

The Problem of "State Failure" and the Complex Societal-Systems Approach

Monty G. Marshall
Center for Systemic Peace
and
Benjamin R. Cole
Simmons College

Introduction

The end of the "super-statist" Cold War wrought significant changes to the dominant "statist" understanding of international relations, among them a new interest in the causes and international effects of fragile, failing, and failed states. In a global system where the state remains the primary organizing structure, the instability and collapse of developing states, particularly those in strategically-valuable regions, caught the interest of policymakers and academics trying to understand the dynamics of the emerging globalization era in world politics. State sovereignty has been the foundational principle of world politics since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and, for most of that time, the "failure" of the state to adequately exercise and maintain its authority to rule over its territory was viewed by more powerful states as simply an opportunity to expand their own influence, often through the perceived "right" to make, or threaten, war. However, the great wars of the Twentieth Century and, in particular, the industrialization of warfare and the devastating effects of "total war" brought about a global consensus that war was an essential part of the problem of "state failure," rather than its solution; this consensus was codified in 1945 as the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter prohibited "aggressive war" and, in so doing, served to transform the world's "state-system" from a "floating" to a "fixed" system; the ultimate responsibility for the maintenance of territorial borders became the subject of "international peace and security" and was placed with the UN Security Council.¹ The "fixed" system of states, while ostensibly the logical expression of the international principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states (chap.I,art.2,par.7), has been regularly challenged by the concomitant principle of the "self-determination of peoples" (chap.I,art.1,par.2).² The collapse of the Socialist Bloc and, with it, end of the Cold War removed, at once, the superpower rivalry and East-West patronage structure that had overlaid and underwritten the world's system of states since the end of the Second World War, exposing developing states to a "new world order" reflecting the vagaries of the global market and the restructuring of strategic priorities. Weaker states, especially in

¹ This transformation also served to separate the authority to rule on issues regarding state sovereignty from the capability to enforce such rulings, as the Member states balked at providing the UN with armed forces to comprise a standing army (Chap.VII, art.43) and forestalled the establishment of a Military Staff Committee to command enforcement measures (Chap.VII, art 47). By default, the UN Security Council was afforded the responsibility to authorize enforcement measures and UN member states were obliged to honor such authorizations and act when willing and able to do so.

² Changes to the "fixed" structure of states have primarily resulted from the breakup of colonial empires (mainly during the period 1946-1975) and the disintegration of socialist "unions" (Soviet Union; Yugoslavia) in the early 1990s. Forcible secessions (Bangladesh; Eritrea; Timor Leste; Kosovo; South Sudan), voluntary dissolutions (Federation of Malaysia; United Arab Republic; Czechoslovakia; Serbia and Montenegro), and (re)unifications (Federation of Malaysia; United Arab Republic; Germany; Vietnam; Yemen) have been relatively rare.

Africa, were perceived to be failing in their sovereign duty to provide and ensure "domestic tranquility" and the world system of states was rocked by a cascade of humanitarian crises. It was about this time that the term "state failure" entered the academic and policy lexicons.

While the sudden loss of support from the global East, and countervailing support from the global West, was an important factor in the decline of state authority in many instances, a practical recognition of the global dimensions of state failure did not come until later, perhaps because the countries of the East and West became somewhat preoccupied with the restructuring of their "worlds." Early studies of state failure tended to follow the precepts of a "statist" approach and focused mainly on the role of the state and, especially, state leadership. The "statist" approach was consistent with both classic understandings of state sovereignty and the statistical methods that characterized the "behavioralist" paradigm in the social sciences, including efforts to define and categorize state failure and its antecedents, attempts to model, predict and explain state failure and changes in state fragility, and studies of state failure as a conditioning or independent variable with effects on terrorism, inter- and intra-state armed conflict, crime, disease, and development. The last several years have seen these projects bear useful fruit, with a host of publications in the field representing qualitative and quantitative methodologies, complementary case studies, small-n comparative works, and large-n statistical analyses, and making significant theoretical and empirical contributions to both the social sciences and policy studies.

However, despite two decades of focused attention and frequent publication, the study of state failure remains underdeveloped and underexplored: terms and synonyms (e.g. fragile, weak, failed, collapsed, conflict-affected, recovering, dysfunctional, vulnerable, precarious, ungoverned, at-risk, poorly-performing, ineffective)³ are used interchangeably; cause, correlation, and consequence are frequently confounded; cross-national time-series measurements remain state-centric, limited in scope, and "fuzzy" in quality; and the predominantly statistical testing and modeling techniques tend to outstrip their theoretical underpinnings. Conceptual definitions of state failure also vary greatly; for some, state failure reflects a straight-forward collapse of central authority and loss of territorial sovereignty while, for others, state failure represents a spectrum of system underperformance in any of several state functions and responsibilities, such as social service provision, corruption, or ruling with consent of the governed. Challenging the field has been the recent rise of critics of the state failure concept, who have argued that fragility and failure are, at worst, justifications for neo-imperialism and, at best, conceptually weak, painting states with widely different circumstances, histories, and problems with the same broad stroke. Indeed, Easterly and Feschii (2010) have gone so far as to call "state failure" a "failed concept."

This chapter summarizes state failure research, responds to critics of the research agenda, and synthesizes both the work and its criticisms to propose an alternative methodology for analyzing state fragility: complex societal-systems analysis. We begin by examining the research agenda's key terms by reviewing both conceptual definitions and their accompanying debates. Next, we summarize recent innovations in measurement of state fragility and failure, and review studies of state failure as both a cause and effect of other cross-national phenomena, such as organized crime, trafficking, and terrorism. We then respond to the key criticisms of the state failure research agenda, before concluding with a discussion of the utility of complex

³ When discussing the concepts, we use the terms "fragile states" and "state fragility," in addition to "failed states" and "state failure" in this piece. See our argument on p. XX for standardizing the fragility/failure research lexicon.

societal-systems analysis to address those criticisms and as a way forward with research in the relationships among internal and external sources of governance, political conflict, and system development. We argue that a systems methodology is best-suited to move the state failure research agenda beyond the behavioralist social-scientific paradigm that depends on often inappropriate and always simplistic statistical assumptions steeped in a presumed independence of observations drawn from an increasingly complex and interdependent social system that spans and networks the entire globalizing world.

Conceptualizing “State Failure”

Although the term “state failure” did not enter the mainstream academic vernacular until the early 1990s, recognition of the unique problems faced by societies with ineffectual states began during the Cold War. Most of these early efforts focused on development economics or were responses to problems in development studies. Huntington (1968) wrote one of the earliest tracts concerned with the domestic impediments to “political order in changing societies,” but his policy prescription of ensuring stability by fostering a “national security state” was claimed by his many critics to have only exacerbated the problem. In addition to developing a comprehensive model of state-society relations, Migdal (1988) provided one of the first comparative analyses of fragile states, juxtaposing Sierra Leone’s post-colonial weakness with Israel’s strength, and identified the importance of neighborhood effects, and conflict in particular, in determining state efficacy. Jackson (1987) provided another early analysis of state fragility, investigating the roles of the international community and international law in forcing western jurisprudential norms of sovereignty and statehood onto African societies, generating “quasi-states” or “juridical statehood.” These early studies identified the problems posed by fragile states and began analyzing the causes behind their inefficacy, articulating the concepts of state fragility and failure that would be picked up later by academics, journalists, and policymakers in the face of high-profile failures.

The use of the “failed and failing” states terminology in policy discourse is usually traced to a 1992 article by Helman and Ratner that appeared in the magazine *Foreign Policy*, titled “Saving Failed States”; they referred to “three groups of states whose survival is threatened: First, there are the failed states like Bosnia, Cambodia, Liberia, and Somalia, a small group whose governmental structures have been overwhelmed by circumstances. Second, there are failing states like Ethiopia, Georgia, and Zaire [DRC], where collapse is not imminent but could occur within several years. And third, there are some newly independent states in the territories formerly known as Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, whose viability is difficult to assess. All three groups merit close attention, and all three will require innovative policies.” (p.2) According to Paris (2011) and Call (2010), Helman and Ratner’s article was responsible for the term’s circulation into the academic and policy vernaculars, but the term was quickly applied to a wider array of developing countries whose survival or viability was less clearly threatened, extending the meaning of the concept to include lesser forms of “failure.” Instead of indicating the complete or impending collapse of central authority, the term came to replace more innocuous references to levels of economic development to encompass a deeper sense of political anomie synonymous with the “weak,” “quasi-,” or “juridical” states addressed by Migdal and Jackson, indicating an inherent inadequacy of “third world” states to perform their fundamental policymaking function(s).

It was this expanded meaning of the term that Kaplan used in his 1994 article in *The*

Atlantic, titled "The Coming Anarchy," which brought the term, and the significance of the problem, into popular discourse. Since that time, the policy communities of the leading states of the globalization era, reacting perhaps from a feeling of being overwhelmed themselves by circumstances, uncertainty regarding the apparent devolution of the state system, and a growing sense of "donor fatigue," have taken the lead in promoting and pursuing research on the problem of "state failure." At the same time, we cannot discount the disturbing perceptual effects brought about by the relatively sudden spilling out of a raft of heretofore closed societies amid the dawning of a media-driven information age. The world went from knowing very little about the internal affairs of states, and particularly states in the developing world, to having the most intimate details of everyday life across the globe reported to them and scrutinized by them on a daily basis; and, this opening happened during the peak level of armed conflicts in the world (Gurr *et al* 2000, chapter 3, "Global Trends in Violent Conflict"). The so-called "CNN effect" was met with a "do something" imperative driven by an over-stimulated public and policy community in a "triumphant" West.

The concept of state failure has thus been epistemologically challenged nearly since its invention, affecting its use and analysis in both academic and policy circles and, perhaps, as many critics have argued, the way we understand the nature of and prospects for resolving the problem. At its core, however, the concept of state failure combines two research streams that had previously remained largely separate in Western thinking: state-building and economic development. What remained largely missing were the external, "systemic" influences emphasized by the *dependencia* critics of the Western developmental approach who argued that non-Western countries face unique hurdles to development stemming from both the historical legacies of colonialism and the uneven development of states comprising the "world-system." (Wallerstein 1974) Western approaches tend to presume that the "legacy of the past" is simply a *quid pro quo*, that is, that the uneven development of states is the natural result of political decisions and trade-offs made in the past that can be remedied in the future. What is perhaps the most pertinent "take-away" from the world-systems approach is Wallerstein's idea of the politically-relevant "world" as defining one's preferred approach to understanding how that "world" works. For the world's weaker states, their "world" may not extend much beyond their own borders; for stronger states, their "world" may include neighboring states or even extend across a geographic or cultural region; for more advanced states, their "world" may extend to include both a regional focus and a number of trading partners and strategic rivals in other regions; and for the strongest states, their "world" may extend across the globe and, even, beyond. States with global interests have strong incentives to better understand how the whole world works. Proactive leaders of the "globalization dynamic" can be expected to take the lead in promoting a global research agenda and to be the most concerned about the problem of "unit failures" in a globalizing world system. As a result, we can reasonably expect an (inherent) "clash of worldviews" in the globalization era and that knowledge gained through applied-research can inform us of how to avoid a (contingent) "clash of civilizations." To date, state failure research has been centered mainly in the Western states: the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the European Union.

