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up for a lack of depth with a sweeping breath of knowledge. In a concise manner, he gives the basic contextual background to a war and then theorizes about it. This historical approach offers needed perspective as Americans tend to myopically focus on most recent conflict. Although the book was published before the events of 11 September, Divine offers a relevant warning about making unrealistic war goals. When President George W. Bush assured the American public that the war on terrorism will cripple militant Islamic terrorist networks around the world, he is following his twentieth-century predecessors in creating a mission impossible to fulfill.

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Cousens, Elizabeth M., Chetan Kumar, with Karin Wermester, eds. *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace In Fragile Societies.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001.

This insightful volume examines five recent cases of peacebuilding. The editors make every effort to establish from the start the difference between securing peace, or peacemaking, and post-conflict peacebuilding. The intention, it seems, is to demonstrate, using these very different case studies, the challenge of the latter. Each of the contributors follows the predictable pattern brought forward by the international community, Western democracies (in particular the United States) and international financial institutions when engaging destabilized or war-torn areas around the globe.

This pattern is criticized, even condemned, as a futile and needless waste of resources and a reckless approach to protecting human life and social cultures. Keeping the peace without attending to the unique dynamics of each case ensures that the focus of the international actors will "emphasize the 'what' and the 'who' of peacebuilding over the 'how,' 'why,' or 'to what end.'" Put succinctly, the authors here demand an internal political approach as opposed to an external remedy that, they continue, is created to appease political constituencies or special interest groups outside the country or region in conflict.

This internal political approach is something that the authors acknowledge to involve trade offs. As an example, the international community's insistence upon election monitoring or even human rights may not contribute or be inherently equivalent to de-facto peacebuilding. This is so because these notions may be bound up in Western ideas and priorities that may not be relevant in a region where war has reduced infrastructure such that clean water and sewage disposal are of much greater importance.

What happens when occupying armies, diplomats, agencies, and financial organizations come to the areas of destabilization? The authors in this volume argue, through substantial evidence in each case study, that what is put in place is quite often un-natural and artificial. Regardless of the best of intentions, then, the work done on behalf of keeping peace is likely to fail once the support leaves, an inevitable reality in this sort of enterprise. Accordingly, the recommendation is to encourage naturally enforcing elements of structure and stability within the target country or region. A recommendation of this sort requires a substantial deference to local custom and tradition. The entire social fabric, the very thing most likely to disappear to times of distress, must be considered as it alone will be able to sustain peacebuilding long after the interest of the international community has moved to the newest hotspot.

There is considerable criticism of the current peacekeeping enterprise throughout the text. Each case makes a point to criticize what they see as the Eurocentric and American bias. The authors suggest that the world's benefactors are, if well intended, arrogant and culturally bound. My question: can it be otherwise? Is it possible for the Western democracies to act differently? This is not to suggest that the authors are unaware of the culture and tradition of the West, not to mention demanding domestic politics of the peacemakers. It does seem, however, that in the enthusiasm to embrace the particulars of the war-ravaged regions by directly attending to the local customs, the authors are reticent to acknowledge the other side of the equation, i.e., the customs of the peacekeepers. After all, the billions of dollars are appropriated in a domestic legislature, bound by law, procedure, and political oversight. It is difficult to imagine a request for aid brought before the US Congress that basically asks for a blank check without some attention to measurable outcomes – outcomes that fit within the context of domestic political accountability.

Finally, it does appear that the authors are not entirely sympathetic to the crisis situation that is part and parcel in many of these missions. Involvement within national boundaries alone necessarily requires considerable international negotiation under some of the most fragile circumstances imaginable. Without doubt the West often acts in ways that can be considered insensitive after-the-fact, but it may be understandable given the sense of urgency. Making judgments about 'intentions' is problematic when considering the actions of an individual; it is no less so when evaluating nations.

What is valuable in this well thought-out test remains in tact despite these concerns: "international peace-building efforts should focus on those factors that allow stable political processes to emerge and flourish." The authors put together a meaningful approach to peacebuilding.

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