

September 17, 2004 Workshop
**Towards the Development of a Fragile States
Assessment Tool**
Meeting Notes

Welcome and Introduction

Tjip Walker: I would like to welcome everyone to this meeting. I am pleased that everyone invited was able to attend and I am very much looking forward to a very stimulating and interesting meeting. The group gathered here today is composed of both IRIS staff and consultants and USAID staff, who were specifically identified for this team because of past work experiences.

Our overall goal today is to decide how to present the fragile states strategy in a usable manner for people who do not have a high tolerance for academic lingo. In this group we are attempting to fuse academics with those who use these tools in the field. This fusion is what makes this a group particularly strong.

We would like to develop a guide for assessing fragile states that is both rigorous and user friendly. I am using the word “guide” here, but this is also a tool. We have not yet decided on the best method for developing this guide, for example whether it should necessarily be a single document or many modules. Certainly there is room for creativity.

However, there are certain principles for the guide based on the existing intellectual framework for fragile states. The intention with the assessment tool is to operationalize the concepts within the fragile states strategy through description, elaboration and increased precision, which will allow us to diagnose the situation and dynamics at play in fragile states.

Our assumption is that the better we know what is going on, the better we can develop feasible programmatic responses to fragile states. The DG Framework illustrates desirable responses and outcomes with the filters to move from the impossible to the feasible.

Many questions will have to be answered in order to develop an effective tool, such as how will the process work for creating this tool, how will we understand effectiveness and legitimacy and what kind of information will be required. We want to provide some fairly practical guidance.

In addition, we will need to prove the value of this tool. USAID has gone through a number of cycles developing analytical devices and we have to be able to prove that this

provides something that the existing frameworks do not provide. This will become particularly important as we discuss the next steps that we envision.

Developing the fragile states assessment tool is the long term goal, which will involve many steps that we will discuss today. Through discussions with Dennis and Joe, we have set the goals for today as the following:

1. We would like to create a sense that all of us are a part of a team. We may be a virtual team, but nonetheless, we want to create a sense of a team. We have provided background information so you can see what skills people bring to bear on the issues surrounding fragile states. I have personally had the pleasure of working with everyone here and I know what you can all contribute. During this meeting we will think about respective roles and responsibilities for developing the assessment tool.
2. Secondly, it is important that we establish a common foundation for the team. Although some of us have been working on fragile states for awhile, others of us are new to the fragile states strategy. Of particular importance is to establish a common contextual foundation in terms what we are trying to do and the activities and initiatives that are going on simultaneously, which will have an impact on this effort. Also there are common concepts that Ann Phillips, Melissa Brown and I have worked on, but we want to make sure there is a clear common understanding. The morning sessions today are designed do exactly this. The presentations are designed to provide a basic sense of the fragility framework and less tested but interesting ideas. This afternoon we want to look systematically at each of the four dimensions in the matrix and try to make some progress on the content.

In conclusion, I believe that everyone is a valued member of this team. We look forward to your contributions and please feel free to chime in today whenever you would like. There will be facilitators to make sure we keep on time and on task, but we do hope that this will be an energetic discussion.

Dennis Wood: I would like to do a few introductory activities this morning, which can be thought of as team building. First, I would like for you to talk about yourself as a professional and how you have dealt with or worked with fragile states. Second, now that we are here as professionals from different disciplines, please discuss the interdisciplinary experience that you have had, and why it was useful to you.

I will begin to get us started. Since I left college I have been a development professional. I am both an economist and a lawyer, and have worked in the private sector, government, and academia. I have worked in fifty or so countries, the first being Algeria in the 1970's. I had the opportunity to be in Indonesia during the run up to their election where we were doing a series of conferences. During one of those conferences, we gathered people together to discuss conflict and that was where I saw the fragility concept come alive. In terms of my experience with interdisciplinary work, I would say it comes

through the work that Jack and I completed for USAID and the fragile states strategy. That piece of work was a synthesis of ideas across many dimensions.

Ann Phillips: I am not a development professional, but rather an academic. I was a professor for fifteen years before I joined USAID through a fellowship program to bring academics into the government. My areas of expertise are comparative politics and political economy, specifically focusing on Russia and Central Europe. For ten years of my academic life, I studied systems transitions and one of the areas I was particularly interested in was the diverse trajectories these transitioning countries took and why this was the case. Naturally, I have a strong interest in fragile states.