As the world leader in promoting globalization and advocating a global market economy, especially since the end of the Cold War, the United States had strong interests and incentives to examine the problem of state failure in the context of global politics. The US Government's State Failure Task Force was created in October 1994 "in response to a 1994 request from senior policymakers to design and carry out a study on the correlates of state

failure. The ultimate goal was to develop a methodology that would identify key factors and critical thresholds signaling a high risk of crisis in countries some two years in advance." (Esty *et al* 1995, iii) In the US policy community, security and intelligence agencies have tended to treat state failure strictly as a problem of central government effectiveness. The State Failure Task Force, renamed the Political Instability Task Force in 2003 (subsequently referred to here as PITF), represented the first effort to operationalize the concept of "state failure" and to use that concept to frame a "comprehensive empirical effort to identify the correlates of state failure."⁴ The PITF "narrowly" defined state failures as "instances in which central state authority collapses for several years"; however, they identified fewer than twenty such episodes since 1955, "too few for meaningful statistical analysis. For this reason, as well as for the reason that events that fell beneath such as threshold nonetheless posed challenges to US foreign policy, the task force broadened the concept of state failure to include a wider range of civil conflicts, political crises, and massive human rights violations that are typically associated with state breakdown." (Esty *et al* 1995, 1) This wider range of "state breakdown" led the task force to operationalize a "problem set" on the basis of observed failures of regime legitimacy ("autocratic backsliding"), failures of governing capability ("collapse of central authority"), and failures to manage political conflicts without resort to armed conflict (revolutionary wars, ethnic wars, politicides, and genocides).⁵ What is particularly unique and innovative in the PITF use of the term "state failure" is its recognition of the crucial relationship between the stability of state authority and the state's use of force against constituent groups. The PITF definition explicitly preferences democratic authority (in line with official US policy), such that changes in regime authority toward more democratic authority are viewed as politically stabilizing and substantial shifts away from democratic authority are considered destabilizing. The US National Intelligence and National Security Councils have adopted similar, security-oriented definitions, treating state failure as discrete events characterized by a state's partial or total loss of central government control over its sovereign territory. These perspectives have operationalized state failure as a binary variable: a state is either failed or not-failed (later modified to stable or not stable).⁶

In contrast, policy actors and academics concerned with foreign policy issues other than traditional or conventional security threats, or with broader national security conceptualizations, have adopted more nuanced definitions of state fragility and failure. These conceptualizations tend to view the state as a complex entity with multiple critical functions, including but not limited to maintenance of territorial sovereignty, and considering the state failure problem as systemic in nature. These broader policy perspectives have also tended to treat state failure as the end point of a spectrum and/or sequence of state weakness and

⁴ The PITF is a collaborative, unclassified (open source) research effort involving a core group of the country's leading research scholars. The effort is funded by the US Central Intelligence Agency; however, its analyses are not based on intelligence reporting nor does the work represent the official view of the US Government but, rather, the personal views of the researchers themselves.

⁵ Both the terms "politicide" and "genocide" refer to the intentional and systematic targeting of civilian population groups with lethal repression by agents acting within the authority of the state; politicides target political groups and genocides target ethnic groups. The PITF research found that these two forms of extreme violence are "second order" forms of political violence that occur only with or following the onset of a major armed conflict event or an "adverse regime change." Politicide and genocide have consequently been dropped from the Task Force's operational definition of state failure/political instability. "Autocratic backsliding" may be viewed as an attempt by regime authorities to "crackdown" on political opposition in order to enforce and preserve the status quo.

⁶ The name and terminology of the PITF was changed in 2003 in recognition of the pejorative connotation of the term "failure" and in recognition of the fact that lesser forms of instability, and the disturbance they cause, are the main concern of foreign policy.

vulnerability. The US Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, defines "fragile" and "crisis" states as those where government does not control its territory, fails to provide "vital services" to large parts of its territory, and holds "weak or non-existent legitimacy among its citizens;" crisis states represent the most extreme cases of state fragility. Other US policy actors, such as the US General Accountability Office, Commission on Weak States, and Interagency Working Group on International Crime, have adopted similar definitions, focusing on legitimacy and service provision in addition to territorial control. This broader conceptualization of state fragility and failure has also been adopted by most of the international policy community, including actors such as the World Bank's Fragile States Initiative, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee's Fragile States Group, and the British Government's Department for International Development's (DfID) Crisis States Programme. These more nuanced definitions are, of course, more difficult to operationalize and problematic to analyze. Table 1 compares the conceptual and operational definitions of these various policy actors.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

While actors in the policy community have adopted more practical definitions pursuant to their particular concerns, the academic community has been more theoretical in attempting to define and categorize the state failure problem, albeit with even less agreement on the definitions reached. Gros (1996) made one of the first attempts to categorize failed and failing states, but a systematic classification scheme did not appear until the publication of Robert I. Rotberg's edited volumes on the topic: *When States Fail* (2003) and *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (2004); Rotberg classifies and characterizes states as strong, weak, failing, failed, or collapsed. These works combined one of the first systemic theories of state failure with a series of case studies by a panel of leading scholars on the topic, including Michael T. Klare, Susan Rose-Ackerman, Nicolas van de Walle, and Jennifer Widner, among others. In addition to an earlier piece in the *Washington Quarterly* (Rotberg 2002) these books build on, most notably, Zartman's 1995 volume, *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, but add categories of "weak" and "failing" states in addition to Zartman's study of "collapse." Unlike Zartman, Rotberg conceives of state functions broadly, including healthcare and education provision, maintenance of infrastructure and political institutions, economic development, and control of corruption, among other factors. Sung (2004) offers a similarly broad definition in her analysis of state failure effects on organized crime.

As mentioned, most early efforts in defining "state failure" and applying those definitions to differentiate states in that regard were either dichotomous or ordinal classification schemes. The subsequent expansion or broadening of the concept of "state failure" in recognition of the intricacies and complexities of societal development and state-building, especially in (armed) conflict and post-conflict situations, toward a more holistic or systemic approach encouraged efforts by researchers to broaden the measurement of "state failure" to provide a more nuanced view of the problem, a broader basis for comparison, and a mechanism by which to monitor changes in pertinent conditions over time. The earliest effort to design a broadened measure of "state failure" was provided by Ted Gurr and Monty Marshall as a "summary ranking of peace-building capacity" in their *Peace and Conflict* report series (Gurr *et al* 2000, Marshall and Gurr 2003 2005). Gurr and Marshall were both members of the PITF and based their measures on findings from the Task Force's global modeling effort: "we judge a

state's capacity for peace-building to be high insofar as it has avoided recent armed conflicts, managed movements for self-determination, maintained stable and equitable democratic institutions, has substantial material resources, and is free of serious threats from the external environment" (Marshall and Gurr 2003, 4).⁷ The idea behind the measure was to combine information regarding a country's particular "risk of instability" with its capacity to address, and potentially avoid the consequences of, that risk.

As a further refinement of the "peace-building capacity" approach and in response to a USAID initiative to better understand and delineate the complexities of "state fragility" and differentiate the "risks" (or potential) for state failure from the condition (or outcome) of state failure, Marshall designed a new measure of state fragility based on a two-tiered "PESS-EL" framework developed for USAID. That framework looks at state capacity as a four-dimensional continuum of "state-society relations": political, economic, social, and security (the "PESS" dimensions), and proposes that "state failure occurs through some combination of loss of *effectiveness* and *legitimacy* (EL) of the institutions of each of the PESS dimensions" (Goldstone *et al* 2004, 8-9). The "State Fragility Index and Matrix" was first reported in the initial issue of the *Global Report* series (Marshall and Goldstone 2007) and was refined in subsequent editions (Marshall and Cole 2008 2009 2010 2011). By examining the principal qualities of "state-society relations" across both the applied aspects of effectiveness and legitimacy, the state fragility measure widens the scope of concern from the classic statist or "whole of government" approaches to include non-state actors in a "whole of society" perspective in which the concepts of state sovereignty and popular sovereignty are coterminous. This more comprehensive (systemic) approach is more consistent with the precepts of democratic authority and, as it includes observations of state, civil society, and public behaviors that are directly informed by the analysis of the risks of "state failure," may be considered the first societal-systems approach to the study of state fragility and failure. By providing annual, standardized, empirical assessments of the many countries comprising the globalizing world system in terms of qualities of public relations and changes in its core dimensions, the "State Fragility Index" (SFI) can be seen as a response to demands by Rotberg (2004) for such a measurement scheme and to reflect the arguments of scholars that the problem of state failure reflects both an effectiveness shortcoming and a legitimacy shortfall in governance (Ghani *et al* 2006, Cliffe and Manning 2008, Goldstone 2008, Lemay-Herbert 2009, Paris 2010).⁸

Susan Rice and Stewart Patrick have also contributed significantly to the definition and categorization of state fragility and failure; they have also provided a comprehensive (one-time) measure of state fragility, the "Index of State Weakness." Rice (2003) defines state failure in terms of both security and service provision, and differentiates between "weak," "failing," and "failed" states, with the last category the most extreme. This categorization is evident in Rice and Patrick's report on the topic, *Index of State Weakness in the Developing World*, which defines "weak states" as those that "lack the essential capacity and/or will to fulfill four sets of critical government responsibilities: fostering... economic growth; establishing and maintaining legitimate, transparent and accountable institutions; securing their populations...

⁷ The initial ranking (2000) did not include the measure for "equitable democratic institutions." Later editions in the *Peace and Conflict* series (since 2007) replaced the measure of "peace-building capacity" with a measure of the "risk of future instability."

⁸ Ziaja and Mata (2010) offer a comprehensive survey of state fragility and failure metrics. As they note, the SFI is the only fragility metric that offers backdated data to allow for time-series analysis of fragility and failure dynamics.

and controlling their territory; and meeting the basic human needs of their population" (2008, 3). Although not reflected in the Rice and Patrick index, Patrick (2006) has also argued for differentiating between states that are *unable* to perform their core functions and states that are *unwilling* to perform these functions. While the former are truly vulnerable to internal or external shocks, the latter may not be. Indeed, Patrick (2007, 2011) has done substantial work refining definitions of failing and fragile states, identifying important analytical weaknesses in the existing concept, particularly the failure to separate willingness from capacity to fulfill state commitments to society. As he notes, it makes little sense to group North Korea, which maintains an effective police state and boasts one of the largest militaries in the world, with Liberia, which has struggled to maintain central authority and maintain order since its independence. Taken together, these broader views of the conditions and characteristics of fragile, failing, and failed states may be seen to represent a "whole of government" approach to the general problem, and potentially the amelioration, of state failure.⁹

Since 2005, the Fund for Peace, a "non-profit research and educational organization" in Washington DC, has produced the "Failed States Index," which defines state failure as including attributes of "loss of physical control of its territory or a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, ... erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions, an inability to provide reasonable public services, and the inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community." (Fund for Peace 2012) Whereas the State Fragility Index (discussed above) uses only public data sources based on observable behaviors to populate its data matrix, the Fund for Peace Failed States Index utilizes a combination of (1) automated content analysis of news reports (using its CAST software); (2) quantitative data from public data sources; and (3) qualitative "expert" review and analysis to assign scores for each country on twelve component indicators.¹⁰ In operationalizing its concept of "failure," the organization examines twelve "baskets" of social, economic, and political/military indicators, each "split into an average of [fourteen] sub-indicators"; these baskets include demographic pressures, group grievances, human flight and brain drain, refugees and IDPs (social indicators); uneven economic development and poverty and decline (economic indicators); and external intervention, factionalized elites, human rights and rule of law, public services, security apparatus, and state legitimacy (political/military indicators). In many ways, the Failed States Index both encompasses and reflects the complexity of modern societal-systems with its process dynamics similarly convoluted and the outcomes of its efforts similarly opaque and confounded. The Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) project at Carleton University in Canada presents a similarly complicated assessment scheme for ranking "fragile and failed states," using as many as seventy-five "structural indicators" drawn from public data resources. (Carment *et al* 2010) The CIFP perspective adds environmental factors and a gender discrimination component to their holistic conceptualization of fragile and failed states and a broader systemic component by proposing that external intervention may precipitate the onset of a state failure condition.¹¹

As commonly noted by state failure researchers and their critics, the total collapse of

⁹ Soon after completing their report on "state weakness," Susan Rice became one of Barak Obama's principal foreign policy advisors. Following Obama's election as president, Rice was appointed United States Ambassador to the United Nations and the "Index of State Weakness" has not been updated since its initial offering.

