502970601075832

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17502970601075832>

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## Editors' Introduction

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Welcome to the first issue of the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, a new cross-disciplinary journal devoted to academic and practitioner analysis of international intervention with the purpose of strengthening state capacities.

Statebuilding – constructing or reconstructing institutions of governance capable of providing citizens with physical and economic security – is widely held to be one of the most pressing policy questions facing the international community today. Those concerned with such issues cross the political spectrum. They include political realists who argue that there is more to fear from failing states than from conquering ones. They also embrace activists who see the dysfunction of state institutions as lying at the heart of the global poverty trap. Indeed, it is the intersection of these concerns on the part of the security and development communities that has made statebuilding a core policy focus across the policy agendas of major Western states, international institutions and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

This journal frames its approach to intervention and statebuilding in broad terms, going well beyond the narrow security focus on international peace-keeping and peace-building. Today, external intervention in the governance of states is increasingly seen as a panacea for a wide range of social, economic and political problems. Statebuilding interventions encompass a growing range of international practices, including: post-conflict governance, in places like Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq; international support for weak states, under the state capacity-building programmes of the US government's Millennium Challenge Account, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's poverty reduction strategies, or the United Nations Millennium Development Goals; and the European Union enlargement strategies of 'member-state building' in the Balkans. The policies and programmes of statebuilding are proving central to the regulatory practices of international politics.

Until now, there has been no academic forum for publishing work which takes a step back from the policy briefs, statements of intent and congratulatory self-assessments of international actors, to ask broader questions about the dynamics, purposes and goals of this interventionist framework and assess the impact of externally-guided policy-making. The *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* brings together academics and practitioners to analyse the consequences of internationalizing domestic governance mechanisms and to assess the development and the impacts of these policies, both intended and unintended.

We welcome papers analysing the impact of the blurring of the sovereign division between the domestic and the international and considerations of the broader dynamics, framing and development of international statebuilding mechanisms. We also welcome submissions focusing on the impact on the ground of specific statebuilding practices, including: international administrative powers; country ownership of poverty reduction strategies; the export of the EU *acquis communautaire*; civil society building; democracy promotion; anti-corruption policies; election monitoring; educational reform; psycho-social counselling; rule of law support; judicial and police reform; civil service and administrative reform; post-conflict peace-building; and financial and economic reforms.

This first issue is just the beginning of this project but, nevertheless, the papers published here all reflect in various ways on recent experiences of intervention and statebuilding and set out a critical space, opening a number of avenues of discussion and enquiry. Simon Chesterman discusses the use and misuse of the concept of 'ownership' in UN statebuilding operations. Amitai Etzioni critically engages with current conceptions of post-conflict reconstruction, considering the legal and moral duties of the US in Iraq and how they can be effectively pursued. Thomas Weiss and Peter Hoffman consider the problems of institutional learning faced by humanitarian aid agencies. Elon Weinstein and Keith Tidball argue that statebuilding strategies often fail to consider the local context, missing vital problems and failing to draw on local assets, and suggest an 'environment-shaping' approach. Beate Jahn, in the first of a two-part piece on the 'tragedy of liberal diplomacy' locates recurring problems in the practice of intervention and statebuilding in the teleological framework of liberal ideology. Paddy Ashdown, in an extensive interview, sets out some of the lessons that need to be learned from his experience as international High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina and his concerns over Europe's integration of the Balkan states.

In today's publishing climate, all new journal start-ups entail taking a calculated risk and we would like to thank Richard Delahunty, Rebecca Webb and the team at Taylor & Francis for their support for this project from the proposal stage onwards. We have also been taken aback by the extent of support the journal has received from academics and practitioners in the field, both in the UK, Europe and the US. This support is reflected in the standing and experience of the international editorial advisory board and in the high number and quality of article submissions we have received so far. The papers we will be publishing later this year include the second part of Beate Jahn's article as well as contributions by Susan Woodward, Kimberly Marten, Donald Rothchild and Nikolas Emmanuel, Graham Harrison, Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, amongst others. We aim to extend the critical space for theoretically and empirically informed discussion of intervention and statebuilding and welcome contributions and correspondence.

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Liisa Laakso