Nicole Ball: I have had an exclusively non-governmental career. I started out as an international relations specialist, but for the past twenty-five years, I have been working in the area of security and development, which is completely multidisciplinary. I have done extensive consulting for bilateral and multilateral assistance agencies and since the 1990's, I have been focusing on two main issues: post conflict recovery and building security sector governance issues, both of which are fragile states issues. I have spent most of my time working in states that are considered to be fragile. For instance, recently I worked in Sierra Leone on reintegration activities with the World Bank. A lot of the countries on the MCA list are places where I have visited. Most of the work that I do is multidisciplinary. For example, on one project, I worked with a colleague with governmental finance expertise and a third team member who was a conflict specialist on gender and child issues. I have found that interdisciplinary work is a great experience.

Charles Weden: I am a long term USAID employee. I have worked in twelve countries, most of which were fragile or became fragile while I was there. I joined OTI about two years ago, and since then, I have worked in Haiti and Iraq. I returned to Haiti after forty years and it has not changed much. Over the years, I was the mission director in a number of posts, which was a multidisciplinary experience.

Wendy Marshall: I work as a coordinator within the USAID Democracy and Governance Office where we assist African countries as they develop their analytical agendas for their D&G programs. As such, I have provided analytical support for a number of fragile states, including Angola and Nigeria. Currently I am working with the D&G Office's fragile states working group, which just got started recently. With regards to interdisciplinary work, I was one of the people involved in testing the conflict assessment tool framework, which is multidisciplinary in nature.

Joe Siegle: I am currently with IRIS and my expertise is in democracy and development and how political institutions contribute to better development outcomes. I worked with World Vision for ten years and in my academic work, I studied the statistical relationships between democracy and development both at the University of Maryland and the Council of Foreign Relations. I have also looked at conflict and post-conflict countries in my research.

Judy Dunbar: I work with Tjip Walker in conflict management and mitigation. I was a Russian literature major in college, but have ended up working in development. My career has been multidisciplinary as I have worked with the Farmer to Farmer Programs maternal programs, fiscal policy reform, women's rights, small and medium enterprise growth programs. Eventually I made my way to OTI programming where I ended up looking at development economics and conflict resolution.

Tjip Walker: I have been working in development for a long time and have been back and forth between being a practitioner and academia. I spent four years working for OTI managing a program in Nigeria, a country which at the time was in democratic transition, but is now proving to be a fragile situation. I am presently on detail to the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation where we are working on developing the analytical agenda associated with the fragile states initiative. I have been involved in many interdisciplinary activities. The one I remember with a great deal of fondness was ten years ago when democracy and development was a concern in the Africa Bureau. Eventually, it morphed into the current DG assessment tool and that was very much an interdisciplinary tool.

Bob Leavitt: I have been the conflict program adviser at the Africa Bureau for the past four years where we are working on prioritizing the integration of funds across assessments in Angola and Burundi to bring in additional resources to attach to conflict management resources. We find it is the best bang for our buck to help other sectors manage conflict. I was also based for six years in Angola, Liberia, Sudan and Ethiopia managing humanitarian assistance programs in transition.

Jack Goldstone: I do not have field experience in development or formal training in political science. My Ph.D. is in political sociology. Currently I am reviewing theories of revolution and how these reflect on population change and conflict. I have been looking at correlations of instability since the 1980s and have worked with regional experts, methodical experts and conflict experts.

Konrad Huber: I recently joined OTI as a human rights advisor. I have a practitioner's background in human rights and conflict management, which I developed in a variety of countries over the years. I have worked for the OSCE, UN Commission for Human Rights and UNICEF. I also recently spent a year with the Council on Foreign Relations, where I looked at Indonesia and the most effective approaches to dealing with internal conflicts there. I have an intellectual curiosity for the subject. I will offer a very personal take on the interdisciplinary bit, but not related at all to fragile states. I am a tennis player and flat footed and have gotten into trouble with my ankles and over the years tried different approaches - losing weight, yoga, etc. The important point being that I have been marshalling different approaches to this problem.

Jonathan Haughton: When I was nine my father took up a position in Nigeria. Though we were kicked out after nine months, my interest was sparked in Africa and developing countries. Most of the work I have done has been in Vietnam, which is not fragile now but once was. That is an important point because it shows there can be life after this

work. Among other relevant recent activities, three or four years ago, I went to East Timor to look at economic questions there. The current situation in East Timor shows the upside that we can easily forget. Currently, I am looking at tax reform in Lebanon; another country that has started out of the gate, but one that could easily be stalled. I am an economist by training and inclination. I have both an undergraduate degree and a doctorate in economics. However, all of the joint research I have done has not been with economists. For instance, I am currently chairing a committee on curriculum change at Suffolk University and so far that is going well.