¹⁰ The Fund for Peace "automated coding" algorithms and software are derived from its Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST) originally developed by its former president Pauline Baker.

¹¹ For a more detailed treatment and analysis of the various measurement schemes, see Marshall 2008.

(central) state authority and rupture of state-society relations must be considered an extreme and rare phenomenon, as the identification of very few cases, such as Somalia in 1991 or Bosnia in 1993, may reach consensus. The proposition that there is a single continuum, pathway, or trajectory connecting fragile states with failing and failed states may be overstated or overly simplistic; multiple pathways are more likely. Indeed, many of the statist approaches to state failure are based on the proposition that state politics are more or less prone to experience discreet "phase shifts" from a stable or non-crisis condition to an unstable or crisis condition and that these shifts, or onsets, may be foreshadowed by observable changes in "risk" conditions or behaviors and triggered by internal or external "shocks." This latter approach is conducive to risk assessment and early warning modeling efforts (forecasting) such as that pursued by the PITF. Marshall and Cole (2009, 21-22) provide evidence to support a systemic resiliency argument that, while no state is "immune" to experiencing failure events, the more fragile states are more susceptible to the risks of failure and vulnerable to systemic shocks; thus, the probability of failure co-varies with the degree of fragility.

Framing the Problem of State Failure as an International Security Concern

The classic conception of "state sovereignty" that forms the basis for the "anarchic" Westphalian state system is embodied in the contemporary United Nations (UN) system through the charter principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states.¹² Interference in the internal affairs of states in the UN system can only be authorized through a Chapter VII enforcement resolution by the UN Security Council on the basis of a recognized "threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression" and only after all other diplomatic remedies have been exhausted. Precepts of "popular sovereignty" are inscribed in the Charter through its inclusion of the principle to "achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (chap.I, art.1, par.3). The achievement of international cooperation in the provision of developmental assistance has been actively promoted under the UN system, while direct intervention in the internal affairs of states has been strongly discouraged, even if not entirely prevented. The continuing global emphasis on development cooperation and assistance among states goes a long way in explaining why research on the problem of state failure has been promoted proactively by developmental agencies and humanitarian organizations, remains largely circumstantial, descriptive, and remedial in nature, and assumes an ever more complex, holistic and systemic perspective. Perhaps the only exception to this developmental perspective on the problem of state failure, which tended to situate both the source and effect of the problem solely within the domestic politics of the affected state, was the political perspective of the PITF, which encompassed US globalization interests and recognized that the domestic problem of state failure can disrupt or alter the foreign relations of the affected state and increase its needs for humanitarian aid and demands for development assistance.¹³

In support of the economic development, political state-building, post-conflict recovery,

¹² See Waltz (1979) for a succinct delineation of the anarchic "self-help" world system. The principle of non-interference is codified in the 1945 Charter of the United Nations (chap.I, art.1, par.7).

¹³ A project similar to the PITF macro-level (i.e., structural and institutional behavior data) risk-modeling effort within the US Government is the Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) micro-level (i.e., coded events data) predictive-modeling effort supported since 2007 by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) initiative of the Department of Defense. (O'Brien 2010)

and general foreign policy perspectives promoted by policymakers and agencies of the US and other Western "donor" countries, scholars interested in the issues of fragile, failing, failed, and recovering states have produced a plethora of case studies on the domestic causes and effects of state failure. Most of the early case studies were in Africa, including Somalia (Menkhaus 2007, Clarke and Gosende 2004, Kreijen 2004, Gros 1996, Adam 1995, Lyons and Samatar 1995), Angola (Fituni 1995), Democratic Republic of Congo (Weiss 1995, Lemarchand 2004, Kreijen 2004), Sierra Leone (Reno 2004, Kreijen 2004), Sudan (Prunier and Gisselquist 2004), Rwanda (Gros 1996), Guinea (Docking 2002), Chad (Widner 1995, Foltz 1995), Togo (Widner 1995), Congo (Widner 1995), Uganda (Khadiagala 1995), Liberia (Lowenkopf 1995, Gros 1996, Kreijen 2004), Mozambique (Schutz 1995), and Ethiopia (Keller 1995, Pausewang 2004). Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo were of particular interest to researchers because they are among the few states to experience complete collapse of central authority and institutions. The prevalence of African case studies also reflects the critically low levels of institutional capacity and inclusive governance endemic to newly independent and less developed states in general. This early research focus on African countries has itself conditioned our early understandings of the problem of state failure. Outside of Africa, case studies have included Afghanistan (Rubin 2002), Tajikistan (Dadmehr 2004), Haiti (Gros 1996, Stotzky 1997) and Fiji (Lawson 2003), and regional studies in the Caucasus (Freitag-Wirringhaus 2002, Darchiashvili 2002) and Latin America (Kurtenbach 2004, de Leon 2004).

Following the foreign-based terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on targets in the United States and perpetrated by agents of a non-state militant organization operating out of Afghanistan, a country widely perceived to be a failing or failed state, US policy shifted towards dealing more directly with failed states as posing a direct threat to US national security and its foreign interests.¹⁴ Up to that time, international acts of terrorism had been viewed mainly as either as criminal acts by isolated extremists or as small-scale attacks directed surreptitiously by "rogue" states, so-called "state-sponsored terrorism." The sudden, dramatic emergence of al Qaeda as an international non-state actor and serious security threat, coupled with the fact that al Qaeda operatives were openly training at bases in Afghanistan and were being protected by that country's Taliban regime, triggered a more intense interest in the problem of failed states as providing havens for anti-system militants and conduits for all manner of unlawful activities such as kidnapping, piracy, and trafficking in humans and contraband. The adverse circumstances in failing and failed states were also seen as providing fertile ground for the recruitment of anti-system agents and terrorists. Chester A. Crocker (2003) argued that failing and failed states harbor transnational terrorist organizations, offering limited law enforcement, easily (and cheaply) corrupted government officials, access to weapons, and a potential recruit population with few economic opportunities and many grievances. His arguments were echoed by Rice (2003), who was also concerned with possible spillover effects that could lead to wider regional conflicts with neighboring countries. Similar arguments have been made by Fukuyama (2004), Krasner and Pascual (2005), and Carment

¹⁴ The notion that "failed states" can be viewed as "threats to U.S. Interests" first entered official policy with President Clinton's "A National Security Strategy for a New Century" promulgated in October 1998. That document recognized that serious spillover effects from failed states "can threaten U.S. interests and citizens" (p. 7). Following the September 11, 2001, al Qaeda attacks on U.S. national territory directed by its leadership in Afghanistan, President Bush announced in his September 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS) that "America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones." He goes on to argue that "The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter [such] a sufficient threat to our national security." (p. 15) President Obama's May 2010 NSS states clearly that "Failing states breed conflict and endanger regional and global security." (p. 8)

(2007), among others; Hastings (2009) examined the role of state collapse in driving, or at least enabling, the rise of piracy along the coast of Somalia.

The proposed linkage between failed states and anti-system behaviors and enterprises such as organized crime and international terrorism has proved tenuous at best. While these groups may have reason to seek refuge in poor, poorly governed, and failed states, the scope of their transnational activities appears to be critically limited under such logistically constrained conditions and remote locations. As Hastings (2009) argued, piracy and terrorism may flourish in places like Somalia, but the pirates and terrorists must necessarily have limited international ambitions and lack operational sophistication to base their operations in a failed state, which by definition suffers severe shortages of resources and skills and lack communication and transportation infrastructure. He raises the concern that with progressive development and state-building these "primitive" criminal groups may increase the sophistication of their operations and attacks, becoming more rather than less problematic as conditions within the state improve and the country recovers from the state failure condition. Indeed, Patrick (2007) notes, "terrorists are likely to find *weak but functioning* states like Pakistan or Kenya more congenial." A failed state, such as Somalia, with its limited infrastructure and its general lack of connectivity to the dense resource flows that characterize the globalizing economy, has far less to offer an organization with regional and global pretensions and a tactical preference for dramatic and disruptive activities, such as the al Qaeda *jihadist* network, compared with a weak but functioning and strategically-located state like Afghanistan (pre-2001) or Yemen (Menkhaus 2004, Hehir 2007). Security analysts and policymakers have responded, turning increased attention from failed states to focus on the problem of "safe havens" in what they termed "ungoverned areas" in "weak but functioning" states (Lamb 2007).

The notion of "ungoverned space" is fairly straightforward. Central authorities are charged with the responsibility to enforce the "rule of law" and, thereby, dampen and control criminal activities within their territory; however, some governments are either unable or unwilling to establish and enforce an effective social order across their entire territory, whether due to lack of infrastructure and resources, inaccessible terrain, or hostile inhabitants. Menkhaus (2007b, 2) describes "ungoverned space" as a term used

to connote a general condition of weak to nonexistent state authority in a defined geographic area. It is a relatively recent addition to the lexicon of the study of failed states, and like other terms used in that field of research it is imprecise and value-laden. The fact that it is an expression preferred by the US Department of Defense adds to the baggage the term carries; some critics of US foreign policy see it as an attempt to justify unilateral counter-terrorist actions in weak or failed states.

Moreover, it is far from clear that international terrorist organizations require ungoverned spaces in which to operate or that transnational terrorism poses a significant threat to international peace and security. Many terrorist cells and organized criminal networks have been found to operate in urban locations well within a country's "governed spaces" and, even, within the "governed spaces" of the world's most powerful states. The hiding place of Osama bin-Laden, for example, was within blocks of Pakistan's most prestigious military academy, in a densely-populated city. Furthermore, Marshall and Cole (2009, 2011) have shown that the bulk of "high casualty terrorist bombings," the principal *modus operandi* of extremist groups in the recent "global war on terror," are not international events but, rather, domestic in both their direct, lethal effects and psychological impact (although the intended "audience" may be the

international community).¹⁵ The overwhelming majority of these attacks have been concentrated in three countries: Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, with limited concentrations in Israel, Russia, India, and Sri Lanka. It appears that these attacks may be fueled by political and economic grievances specific to the local context (Patrick 2007, Newman 2007, Laqueur 2003). Menkhaus (2007b) and Clunna and Trinkunas (2010) reject the notion that "ungoverned" spaces exist at all, posing the counter-argument that some form of governance exists in all social spaces, regardless of the current attitude of central authorities. Clearly, fragile, failing, failed, and recovering states are havens for the mavens of many of the global system's most vexing ills, but this fundamental observation is more tautology than conspiracy.

Critiques of the State Failure Concept: Summary and Response

This chapter has thus far described the tremendous growth in the study of state failure and fragility over the last twenty years. Recently, however, these same concepts have been increasingly criticized on theoretical, empirical, and meta-analytical grounds. Call's (2008) article, "The Fallacy of the 'Failed State'," offers a concise criticism of the failed state and fragility concepts, arguing that they should be abandoned altogether except to refer to cases of complete state collapse. He points out six major weaknesses, arguing that these concepts: (1) excessively aggregate diverse states; (2) lead to cookie-cutter prescriptions for interventions by stronger states; (3) "dodge" contested issues of democracy and democratization by focusing on technical and institutional aspects of governance; (4) conflate peace and statehood; (5) are based in a West-centric, value-based notion of the state, with underlying teleological assumptions about the proper direction of state progress; and (6) obfuscate the role of the West in contributing to fragility and failure in the first place. Call's criticisms capture common concerns. Patrick (2007, 2011) noted similar problems with the failed/fragile terminology and conceptualization, as have Chandler (2006), Boas and Jennings (2007), Logan and Preble (2008), and, in a less formal manner, Easterly and Freschii (2010).

Of these six criticisms, one may be viewed as foundational and, perhaps, given the history of states and the state-system, particularly ironic: that concepts of state fragility and state failure conflate peace and statehood. The classic Machiavellian conception of the "princely state" proposes that the foundational principle of the state concerns the establishment and preservation of sovereign authority including with the right of states to make war, and the duty of states to defend against war, both domestically and internationally (often referred to by the French term, *raison d'État*). However one might conceive the origins and attributes of "peace," the essence of peace begins with the absence of war. As the state has traditionally used the tool of war to shape the peace, at least within its own sovereign jurisdiction, the state can be seen to straddle the nexus of war and peace. With the promulgation of the UN Charter on 26 June 1945, the right of states to make war (amongst themselves) has been abrogated in law and, with the emerging (2005) UN doctrine of the "responsibility to protect" (r2p), the unconditional right of states to use lethal force against their populations in order to preserve the existing form of state authority has been fundamentally circumscribed.¹⁶ Although it predates the articulation

¹⁵ "High casualty terrorist bombings" include single bomb, or coordinated multiple-bomb, attacks on non-combatant targets that result in fifteen or more reported deaths.

¹⁶ The "three pillars" of the emerging "responsibility to protect" doctrine are as follows: "1) the State carries the primary responsibility for protecting populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, and their incitement; 2) the international community has a responsibility to encourage and assist States in fulfilling this responsibility; and 3) the international community has a responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other means to protect populations from these crimes. If a State is manifestly failing

of the UN r2p doctrine by a decade, the original PITF operationalization of state failure in accordance with the onset and duration of any of four types of "problem events," three of which involve major political violence, is fully compatible with its stated preference for "consolidated democratic authority" and foreshadows the emerging r2p doctrine. Indeed, the Task Force derives its fourth "problem event" (autocratic backsliding or collapse of central authority) from the *Polity IV* regime data series; the *Polity* concept of "interregnum" is defined as a "complete collapse of central authority" and these events are always associated with major political violence events.¹⁷ It appears that the absence of the state may be equated with a general condition of war and, by implication, that the state is essential to the (re)establishment of the peace (the Hobbesian dilemma). This relationship also characterizes revolutionary situations in which the institutions of state authority of a prior regime are rejected and replaced by radically different sources of state authority; the destruction of the state invariably triggers political violence independent of revolutionary intent. Furthermore, if a stable state is essential to local peace, then, this suggests that the state is a self-actuated, rather than an imposed West-centric, social construct, although the boundaries of the state may have been determined by "others" and, so, incongruent with the nature and source of local authority.¹⁸

More recent attempts to categorize and measure a broader class of weak, fragile, failing, failed, and recovering states, have recognized security as only one of several dimensions of state performance. Indeed, societal-systems analysis treats the state as a complex adaptive system, and state fragility and failure as the inhibition or collapse of such a system. The outbreak of violence contributes to systemic problems, but state fragility or failure could plausibly occur without violence, or with minimal violence. Indeed, the State Fragility Index includes only one category for exposure to violent conflict, which accounts for less than one-eighth of the scale; in practice, most fragility, and change in fragility, is derived from other areas of systemic performance, such as economic, social, and political factors. Similarly, Rice and Patrick's Index of State Weakness, as well as the Failed States Index, utilize dozens of indicators; security concerns contribute only marginally to the end score and categorization. Violence is certainly a prominent factor that contributes to and is associated with state fragility and failure, but violence is not the sole determinant of either the concept or the condition of state failure. Marshall (2005) argues that higher levels of fragility and instability in newly independent and lesser developed countries is directly related to the management challenges of establishing central state authority and administrative capacity ("state-formation instability") and integrating disparate and competing social groups given the limited resources available for allocation in developing economies ("post-formation instability"). The development of system management capabilities is strongly determined by the qualities of leadership, particularly

to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take collective action to protect populations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations." UN Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, "The Responsibility to Protect," available at <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/responsibility.shtml>; accessed 28 September 2012.

¹⁷ The conflict management function of the state is of central concern in the differentiation between autocratic authority in the *Polity* data series, which relies primarily on coercive practices in the selection and exercise of executive authority and relations between the executive and state constituencies) and democratic authority, which relies on open and competitive selection, institutionalized constraints on the exercise of executive authority, and inclusive and deliberative popular participation. (Marshall *et al* 2010)

¹⁸ By "self-actuated" we mean that the social impetus for establishing state authority to regulate group affairs comes principally from within the social group rather than imposed from outside. This proposition would also suggest that stable (central) state authority should be compatible with and complementary to traditional sources of local authority. See Vreeland 2008 for a criticism regarding the possible "contamination" of the *Polity* measure of governance with observations regarding armed conflict.

ignorance, inexperience, incompetence, corruption, and predation and these, in turn, are conditioned by the vagaries and complexities of the internal and external social systems.

Call's other criticisms capture more amorphous issues relating to the complexity and, therefore, inherent ambiguity of analytical schemes encompassing the totalities of modern states and societies and, so, are less profound and less compelling. First, regarding excessive aggregation: while describing a state as fragile, failing, or failed certainly does aggregate states that are culturally, politically, and economically unique in many ways, the act of aggregation itself is not inappropriate if the categories are based on common attributes that are conceptually interesting or empirically useful. Just as describing states as "middle income" may aggregate states as diverse as Brazil, India, and China, the term may nonetheless be useful when discussing global income distributions. States that are systemically fragile or failed have important attributes in common that aggregation allows us to clarify and analyze, but it should not be taken to mean that these states are similar in any other way. Second, Call's criticism that state failure studies "dodge" contested issues regarding democracy and the democratization process is equally nebulous. The difficulty of using alternative formulations of multi-faceted concepts requires that choices be made, otherwise, research lacks coherency and progress is hampered. The alternatives must be considered and the choices made must be acknowledged; a thorough treatment would necessarily involve the use of alternative formulations of contested concepts to help identify how these different formulations affect our understandings of complex phenomena. Moreover, democratic norms are included in many of the conceptual and operational definitions of state fragility and state failure discussed here. Similarly, Call's disagreement with "cookie-cutter" policy prescriptions that have proceeded from fragility/failure research, also voiced by Easterly and Freschii (2010), is not adequate reason to discard the research itself. Policy-relevant research is always subject to interpretation by pundits and policymakers, and the applied results of such interpretation should not be used to judge the quality of the underlying research. Some critics, such as Easterly and Freschii (2010) and Paris (2010), in addition to Call, have questioned the underlying motives of government-funded research and the distortions of comprehension and analysis or "contamination of evidence" that may result from policy applications in the field that have been informed by prior applied-research; these are general admonitions related to the well known Hippocratic dictum, "first, do no harm." These criticisms call for a separate, second-order (downstream) research endeavor focused on policy evaluation to help determine the impact that policy implementation has on outcomes and whether the intent of a policy treatment is reflected in measured changes to those outcomes.¹⁹

In contrast to the generalized criticisms by Call, Howard (2008) rejects much of the previous work on state fragility and failure on operational grounds. She argues that interval-level classifications as well as Rotberg's weak, failing, collapsed, scheme are inappropriate, in that they both use too expansive a definition of state function. For Howard, a state has either failed, is failing, or is not failed/failing, and describing it as "weak" or "fragile" confuses normative notions of legitimacy and support for democratic governance with state failure. Reilly (2008) offers a similar critique, noting that the maximalist definitions focus on what failed states *do* rather than on what failed states *are*. Moreover, Howard argues, general

¹⁹ See, for example, Marshall's global and regional trend analyses found in *Third World War* (1999) and the *Peace and Conflict* and *Global Report* serial publications. The *Human Security Report* series (Human Security Centre 2005, Human Security Report Project 2011), initiated in 2005 by Andrew Mack, also uses trend analyses to evaluate foreign policy.

forecasting models of state failure or political instability do not offer policy-actionable advice, as they rely on proxy variables, such as infant mortality rate, rather than theoretically-justified causal factors. The various definitions and classification and measurement schemes produced by the policy and academic sectors demonstrate substantial areas of conceptual convergence and some disagreement. The term “failed state” is increasingly seen as conceptually limited, in practice referring to those few states that are experiencing complete collapse of central authority (e.g. Somalia). The meaning and identity of “failing” states are also generally agreed upon, being those which are so embroiled in and debilitated by civil conflict that the state’s sustainability functions are neglected and resources are diverted in favor of ensuring security, such that central authority collapse may be imminent (e.g. Pakistan, Sudan, and Syria in mid-2012). The greatest areas of conceptual and empirical disagreement involve classifying those states that are neither obviously collapsed or on the verge of collapse nor those embroiled in or recovering from devastating civil wars but those which are simply described as “weak” or “fragile” in the literature but not in a condition of political crisis (Marshall 2008). While most agree that degree of weakness/fragility should be conceptualized as representing performance in at least two dimensions, capacity/effectiveness and legitimacy, the question of how to define and operationalize performance in these dimensions, especially legitimacy, is a matter of substantial debate. Of increasing concern is the more fundamental critique that assessments of “state failure” are steeped in Western cultural values and conceptualizations of the “ideal state” and that “common standards” of state capabilities/responsibilities and qualities of state-society relations may be critically biased or simply inappropriate for non-Western or lesser developed states and societies (Call 2008, Yamin 2010).

Call’s sixth criticism, that the literature on state fragility and failure tend to ignore the role of the West in creating, conditioning, or sustaining these phenomena, is an argument similar to that forwarded by the earlier *dependencia* critics of Western theories of development. This criticism alludes to the importance of a greater, systemic perspective, that states are not “independent” entities but, rather, individual organizational nodes in an increasing complex and integrated network of state and non-state actors that have only limited control of the myriad sources of influence that affect their internal affairs and foreign relations. The West is an important source of influence but not the only one; nor, even, a principal one for many of the world’s most fragile and failed states. External influence, other than overt military interventions and international sanctions, is increasingly complex and difficult to observe and measure in any systematic, accurate, or reliable way. Even the effects of foreign assistance have been hard to gauge, as, until recently, there has been little or no public information compiled on these resource flows. Influence, like knowledge, presents the recipient with the proverbial double-edged sword: what it is may not be near as important as how it is used. On the other hand, international embargoes and sanctions are intended to induce changes in the policies, leadership, or even the nature of the state in targeted countries but may have unintended consequences in increasing state fragility or triggering state failure. The new information age, while overloading us with observable information, has made only minor inroads in revealing the covert side of state and non-state influence. At best, we can make informed inferences regarding the relative importance of historical and covert influences on current phenomena such as state fragility and failure. For example, claims that a growth in organized crime can be associated with “ungoverned spaces” may ignore the inference that a rise in the supply of contraband is a function of or driven by the demand for contraband in “governed spaces.” Influence channels are rarely one-way flows; nodes in a social network are both transmitters and receivers of influence. Clearly, more can and should be done to better identify, incorporate,

and understand external influences on state attributes and behaviors.