Sharon Morris: I am a senior advisor in the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation and have been with USAID for four years. I also spent five years at the MacArthur Foundation looking at issues of conflict and development and have traveled to many fragile states including Nepal. My work has an interdisciplinary focus and a lot of what our office is trying to do is to bring in knowledge from all of the development areas. Conflict assessment is an interdisciplinary field in which we look at everything from natural resource competition to demographic trends. It is an approach that looks at a problem and looks at everything we can bring to it. The challenge of multidisciplinary teams is that we all talk different languages. For example, in the conflict office you will be asking natural resource management staff about governance issues.

Ron Oakerson: My background is in political science. I have had an interesting career, including five years as former Chief Academic Officer at Indiana University, which is a small liberal arts college. I was also on the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. I am not a development professional, but I have done some development work with a domestic and local government focus (specifically metropolitan area issues and metropolitan governance matters). I did become involved in development work beginning in 1989 with USAID in Cameroon on various issues related to policy reform. Although I did not have the opportunity to do much field work, I did work that involved a joint assessment between USAID and the European Commission of Democracy and Governance. Prior to that, I worked on common property resources, but most of the work I have done is interdisciplinary in one way or another. The coherence comes from the fact that I am a hardcore institutionalist. What is most appealing about development and fragile states is that it offers an interesting and most daunting set of challenges.

Dennis Wood: I thank you all very much. We will continue to share with each other and look at one another with more understanding.

Review of Previous Work on Fragile States Strategy

Tjip Walker: In this session I will provide a short overview of the fragile states strategy work thus far. Some of this will be new to everyone, but a lot of it will be familiar to many of you. I will try to do this quickly since we have given you documents that explain many of these points in greater detail.

It is important to remember the context of this whole effort; it has taken a fair amount of momentum in USAID and other government agencies. A year ago when we started, we were cutting edge. However, we are no longer there. We are working alongside other agencies, which is an important thing to bear in mind. The current fragile states strategy is primarily focused on USAID. It is a tool for USAID as an agency, but we also must recognize that responding to fragile states is not only a development issue. It also has to do with trade, diplomacy and a number of other areas. We must develop consistency and purpose across agencies. A rigorous and accessible assessment guide should create this consistency across agencies. Although other agencies are reading about fragile states, we are much further ahead in terms of thinking through the issues.

In terms of developing this work, we have used a number of reports. Many of you have seen reports from CSIS, the U.S. Army and CFR. There are also a number of quantitative studies out there, from sources like the political instability task force and the World Bank. IRIS's work fits within this context.

The topic of fragile states is not new for USAID. The agency has worked in post-conflict countries since the Soviet Union's collapse, but today USAID understands that these countries are different from stable nations.

USAID has been implementing transition initiatives in fragile states for the past 10 or 11 years, and as a result, the agency has gathered a significant amount of information on country transition and USAID's response. We're trying to use this experience as we develop the fragile states strategy.

The White Paper is important because it provides a vision for USAID's five goals. The five goals are discussed in the context of pursuing five different approaches in which the tools, criteria and mechanisms vary. One of these five goals is to respond to fragile states, but of the five, USAID had the least to say about this issue.

The effort to identify a strategy for fragile states began in earnest about a year ago. There has been integration between IRIS and USAID, but also among large groups on both sides. The strategy has been refined and we have identified three key issues that require more work: 1.) processes of increasing fragility, 2.) failed states and 3.) recovery strategies. The final fragile states paper commissioned by USAID from IRIS, which was completed last November, contained 190 pages of analysis. Jack Goldstone was responsible for the first issue in the strategy formation process and Jonathan Haughton was responsible for the second issue of failed states. We have made an effort to summarize the key points of the paper through a stand-alone executive summary document. While the summary captures much of the 190 pages, we are seeing that there are interesting ideas alluded to in the longer paper that may not be elaborated upon well enough in the summary. Jack Goldstone has gone back to the longer document to try and help us to pull out all that is useful. In a few moments he will talk about what else is in there. Keep in mind that the longer paper is also an initial draft, and there are still arguments among the authors as to the content.

For the most part, the content of the summary document is now contained in USAID's draft fragile states strategy. The strategy basically lays out two near term steps - developing an assessment tool and establishing quantitative efforts to provide early warning and alert systems. These two steps are going on simultaneously, and because both steps will involve working with indicators, there will necessarily be cross fertilization. Both Judy Dunbar and I are working on these two activities, which will hopefully provide for effective information flow.