State failure and fragility research has matured substantially in the twenty-five years since its emergence as a specific research agenda. While inductive reasoning and case study approaches still dominate much of the research agenda, several clusters of scholars have moved the study of state fragility and failure in a more deductive direction, with a focus on developing theory and systematically defining and measuring core concepts. Not surprisingly this movement has generated significant theoretical questions that have spurred debates in the discipline. Should our conceptual and operational definitions of state fragility/failure include democratic governance quality, extent of social welfare provision, or equality of income distribution? What are the core responsibilities expected of states, and at what point has a state “failed?” These questions and debates have been mirrored on the empirical side of the research agenda, manifested in alternative definition and measurement schemes. How do we define and measure state legitimacy? Should one “dimension” of state performance have more or less weight than another? What are the ethical implications of academic researchers cooperating with policymakers to conduct predictive modeling of state fragility changes and failure events? In addition to questions, state failure research has also provided significant findings important to both academia and the policy sector. The state failure agenda has produced a wealth of qualitative case studies on otherwise under-researched areas in the developing world. There are now multiple rival metrics of state fragility, offering distinct conceptual and operational definitions of key terms, with varying degrees of cross-national and temporal data coverage, available for quantitative analysis.

The Way Forward: From State-Centric to Complex Societal-Systems Analysis

The "problem of state failure" encompasses far more than a concept, a condition, a body of literature, or a research agenda; it is emblematic of the need for an entirely new analytic approach in the social sciences: one that can account for and accommodate complexity, interdependence, the integration of theoretical and applied research methodologies, that is, complex societal-systems analysis. As noted above, the primary method for examining the problem of state failure has been the historical case study. This is a necessary first step in systematic inquiry as it accumulates information on select cases that appear to fit the definitional criteria of the topic of interest. The identification of cases and the accumulation of information on those cases, then, inform a comparative case study approach that considers possible explanatory factors and constructs a historiographical (sequential or process) narrative based on informed and reasoned understandings drawn from a biased selection of cases (proto-theory). Once a substantial body of information is collected and explanatory propositions are articulated, then, systematic coding and data collection of key explanatory variables can proceed and statistical methods can be used to test the veracity of extant propositions and suggest alternative explanations, along with the need for further information. The privatization of independent research necessarily fosters partial and disconnected explanations of complex social phenomena. The synthesis of partial accounts leads to the elucidation of grand historiographical narratives organized to highlight a foundational explanation for seemingly related social phenomena (meta-theory). Jared Diamond's *Collapse* (2005) and Acemoglu and Robinson's *Why Nations Fail* (2012) present grand, systemic, explanatory narratives that stand at the "outer-bounds" of the private, independent inquiry in the problem of state failure. This is about as far as independent scholarly research can push systematic inquiry. The advent of personal computers has provided a platform for scientific methods and propelled private

research well beyond its prior limitations but, still, far short of where we need to go in order to reasonably comprehend and effectively manage complex societal-systems. The human-engineered world is changing at an incredible pace and academic and policy research is struggling to keep pace with expanding globalization dynamics and intensifying systemic complexity.

The "behavioral revolution" in American political science, and particularly as it has progressed in regard to comparative politics and international relations, has paralleled the continuing evolution of electronic computers since the advent of that technology toward the end of the Second World War. The computer's capabilities for systematically storing and processing ever-expanding volumes of data points were naturally suited for application in the social sciences and public policy analysis. The confluence of computational, statistical, and empirical techniques may even be viewed as having finally disciplined the study of politics and elevated it to a "hard" science or, at least, a proto-science. Social sciences, unlike the physical sciences, have to contend with the idiosyncratic and strategic variability brought about through human agency and, unlike the biological sciences, complications resulting from strategic interaction. In essence, our acquired knowledge of physical and biological laws provides the parameters within which laws governing human behavior must operate in order to promote and perpetuate the societal-systems that sustain human life. Political science, then, must study the relationships linking individual and collective action as those actions affect and are affected by their environment. The human command of her circumstances is conditioned and, ultimately, arbitrated by the nature of his interactions with the environment: human societal-systems can only be fully understood and sustained as an integral component of the greater eco-system. How humans behave within the global context is the subject of globalization and the object of comparative and international political science.

While computers have become ubiquitous in large parts of the world in the early years of the 21st Century, the behaviorist approach to the study of politics is uniquely "American" and requires at least a brief introduction to inform our discussion. Dryzek (2006, 489) provides a succinct delineation of behavioralism's main tenets:

Behavioralism may be defined in terms of its commitments to "(1) a research focus on political behavior, (2) a methodological plea for science, and (3) a political message about liberal pluralism" (Farr 1995, 202), as well as the organizing concept of a political system (Easton 1953). Although behavioralism emphasized the individual, there was no problem in studying "... individuals acting in groups to realize their collective interests" (Farr, 204).²⁰

The incorporation of pluralism in political analysis necessarily shifts the focal point away from the classic, and relatively static (or stable), notion of the unitary state to the nexus between the state and a dynamic civil society and begins to examine the inherent tensions between a conceptually uniform *raison d'état* and the far more complex and circumstantial *raison de société*. In the first instance, then, behavioralism can be seen to have emerged in response to the narrow focus on the sovereign state in classical political studies and intrinsic analytic flaws related the personification, reification, and over-simplification of that conceptualization of the

²⁰ James Farr, 1995, "Remembering the Revolution: Behavioralism in American Political Science," in *Political Science in History: Research Programs and Political Traditions*, ed. James Farr, John S. Dryzek, and Stephen T. Leonard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, and David Easton, 1953, *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science*, New York: Knopf, cited by John S. Dryzek, 2006, "Revolutions without Enemies: Key Transformations in Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 100.4: 487-492.

state. In the second instance, the behavioralist approach's insistence on incorporating liberal notions of pluralism in political analysis expanded its scope of inquiry outward from the tightly constrained core of independent states populating a largely anarchical "system of states" to potentially encompass all human individuals and their diverse combinations acting within political constituencies.

The behavioralist approach could thus juxtapose democratic notions of popular sovereignty to autocratic notions of state sovereignty and, in doing so, shift the focal point of political conflict studies away from the Machiavellian perspective of state security imposed through mechanisms of effective social control toward the Lockean perspective of effective conflict management and good governance maintained through deliberation and negotiation between governance prerogatives and the diverse interests and aspirations of civil society. While the state retains primacy among societal actors in the pluralist-behavioralist scheme, it loses much of its privilege and discretion: it can no longer act as necessary to ensure the stability of the state but is expected to act within the law in doing so, that is, to do what is just. While the state remains primarily responsible for ensuring system stability, the agency of the state must be viewed as only the first among many societal actors whose dynamic interactions define the qualities of the societal-system and, in which, both stability and change are systemic outcomes. From this point of view, the state can be understood to have "failed" in its systemic responsibilities if system change is improperly managed, by either commission or omission, such that system stability is disrupted, impaired, or lost. Such "failure" has consequences for both the societal-system which a state manages directly and for the greater societal-system of within which that societal-system and its state are embedded as integral parts. This sense of "state failure" stems from the circumstantial, subsidiary nature of increasing globalization and interconnectedness. Thus, the progressive development of system mechanics and an understanding of the basis for nodal dysfunction or malfunction within a complex societal-system network of global scope will require a holistic, integrated methodological approach that brings together academic, scientific, practical, organizational, and policy perspectives and spans group, state, interstate, and global levels of analysis.

The classical statist approach in the blossoming field of international relations in 1946 had to contend with just seventy-three (73) sovereign state "actors" in the world interacting mainly in pairs in accordance with "power laws" based on "relative capabilities" in an anarchic "billiard ball" analogy of world politics. The number of independent state actors doubled during the process of "decolonization" and infused the state system with a raft of new, underdeveloped "third world" states, complicating the simple bipolar world order that had emerged after the Second World War, essentially by tossing "rubble" all over the "billiard table" with the effect that the several "billiard balls" began to react seemingly erratically. Since that time, the number of non-state, state, and interstate political actors in the world that may interact to substantially affect political outcomes at any level within the global system expands toward infinity. In mid-2011 there are nearly 200 sovereign states in the world and, according to the Union of International Associations, there are tens of thousands of international organizations (nearly 60,000 in 2004; up from less than 1,000 in 1951).²¹ National and local "civil society" organizations, economic enterprises, and social networks continue to proliferate. In the United

²¹ These figures include inactive, non-governmental organizations which comprise about 30-40% of the total number. As such organizations become active or inactive according to issue salience at any point in time, the distinction between active and inactive may be temporal. Figures are from Table 3.1 posted on the Internet at www.uia.be/sites/uia.be/files/statistics/organizations/types-2004.pdf, accessed July 26, 2011.

States, for example, there were nearly 1.6 million not-for-profit (civil) organizations (2009), over 6 million business firms (2007), and around 140,000 “advocacy, grantmaking, and civic organizations” (2010).²² For comparison, there were more than 3.3 million not-for-profit organizations (2009) in India, a relatively poor and underdeveloped country with a population about three times the size of the United States.²³ Clearly, state-centric and simplistic “causal” approaches to analysis have been critically challenged, and overwhelmed, by exponential increases in the numbers of political actors and densities of interactive dynamics. Recent analytic innovations in response to these challenges have emphasized strategic or processual sequencing rather than causal rhetoric in constructing prevention, early warning, risk assessment, predictive, simulation, projection, and formal complexity models of global and regional societal-system (dys)function, (de)generation, and (dis)integration.

As a result of our collective failure to advance our comprehension of the complexity of societal-system dynamics, we continue to be surprised by major global and regional events such as the collapse of the Socialist Bloc, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the “third wave” of democratization, the “global war on terrorism,” and the so-called “Arab Spring.” Part of this analytic failure is probably due to an inherent preference for or expectation of system continuity and stability. State failure is known to be a rare event; profound or cascading systemic changes are the rarest of rare events. In the absence of foreknowledge of discontinuity, the rational expectation of actors overwhelmingly favors continuity. Even with foreknowledge of precursive factors, the time and place for the onset of a disruptive or discontinuous event within a complex societal-system cannot be accurately predicted. Prediction of anomalies is not only improbable but unnecessary to the effective management of complex systems; building system resilience, reducing or remedying risk conditions, dampening systemic shocks, and preparing for timely ameliorative response to the onset of systemic anomalies provide a superior, decentralized management strategy. Effective system management is the foundational narrative in both the Diamond (2005) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) treatments; system failure and, particularly, catastrophic system failure is brought about through system mismanagement and systematic neglect that result in the accumulation of limited and unresolved failures that further degrade the system and lead to unmanageable, partial or complete, system breakdown.

The goal of complex societal-systems analysis, then, is to progressively monitor and record social behaviors and circumstances (i.e., dynamics and structures), identify systemic patterns and relationships, diminish knowledge deficits through increased comprehension of processual trajectories and linkages, and apply these understandings to improve system performance, management, and response. By way of conclusion, it will be helpful to discuss the operation, approach, and principal findings of the Political Instability Task Force which has been actively engaged in evidence-based, complex societal-systems analysis for the past eighteen years; its ongoing efforts provide the most innovative and comprehensive investigation and treatment of the problem of state failure the world has yet known. The first author of this essay has been directly involved with the PITF for the past fourteen of those

²²Sources of data on United States’ organizations are posted on the Internet: National Center for Charitable Statistics for no t-for-profit organizations (nccsdataweb.urban.org/PubApps/profile1.php); U.S. Census Bureau for business firms (www.census.gov/econ/smallbus.html); and U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics for advocacy organizations (www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag813.htm); all three sites were accessed on July 26, 2011.

²³ The figure for not-for-profit organizations in India come from a study commissioned by the government of India and referenced on the Internet by OneWorld South Asia (southasia.oneworld.net/todaysheadlines/india-more-ngos-than-schools-and-health-centres), accessed July 26, 2011.

eighteen years, primarily because the Task Force commands the resources, attracts the expertise, encourages intellectual and practical collaboration, inspires the creativity, and embodies both the current and future imperative to continuously push the leading edge of complex societal-systems analysis. This assessment may seem a bit grandiose and self-indulgent, given that the PITF maintains nearly invisible to the public and has only published a single professional article (Goldstone *et al* 2010; although Task force reports are produced regularly: Esty *et al* 1995, Esty *et al* 1998, Goldstone *et al* 2000, Bates *et al* 2003, Goldstone *et al* 2005, Gurr *et al* 2005, and Ulfelder and Lustik 2005, and the production of spinoff publications by Task Force members have been quite prolific). This low-profile is partly due to the "intelligence culture" of its sponsoring agency which is best portrayed as cautious and diligent about the information it shares with public that may be associated with the US Government, even though the evidence used is entirely open source information and openly identified in the PITF "data dictionary," its reports are unclassified and available on the Internet, and the data resources it generates are widely and promptly distributed (again, via the Internet) and made available to other researchers.²⁴ The PITF's low profile is also partly due to its collaborative structure, which is a "collective action" issue where individual members of the Task Force are hesitant to promote the work of the group, and partly due to the complex and innovative nature of the work itself: the expansive and expanding body of PITF research is difficult to articulate succinctly and convey convincingly to people who are engaged in more limited and focused research, who are uncomfortable with the collaboration of policymakers and scholars in applied research, and who are not familiar with approach of the PITF or its development over its relatively long duration.²⁵ From the complex societal-systems research point-of-view, the value of the PITF to systematic empirical research at the global (systemic) level of inquiry can be viewed as an "iceberg": the reported (visible) Task Force findings represent only the tip of the full body of its effort and contributions; the bulk of its contributions are submerged in the extensiveness and intensiveness of its foundational research efforts.

The PITF's identification, compilation, and collection of mainly state-level, global data resources is one of its most important functions and, perhaps, its most valuable contribution to complex societal-systems analysis and to scholarly research more generally. The data collection effort contains state-level variables and indicators principally because most data is aggregated at the state-level; very little data with global coverage is presently available with sub-state aggregation or non-state actor focus, although this dearth of systematic information is slowly beginning to change.²⁶ The PITF has continually reviewed public data sources to identify new, updated, and upgraded data resources and has selectively compiled relevant variables with

²⁴ As this section focuses on Task Force work, it is appropriate to repeat the caveat that the work of the Task Force is not based on intelligence reporting nor does it represent the official view of the US Government, the US Intelligence Community, or the CIA, but rather the views of the individual Task Force members and, in this particular application, the views of the authors.

²⁵ The Task Force's periodic reports provide some indication of the expanding nature and scope of the global modeling effort: the Phase I report comprises 100 pages total; the reports have continued to grow in length such that the Phase IV report filled 400 pages. Since the Phase IV report, the Task Force has abandoned the comprehensive report in favor of shorter reports on specific aspects or topics of the project.

²⁶ Several countries, principally the upper- and middle-income states, compile detailed records for sub-state administrative units which allow for analysis of spatial variations within those states. As part of its Phase IV research, the PITF modeled the onset of "sub-national" violent conflicts in India using federal state and district-level data drawn from the India central government's *Census of India* and *Crime in India* publications (Bates *et al* 2003).

substantial, global scope and temporal coverage for quantitative analysis.²⁷ The Task Force's ongoing research efforts also provide critical information regarding variables of particular interest and quantitative research "gaps," leading, on the one hand, to efforts to update, revise, and refine extant data resources and, on the other hand, efforts to collect and compile original data resources on topics and issues of particular research interest. The PITF "global merge" database allows it to investigate statistical relationships among variables of interest at the state level of analysis for which data with substantial country scope and temporal coverage exists. As it compiles data from multiple, independent sources, many of which are proprietary, the PITF database is subject to copyright and other intellectual property restrictions and, so, may not be publically distributed. However, in recognition of the importance and value of its global data collection effort, the PITF maintains and distributes a "public data dictionary" listing all the open source variables compiled in its "global merge," along with key information regarding original source, variable definition, and coverage for each variable.²⁸ The PITF also distributes "replication datasets" for each of its reports and publications; these contain specific variables used in the reported models (with select variables not reported in the models) for which the PITF has obtained explicit copyright permission from the original data source.

The composition of the PITF is interdisciplinary and has been about evenly split between theoretical scholars and methodological researchers, all of whom are grounded in empirical "large-n" approaches to systematic inquiry. The Task Force is augmented with representatives from foreign policy departments and agencies within the US Government and intelligence analysts who bring a practical perspective to the work of the PITF and an informed scrutiny of the more academic viewpoints of the core of scholars. The scholar members of the PITF number between ten and fifteen at any point in time and are drawn from the more senior ranks of US academia.²⁹ Membership has changed over time due to natural attrition and in response to changes in policy interests and tasks; a small group of long-term members provide continuity and help maintain an intellectual coherence and historical memory for the effort while new members are recruited to replace members who have taken leave from the group and to inform special topics of current interest. The variation in membership and focus of study stimulates creativity and expands the breadth and depth of inquiry, while its core mission, which has remained unchanged since its inception, organizes and disciplines that inquiry. The unique combination of expertise and perspective not only informs and guides the core mission to develop "a methodology that would identify key factors and critical thresholds signaling a high risk of crisis in countries some two years in advance" (Esty *et al* 1995, iii), but it also informs and guides the application of a broad range of methodologies to its tasks to better inform the modeling effort and increase the confidence in and robustness of its findings. Topical investigations always begin with a review of the scholarly literature and special sessions which include discussions with a range of experts in those topics. While a large part of the work of the PITF emphasizes statistical approaches, other methods are used at various times and for various purposes and include approaches as diverse as narrative case study and comparative case study, game theoretical, decision-making, process tracing, expert polling, formal modeling, neural network analysis, and data mining. Alternative sources of both

²⁷ An important factor in the selection process is an assessment of the relative quality (accuracy and reliability) of the data resource.

²⁸ The 2010 version of the PITF Public Data Dictionary lists over 2,600 variables drawn from about 100 different sources covering 164 countries with annual data for the period 1955 to present. The dictionary is found on the PITF web site at XXX.

²⁹ As the Task Force is a US Government project, all members of the Task Force are US citizens.

independent and dependent variables are used, when these are available, and related or substitutable variables comprising "baskets" of indicators are interchanged in statistical modeling to better "map the landscape" of complex interconnectedness among system variables. Both structural and dynamical elements are examined, as are both internal (societal) and external (systemic) dimensions.³⁰ The result is a "living" and "learning" research effort that utilizes intensive and extensive methods to accumulate knowledge and better understand not only societal-systemic complexity, diversity, and interconnectedness but, also, the existential, logistical, and applied commonalities that make collective behaviors in chaotic systems comprehensible and manageable.

The Task Force has tested literally hundreds of variables to see if they have any association with vulnerability to political instability. Because the onset of instability is a complex process with diverse causal pathways, we originally expected that no simple model would have much success in identifying the factors associated with the onset of such crises. Rather, we expected that we would need to develop widely different models to identify the factors associated with instability onset for different regions, and for different kinds of events. Moreover, we assumed these models would have to be complex, relying on many independent variables, reflecting both their levels and rates of change, and their interaction in varied combinations. It was to our considerable surprise that these expectations turned out to be wrong. The Task Force's analysis has identified some differences across regions and types of instability, but these differences have generally proved minor. Even more surprising, we have found that relatively simple models, involving just a handful of variables and no complex interactions, accurately classify 80% or more of the instability onsets and stable countries in the historical data. This is perhaps the most significant general finding of the Task Force's research: relatively simple models can identify the factors associated with a broad range of political violence and instability events around the world (Goldstone *et al* 2005, 10).

Having conducted (1) extensive and intensive studies regarding the precursive structural conditions and social dynamics characterizing the risks of state failure events and (2) developed and refined data inputs and (3) designed multiple, comparable models using various specifications and methodologies and (4) tested those models against both "in-sample" and "out-of-sample" case sets and, subsequently, having (5) "unpacked" and "drilled down" to gain a more "fine grained" understanding of the risk factors and the particular contexts in which those risk factors may be more or less likely to trigger event onsets and, consequently, having (6) "re-contextualized" their statistical findings into narrative form to examine the veracity of the risk factors in accordance with expert knowledge and analysis of country-specific observations, the PITF selects a single, representative, global model which is empirically robust, analytically sound, and theoretically grounded and which encompasses what the Task Force consensus considers to be its most prescient findings.³¹ The PITF global model uses a triple-matched, case-control methodology and a conditional logistic regression statistical application to specify key, precursive factors that characterize the imminent risk of the onset of a political instability (state failure) condition in any of 163 countries in the world (for a detailed specification of the model, see Goldstone *et al* 2010).³² The most recent specification of the

³⁰ The PITF does not include classic interstate behaviors, such as wars, militarized disputes, and crises, within its research mandate. The systemic dimensions include such factors as military and economic interventions, foreign assistance and investment, trade flows, and neighborhood effects.

³¹ The PITF has examined and modeled various subsets of countries and types of instability events to augment and inform its global modeling effort; these have included subset models for sub-Saharan Africa, Muslim countries, and autocracies and topical models for ethnic war, revolutionary war, ethnic and revolutionary war, genocide and politicide, mass killings, and regime transitions.

³² The PITF global research and modeling effort includes all independent countries in the world, except the United States, that have reached a total population of 500,000 or more in the most recent year (i.e., 163 countries in 2010); the United States is not included due to policy constraints. The political instability (state failure) condition used as the dependent variable in the global model is the "consolidated case," which is defined by the initial onset of any

PITF global model for the initial onset of a political instability condition contains five indicators: basic regime type, (polar) "factionalism," (high) infant mortality rate, state-led (ethnic) discrimination, and "armed conflict in [four or more] bordering states."³³ In our opinion, the principal findings of the PITF global modeling effort can be summarized in seven points:

- **first**, the principal risk factors of political instability identified in the global model are only five; these risk factors are common to all countries and the onset of all specified forms of instability (no additional risk factors have been found that, when added to the global model, substantially improve the performance of the model);
- **second**, poorer and lesser developed states are, perhaps inherently, the most highly prone to experience political instability onset;
- **third**, multi-ethnic societies are at higher risk of instability only when the state institutionalizes discriminatory practices targeting any of its constituent groups;
- **fourth**, autocratic governance, while diminishing dramatically since its global peak in the mid-1970s, has been strongly associated with onsets of armed violence and the collapse of central authority, whereas incomplete democratization is susceptible to "autocratic backsliding," thereby, at least temporarily raising the risks of armed violence in those countries;
- **fifth**, societal polarization or "factionalism" is the principal, observable, dynamic factor associated with political instability; the mobilization of opposition to the regime takes considerable time and, so, provides opportunities for both recognition of risk and prevention of instability onset (i.e., effective conflict management);
- **sixth**, there is a spatial or systemic "neighborhood" component that can compound or help alleviate the risks of political instability;³⁴ and
- **seventh**, the condition of political instability, whether regime instability or outbreak of serious armed conflict, has been identified as the precursive risk condition for inhumanity and the escalation of political violence to include its most extreme forms: genocide or politicide (i.e., the intentional use of lethal violence against distinct civilian/non-combatant populations).