Feeding into the fragile states assessment tool are two tools that are currently used by USAID: the DG assessment method and the conflict assessment framework. We also have other conflict assessment methods that have been developed in the Africa Bureau. For the fragile states assessment tool we would like to build on all of these by taking the best pieces of each and seeing how we can best use them. Humanitarian objectives and fragile states objectives may be different but there are also cross-cutting issues that need to be dealt with. None of the existing methods quite hits the nail on the head with fragile states, which indicates that we need to create a tool specifically geared towards the needs of fragile states. The objective here, then, is to look at how to retaylor these existing frameworks to make certain that they deal with fragile states.

We turn now to how we can define and identify fragile states. One way of distinguishing between fragile states and other states are planning horizons. More stable states generally have a longer-term perspectives and expectations. Programming is based upon these expectations and planners feel confident that they can stay the course in these types of countries. Fragile states, on the other hand, have extremely short planning horizons. Talking to people in these states about planning cycles will therefore be counterproductive. In fragile states people are expecting to see quick changes. Part of the challenge is then making sure we understand those dynamics which are shifting and variable. At the same time, we have to provide responses that lead to results in a very short amount of time.

In the fragile states diagram, there is a distinction between states that are stable, vulnerable or in crisis. From a programmatic standpoint, this helps us to distinguish when it is that we really need to pay attention in a state or simply continue low-key monitoring of a state. Bear in mind also, that we are hoping to identify countries to be able to provide assistance before they head into crisis. However, this identification point of when to pay attention or intervene is not yet empirically based. In our diagram we do not have any arrows along the trajectory going back the other way indicating that there are clear problems in countries that are back sliding.

Another aspect of the strategy is identifying goals for fragile states. We have identified these goals as stability, reform and capacity, but questions still remain as to whether these goals form a hierarchy or whether they can be achieved simultaneously. Planning for these goals is a challenge because of the shorter planning horizons in fragile states. Reform is establishing rules for the game and I tend to think of these rules as being put into place in a hierarchy.

In the summary and strategy we have distilled the basic ideas of effectiveness and legitimacy and added in institutional dimensions. The more dynamic aspects of the strategy are the pathways.

In the fragile states strategy, effectiveness is defined as the capability of the state to work with society to provide or produce public goods and services and legitimacy is defined as the perception by most key segments of society that patterns of governance are appropriate and just. Today we will discuss whether we feel comfortable with these key definitions or not. One of the issues surrounding legitimacy is whether it is determined by external or internal views. Outsiders might use a set of norms like the Freedom House Index to determine state legitimacy. The question is whether we think that these types of measures are appropriate for judging country legitimacy or whether we are talking about local public opinion.

In terms of effectiveness, the strategy suggests that we measure the capability of the state, but we have had discussions about this issue. An unresolved question is whether effectiveness is also the relationship between state and society. It is important to look at how both state and society solve problems collectively, but the balance and the roles are still undefined.

The World Bank has also been grappling with issues of fragile states [see handout]. For instance, they have asked whether it is appropriate to think about basic core functioning of government and whether we want to make use of it or not.

In the IRIS/USAID fragile states framework, we also look at the interrelatedness between effectiveness and legitimacy, which gives the framework a sense of dynamism. In the IRIS diagram, critical dimensions (political, economic, security and social) are cross-referenced with effectiveness and legitimacy to form the PESS-EL framework.

Drawing on Jack Goldstone's work, the most dynamic aspect of the framework is the pathways. These pathways are the patterns of interaction between legitimacy and effectiveness which lead to various negative outcomes.

The strategy also identifies a series of five conditions for pathways of failure, which are really descriptions of the balance of power and the nature of politics in these various failed states. Prior to this meeting we asked Jack to think about recovery strategies and a dynamic of recovery that could parallel dynamics of failure. This is the area that really excites people because it adds positive value to the framework. If it is possible to discern parallel dynamics for failure and recovery this will impact our future analysis and perhaps lead us to define upward trajectories.

By the end of October, we hope to have a draft fragile states assessment tool. Towards that end we are soliciting memos from each of the consultants and meeting with you here today. Developing this tool will be an interactive process between a consultant and one or more designated staff from USAID who are willing to work to develop drafts and make sure that they are evolving. Dennis and Joe will take on the process of

consolidation, and the draft tool will serve as a basis for a series of field tests. As many of the people in this room who are able should participate in the field tests and we will also work on getting others involved in order to obtain more perspectives and more buy in.

Throughout the field tests we will engage in a series of briefings and debriefings with the field team members. Once we have completed the debriefings, we will talk about what worked, what did not work and how we can change things. Hopefully the whole process will conclude in February with the production of a final fragile states assessment tool. The intellectual inputs are going to be handed through this particular mechanism of PPC IDEAS, whereas the field visits will have to be handled in another way.