Perhaps the most profound difference between the "self-help" system of the "old world order" and the "globalizing" system characterizing a "new world order" lies in the fundamental attitude of states toward one-another. In the "old world order," the national interest of powerful states was focused on establishing and maintaining an advantage in "relative capabilities" *vis-à-*

of the four categories of political instability events and lasts until there is no ongoing event or additional onset in a particular country for a period of five years. Control cases are matched by year and region with problem cases.

³³ "Factionalism" refers to an advanced, macro-systemic stage of group polarization that transforms political behavior in distinct ways that are both systematic and sustained. Factionalism transforms the conventional politics of deliberation to the unconventional 'anti-system' politics of disruption" (Marshall and Cole 2008b, 7). The factionalism condition in societal politics is observed as contentious political behavior ruling and non-ruling sectors over an accumulation of unresolved and/or unresolvable issues; a condition similar to that noted by Diamond (2005) and Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) to explain state failure and collapse. The "armed conflict in 4+ bordering states" indicator represents systemic/spatial factors affecting the onset of political instability; see note 32, below.

³⁴ The "neighborhood" component includes not only the "good" and "bad" circumstantial clustering and influence network systemic effects but, also, such spatial effects as large land area (large countries tend to be most ethnically diverse and logistically more difficult to manage and administer) and land-locked countries (more logistically challenged, more dependent on neighboring countries, more remote from systemic influence and exchange networks).

vis neighboring, competing, or coveted "others"; this outlook often drove states to actively weaken or undermine the viability of its real, perceived, or potential rivals. The "problem" of the "old world order" was associated with "state power." In the emerging "new world order," the nature of the "problem" is increasingly understood and conceptualized as "state failure." The security threats posed by powerful states in a self-help system are clear: the use of force in violation of a state's sovereignty or for control of contested interests. The security threats posed by failed states in a dynamic, integrated, and complex system of states cannot be fully understood in traditional (direct) "invasive," or even (indirect) "spillover," terms. The real security threat posed by the failure of individual components in an integrated system lies in the degradation of system potential and the absolute diminution of "relative opportunities" for all units within the system. The constriction of systemic well-being and entrepreneurial opportunities increases tensions and rivalries among units within the system, further degrading the system. The prevention of conflict within a societal-system, then, can be seen as tantamount to proactively improving compliance with systemic imperatives and effectively managing sustainable system performance. Developing a better understanding of why, how, and when components fail in complex societal-systems is essential to inform effective conflict management and will require a broader and more systematic approach to the accumulation of knowledge.

Works Cited

- Acemoglu, Daron, and James A. Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Adam, Hussein. 1995. "Somalia: A Terrible Beauty Being Born?" In William I. Zartman, ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. London: Lynne Rienner, 69-90.
- Bates, Robert H., David L. Epstein, Jack A. Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, Barbara Harff, Colin H. Kahl, Kristen Knight, Marc A. Levy, Michael Lustik, Monty G. Marshall, Thomas M. Parris, Jay Ulfelder, and Mark R. Woodward. 2003. *State Failure Task Force: Phase IV Findings*. McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation.
- Boas, Morten and Kathleen Jennings. 2007. "Failed States and State Failure: Threats or Opportunities?" *Globalizations* 4 (4): 475-85.
- Call, Charles. 2008. "The Fallacy of the 'Failed State.'" *Third World Quarterly* 29 (8): 1491-1507.
- _____. 2011. "Beyond the 'Failed State': Toward Conceptual Alternatives." *European Journal of International Relations*.
- Carment, David. 2007. "Risk Assessment and State Failure." *Global Society: Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations* 21 (1): 47-69.
- Carment, David, Yiagadeesen Samy, Doug Hales, Jordan Miller, Liz St.Jean, and Peter Tikuisis. 2010. "Indicators of State Failure: Phase II." CIFP Report to Defence R&D Canada, available at: <http://www4.carleton.ca/cifp/app/serve.php/1350.pdf>; accessed 26 September 2012.
- Chandler, D. 2006. *Empire in Denial: The Politics of State-building*. London: Pluto Press.
- Clarke, Walter and Robert Gosende. 2003. "Somalia: Can a Collapsed State Reconstitute Itself." In Robert I. Rotberg (ed.). *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Washington, DC: Brookings, 129-158.
- Clunan, Anne L., and Harold A. Trinkunas, ed. 2010. *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty*. Stanford University Press.
- Crisis State Research Center. 2006. "Crisis, Fragile and Failed States: Definitions Used by the CSRC." Available at: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/drc/FailedState.pdf>; accessed 24 June 2011.
- Crocker, Chester A. 2003. "Engaging Failing States." *Foreign Affairs* (Sept./Oct. 2003).
- Dadmehr, Nasrin. 2003. "Tajikistan: Regionalism and Weakness." In Robert I. Rotberg (ed.).

- State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Washington, DC: Brookings.
- Darchiashvili, David. 2002. "Human Security, Liberal Democracy, and the Power of Nationalism: The State Crisis in Georgia and Possible Solutions." In Tobias Debiel and Axel Klein (eds.). *Fragile Peace: State Failure, Violence and Development in Crisis Regions*. London: Zed Books, 110-128.
- Debiel, Tobias and Axel Klein (eds.). 2002. *Fragile Peace: State Failure, Violence and Development in Crisis Regions*. London: Zed Books.
- de Leon, Bernardo Arevalo. 2002. "Stagnant Transformation: Democratic Transition and Military Conversion in Guatemala." In Tobias Debiel and Axel Klein (eds.). *Fragile Peace: State Failure, Violence and Development in Crisis Regions*. London: Zed Books, 146-155.
- Diamond, Jared. 2005. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York: Viking Penguin.
- Docking, Timothy. 2002. "Responding to War and State Collapse in West Africa." *United States Institute Special Report*: 21 January 2002. Washington, DC: USIP.
- Dryzek, John S. 2006. "Revolutions without Enemies: Key Transformations in Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 100 (4): 487-492.
- Easterly, William and Laura Freschii. 2010. "Top 5 Reasons Why 'Failed State' is a Failed Concept." *Aid Watch*. Available at: <http://aidwatchers.com/2010/01/top-5-reasons-why-%E2%80%9Cfailed-state%E2%80%9D-is-a-failed-concept/>; accessed 24 June 2011.
- Easton, David. 1953. *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science*. New York: Knopf.
- Esty, Daniel C., Jack A. Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, Pamela T. Surko, and Alan N. Unger. 1995. *State Failure Task Force: Phase I Findings*. McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation.
- Esty, Daniel C., Jack A. Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, Barbara Harff, Marc Levy, Geoffrey D. Dabelko, Pamela T. Surko, and Alan N. Unger. 1998. *State Failure Task Force: Phase II Findings*. McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation.
- Farr, James. 1995. "Remembering the Revolution: Behavioralism in American Political Science." In *Political Science in History: Research Programs and Political Traditions*, ed. James Farr, John S. Dryzek, and Stephen T. Leonard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fituni, Leonid L. 1995. "The Collapse of the Socialist State: Angola and the Soviet Union." In William I. Zartman, ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. London: Lynne Rienner, 143-156.

- Foltz, William J. 1995. "Reconstructing the State of Chad." In William I. Zartman, ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. London: Lynne Rienner, 15-32.
- Freitag-Wirringhaus, Rainer. 2002. "State-building and Solving Conflicts in the South Caucasus." In Tobias Debiel and Axel Klein (eds.). *Fragile Peace: State Failure, Violence and Development in Crisis Regions*. London: Zed Books, 89-110.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2004. *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Fund for Peace. 2012. "Failed States Index." Web document: <http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/?q=fsi=about>; accessed 26 September 2012.
- GAO. 2007. *Forces That Will Shape America's Future: Themes from GAO's Strategic Plan, 2007-2012*. Available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07467sp.pdf>. Cited in Liana Sun Wyler. 2008. "Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and US Policy." *CRS Reports for Congress*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress.
- Garrett, Laurie. 2005. *HIV and National Security: Where are the Links?* New York: Council on Foreign Relations.
- Goldstone, Jack A., Ted Robert Gurr, Barbara Harff, Marc Levy, Monty G. Marshall, Robert H. Bates, Robert H., David L. Epstein, Colin H. Kahl, Pamela T. Surko, John C. Ulfeder, Jr., and Alan N. Unger. 2000. *State Failure Task Force: Phase III Findings*. McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation.
- Goldstone, Jack A., Robert Bates, Ted Robert Gurr, Michael Lustik, Monty G. Marshall, Jay Ulfeder, and Mark Woodward. 2005. "A Global Forecasting Model of Political Instability." PITF Phase V Findings Report presented at the annual convention of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, 3 September 2005.
- Goldstone, Jack A., Robert H. Bates, David L. Epstein, Ted Robert Gurr, Michael B. Lustik, Monty G. Marshall, Jay Ulfeder, and Mark Woodward. 2010. "A Global Model for Forecasting Political Instability." *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (1): 190-208.
- Goldstone, Jack, Jonathan Houghton, Karol Soltan, and Clifford Zinnes. 2003. "Strategy Framework for Assessment and Treatment of Fragile States." Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector (IRIS), University of Maryland, College Park. Report submitted to the United States Agency for International Development PPC/IDEAS: EDG-O-00-02-00037-00, Request No. 2003-312.
- Gros, Jean-Germain. 1996. "Toward a Taxonomy of Failed States in the New World Order: decaying Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda, and Haiti." *Third World Quarterly* 17: 455-71.
- Gurr, Ted Robert, Monty G. Marshall, and Deepa Khosla. 2000. *Peace and Conflict 2001: A Global Survey of Armed Conflicts, Self-Determination Movements, and Democracy*.

College Park MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management,
University of Maryland

- Gurr, Ted Robert, Mark Woodward, and Monty G. Marshall. 2005. "Forecasting Instability: are ethnic war and Muslim country models different?" PITF Phase V Findings Report presented at the annual convention of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, 3 September 2005.
- Hastings, Justin V. 2009. "Geographies of State Failure and Sophistication in Maritime Piracy Hijackings." *Political Geography* 28 (4): 213-223.
- Hehir, Aidan. 2007. "The Myth of the Failed State and the War on Terror: a Challenge to Conventional Wisdom." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 1: 307-32.
- Helman, Gerald B. and Steven R. Ratner. 1992. "Saving Failed States." *Foreign Policy* 89 (Winter 1992-93); 3-20.
- Howard, Tiffany O. 2008. "Revisiting State Failure: Developing a Causal Model of State Failure Based upon Theoretical Insight." *Civil Wars* 10 (2): 125-146.
- Human Security Centre. 2005. *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Human Security Report Project. 2011. *Human Security Report 2009/2010: The Causes of Peace and the Shrinking Costs of War*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1968. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. Yale University Press.
- Jackson, Robert H. 1987. "Quasi-States, Dual Regimes, and Neoclassical Theory: International Jurisprudence and the Third World." *International Organization* 41: 519-549.
- Kaplan, Robert. 1994. "The Coming Anarchy." *The Atlantic* (February).
- Keller, Edmond. 1995. "Remaking the Ethiopian State." In William I. Zartman, ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. London: Lynne Rienner, 125-142.
- Khadiagala, Gilbert M. 1995. "State Collapse and Reconstruction in Uganda." In William I. Zartman, ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. London: Lynne Rienner, 33-48.
- Krasner, Stephen and Carl Pascual. 2005. "Addressing State Failure." *Foreign Affairs* 84: 153-163.
- Kreijen, Gerard. 2004. *State Failure, Sovereignty and Effectiveness*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Kurtenbach, Sabine. 2002. "The Central American Conflict System: External Players and

- Changing Violence.” In Tobias Debiel and Axel Klein (eds.). *Fragile Peace: State Failure, Violence and Development in Crisis Regions*. London: Zed Books, 129-145.
- Lamb, Robert D. 2007. "Ungoverned Areas and Threats from Safe Havens." Final report of the Ungoverned Areas Project to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. Available at http://cisssm.umd.edu/papers/files/ugash_report_final.pdf; accessed on 27 September 2012.
- Laqueur, Walter. 2003. *No End to War: Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Continuum.
- Lawson, Stephanie. 2003. "Fiji: Divided and Weak." In Robert I. Rotberg (ed.). *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Washington, DC: Brookings, 265– 288.
- Lemarchand, Rene. 2003. "The Democratic Republic of the Congo: From Failure to Potential Reconstruction." In Robert I. Rotberg (ed.). *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Washington, DC: Brookings.
- Lemay-Hebert, Nicolas. 2009. "Statebuilding without Nation-building? Legitimacy, State Failure and the Limits of the Institutionalist Approach." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 3: 21-45.
- Logan, Justin and Christopher Preble. 2008. "Fixing Failed States." *The Harvard Review* (March).
- Lowenkopf, Martin. 1995. "Liberia: Putting the State Back Together." In William I. Zartman, ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. London: Lynne Rienner, 91-108.
- Lyons, Terrence and Ahmed Ismail Samatar. 1995. *Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention and Strategies*. Washington, DC: Brookings.
- Marshall, Monty G. 1999. *Third World War: System, Process, and Conflict Dynamics*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- _____. 2004. *Conflict Trends in Africa, 1946-2004: A Macro-Comparative Perspective*. Report prepared for the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool, UK Government. Available at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/Conflict%20Trends%20in%20Africa.pdf>.
- _____. 2008. "Fragility, Instability, and the Failure of States: Assessing Sources of Systemic Risk." *Center for Preventive Action Working Paper Series*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.
- _____. 2011. "The New Democratic Order: Complex Social-Systems and the 'Invisible Hand.'" *Harvard International Review* 33 (1): 95-106.
- Marshall, Monty G. and Jack A. Goldstone. 2007. "Global Report on Conflict, Governance and State Fragility 2007: Gauging System Performance and Fragility in the Globalization

- Era." *Foreign Policy Bulletin* (Winter): 1-19
- Marshall, Monty G. and Benjamin R. Cole. 2008a. "Global Report on Conflict, Governance and State Fragility 2008." *Foreign Policy Bulletin* (Winter): 1-19.
- _____. 2008b. "A Macrocomparative Analysis of the Problem of Factionalism in Emerging Democracies." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA, 28 August 2008.
- _____. 2009. *Global Report 2009: Conflict, Governance and State Fragility*. Vienna, VA: Center for Systemic Peace; and Fairfax, VA: George Mason University.
- _____. 2011. *Global Report 2011: Conflict, Governance and State Fragility*. Vienna, VA: Center for Systemic Peace.
- Marshall, Monty G., Keith Jagers, and Ted Robert Gurr. 2010. "Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2010." Dataset Users' Manual and electronic database. Available at <http://systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm>; accessed 28 September 2012.
- Menkhaus, Ken. 2007a. "Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping." *International Security* 31 (3): 74-106.
- Menkhaus, Ken. 2007b. "Terrorist Activities in Ungoverned Spaces: Evidence and Observations from the Horn of Africa." Paper prepared for the "Southern Africa and International Terrorism" workshop. Available at http://thebrenthurstfoundation.org/Files/terror_talks/Terrorist%20Activities%20in%20Ungoverned%20Spaces.pdf; accessed 27 September 2012.
- Migdal, Joel S. 1988. *Strong Societies and Weak States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- National Intelligence Council. 2004. *Mapping the Global Future: Report of the National Intelligence Council's 2010 Project*. Available at <http://www.foia.cia.gov/2020/2020.pdf>; accessed 24 June 2011. Cited in Liana Sun Wyler. 2008. "Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and US Policy." *CRS Reports for Congress*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress.
- Newman, Edward. 2007. "Weak States, State Failure and Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19 (4): 463-88.
- Nyheim, David. 2009. "The DAC Network on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-operation & The DAC Fragile States Group Joint Session." Paris: OECD.
- O'Brien, Sean P. 2010. "Crisis Early Warning and Decision Support: Contemporary Approaches and Thoughts on Future Research." *International Studies Review* 12.1: 87-104.

- OECD. 2007. *Fragile States: Policy Commitment and Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*. Cited in Liana Sun Wyler. 2008. "Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and US Policy." *CRS Reports for Congress*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress.
- Paris, Roland. 2011. "Academic Research and Policymaking on Fragile States." *International Studies Review* 13:58-71.
- Patrick, Stewart. 2006. "Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?" *The Washington Quarterly* 29 (2): 27-53.
- _____. 2007. "'Failed' States and Global Security: Empirical Questions and Policy Dilemmas." *International Studies Review* 9: 644-662.
- _____. 2011. *Weak Links: Fragile States, Global Threats, and International Security*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pausewang, Siegfried. 2004. "Democracy and Human Security in Ethiopia: Structural Reasons for the Failure of Democratization." *SAIIA Report no. 45*. Johannesburg: South African Institute for International Affairs. Available at: <http://www.cmi.no/publications/publication/?1862=democracy-and-human-security-in-ethiopia>; accessed 24 June 2011.
- Prunier, Gerard and Rachel Gisselquist. 2003. "The Sudan: A Successfully Failed State." In Robert I. Rotberg (ed.). *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Washington, DC: Brookings.
- Reilly, David A. 2008. "The Two Level Game of Failing States: Internal and External Sources of State Failure." *The Journal of Conflict Studies* 28: 17-32.
- Reno, William. 2003. "Sierra Leone: Warfare in a Post-State Society." In Robert I. Rotberg (ed.). *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Washington, DC: Brookings.
- Rice, Susan. 2003. *The New National Security Strategy: Focus on Failed States*. Washington, DC: Brookings. Available at: http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2003/02terrorism_rice.aspx; accessed 24 June 2011.
- Rice, Susan and Stewart Patrick 2008. "Index of State Weakness in the Developing World." Washington, DC: Brookings. Available at: http://www.Brookings.edu/reports/2008/02_weak_states_index.asp; accessed 24 June 2011.
- Rotberg, Robert I. 2002. "The New Nature of Nation-State Failure." *Washington Quarterly* (Summer).
- _____. (ed.). 2003. *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*. Washington, DC: Brookings.

- _____. (ed.). 2004. *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rubin, Barnett R. 2002. *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Schutz, Barry. 1995. "The Heritage of Revolution and the Struggle for Governmental Legitimacy in Mozambique." In William I. Zartman, ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. London: Lynne Rienner, 109-124.
- Stotzky, Irwin. 1997. *Silencing the Guns in Haiti*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sung, Hung-En. 2004. "State Failure, Economic Failure and Organized Crime: A Comparative Analysis." *Journal of Research in Crime Delinquency* 42 (2).
- Ulfelder, Jay and Michael Lustik. 2005. "Modeling Transitions to and from Democracy." PITF Phase V Findings Report presented at the annual convention of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, 3 September 2005.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). 2006a. *Why Fighting Crime can Assist Development in Africa: rule of law and protection of the most vulnerable*. Vienna: UNODC.
- _____. 2006b. *2006 World Drug Report*. Vienna: UNODC.
- US Commission on Weak States. 2003. *On the Brink: Weak States and US National Security*. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.
- USAID. 2005. *Fragile States Strategy*. Available at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDACA999.pdf: accessed 28 September 2012.
- Vreeland, James. 2008. "The Effects of Political Regime on Civil War: Unpacking Anocracy." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52.3: 401-425.
- Wallerstein, Immanuel. 1974. *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic Press.
- Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Relations*. New York: Random House.
- Weiss, Herbert. 1995. "Zaire: Collapsed Society, Surviving State, Future Polity." In William I. Zartman, ed. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. London: Lynne Rienner, 157-170.
- Widner, Jennifer. 1995. "State and Statelessness in Late Twentieth-Century Africa." *Daedalus* CXXIV: 136-137.

- Williams, Phil. 2001. "Transnational Criminal Enterprises, Conflict, and Instability." In Chester A. Crocker, Fen O. Hampson, and Pameal Aall, eds. *Turbulent Peace: the challenges of managing international conflict*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
- Wylar, Liana Sun. 2008. "Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and US Policy." *CRS Reports for Congress*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress.
- Yamin, Saira. 2010. *Revisiting the Discourse on State Failure: Towards a Conflict Resolution Trajectory*. Doctoral dissertation submitted to the School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University.
- Zartman, William I. 1995. *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*. London: Lynne Rienner.
- Ziala, Sebastian and Javier Fabra Mata. 2010. "State Fragility Indices: Potentials, Messages and Limitations." Bonn, Germany: German Development Institute.

Table 1. Conceptions of State Fragility & Failure in the Policy Community

Actor	Terminology	Definition	Type	Key Factors
US Political Instability Task Force	political instability eventstate failure	total or near-total collapse of central authority, reversion to autocratic rule, or the onset of ethnic or revolutionary war	nominal	armed conflict adverse regime change
US National Intelligence Council	failed state	state with “expanses of territory and populations devoid of effective government control”	binary	territorial sovereignty
US Agency for International Development (USAID)	fragile state crisis state	government does not control its territory, fails to provide “vital services” to significant parts of its territory, and holds “weak or non-existent legitimacy among its citizens”	ordinal	service provision legitimacy
US National Security Council	weak state	state fails to “fulfill... sovereign responsibilities”	binary	territorial sovereignty service provision
US Interagency Working Group on International Crime	failed state	state fails to meet “standards and responsibilities of sovereign control over its territory”	binary	territorial sovereignty service provision legitimacy (implicit)
US Government Accountability Office	failing state fragile state	states that “do not control their territory,” and whose citizens “do not perceive the government as legitimate” and “do not have basic public services or domestic security”	ordinal	territorial sovereignty service provision legitimacy
US Commission on Weak States	weak state failed state	states that fail to “control their territories,” or “meet the basic needs of their citizens” or “provide legitimacy that flows from effective, transparent governance”	ordinal	territorial sovereignty service provision legitimacy
OECD Development Assistance Committee's Fragile States Group	fragile state	states lacking “either the will or capacity to engage productively with their citizens to ensure security, safeguard human rights, and provide the basic function for development,” characterized by “weak governance, limited administrative capacity, chronic humanitarian crisis, persistent social tensions, violence or the legacy of civil war”	binary	armed conflict human rights service provision
World Bank Fragile States Initiative	fragile state	state with low income, “poor governance, internal conflicts, tenuous post-conflict transitions, weak security, fractured societal relations, corruption, breakdowns in the rule of law, and insufficient mechanisms for generating legitimate power and authority (Wyler 2008: 26-7).”	binary	armed conflict rule of law corruption legitimacy
UK Department for International Development (DfID) Crisis States Programme	fragile state crisis state failed state	fragile states: “significantly susceptible to crisis in one or more... subsystems... particularly vulnerable to internal and external shocks and... conflicts.” crisis state: “reigning institutions face serious contestation and are potentially unable to manage conflict and shocks.” failed state: “can no longer perform its basic security, and development functions,” and has “no effective control over its territory and borders.”	nominal	territorial sovereignty service provision crisis management