DISCUSSION

Nicole Ball: From reading the draft strategy it is unclear what you want us to do, although the objectives of the strategy seem to be to develop agency wide understanding of fragile countries, to identify states that need assistance and to develop tools.

Tjip Walker: This process is working in tandem with the early warning and alert systems. The question is then what we are going to do about countries, to which we have been alerted. The tracking system will produce only some sense of what is going on whereas the fragile states assessment tool is part diagnostic. We want to know what the dynamics are and how they compare to the indicators to be able to say that we have made an accurate assessment. Then once we have diagnosed the situation, it would help to begin to identify the appropriate responses. In this process we want to figure out developmental responses, what should be undertaken, and of these, what are the priorities. The tool should be identifying these responses and priorities. It can be used for a desk study, but the primary purpose is for it to be taken into the field and used for a team investigation.

Nicole Ball: What role will the local stakeholders play in this process apart from being part of an assessment team?

Tjip Walker: The role of local stakeholders could be somewhat variable. One could easily imagine that it would be valuable to have local people participating in the assessments and would be a way of providing a common analytical framework for them. Clearly if this becomes the strategy for the agency it could become the basis for conversations with USAID in the future. Obviously, given the range of countries we are dealing with, the extent of local stakeholder involvement should vary. For instance, we may find ourselves in a situation where the government is not legitimate and so we have limited engagement.

Bob Leavitt: What are the bureaucratic expectations for this tool? Is there an expectation that this tool will be required in certain countries, and that by 2005 or 2006 all new staff will be trained on this? How do these different tools come together in a certain country? Will it replace another tool within a country?

Tjip Walker: At the moment, the strategy will be the lead analytical tool within any fragile state. This doesn't mean that it is the only one; that will vary. My impression is that the fragile states assessment will not be required; however, training will be necessary. As far as the relationships with the other tools, the DG tool is appropriate for countries in the green zone of the diagram and it will not conflict with our fragile states framework. However, the DG dynamic needs to be captured within our framework. It is possible that we will create modules, such as one for conflict, one for security, etc., which can be put together in the fragile states assessment tool.

Konrad Huber: If we intend to implement this strategy among multiple players in the U.S. Government, how can we involve those key players, including those from Treasury, DOD and DOS? This is clearly one of the hopes. Part of the need to get this done is that we want to be the first movers to get the buy-in around this rather than being given whatever strategy someone else comes out with. We want to get other people involved in the field tests, including other government agencies and even other donors. Certainly within the agency, if we all agree on a game plan this could work together.

Jonathan Haughton: Will USAID actually be doing the assessment? Once we have the assessment, who is the audience? It seems to me that the best solution would be to have an integrated assessment, but due to budgetary constraints, it might be exclusively done by the mission or exclusively by consultants.

Why DG does particularly well is that there is a very basic ground on which they stand. If there are inexperienced people using the tool, they can still use it. These things do raise sensitivities. There are going to be issues that come up. In general, things would be shared within USAID. I think one of the things we will have to look at is the extent to which this creates problems. If you have joint people and have an intention of buy in, then this will be shared widely.

Ron Oakerson: My experience with DG is that it would be geared towards the in-country mission and they would be extremely sensitive to the governments in place within a country. If this strategy is supposed to be successful, one really cannot allow the in-country mission to have that kind of sway on the issue.

Tjip Walker: I think there are several features that made it a little less of a problem. Part of it is that the whole strategy is to try to empower missions to be able to address the problem themselves. One of the things we hear from the mission's is that it is not that they lack the tools, but it is that they cannot diagnose the problem. So we're trying to give people all the tools they need. In that spirit, missions would like to respond to issues and therefore they would not see our analysis as a threat. However, being realistic, we recognize there are differences. These countries do not have large absorptive capacity. We need to be very strategic in the way that we approach them. What are the most important issues to be dealt with? This does not mean coming in with the typical USAID approach of everything at once, which is driven by congressional earmarks and internal stakeholders. Essentially, we need to de-link the fragile states effort from standard

procedures and responses. In response to the draft fragile states strategy, we have received comments such as, “You forgot gender, HIV, human trafficking, human rights... etc.” The temptation is to say that all of these issues are in there. But that would swamp the arc that we are building. We are trying to be strategic, defensible, but we have to realize that there are going to be pressures. If we get more people on board towards the strategy, they would be more accepting of the idea of prioritizing.

Nicole Ball: What about stakeholder issues and roles? How are we integrating people? What about local people?

Tjip Walker: I am wide open to the idea of working with local people, but we have our bureaucratic objectives. Beyond that, we can focus on getting local buy-in.

Joe Siegle: Looking at past U.S. experience, are you aware of any body of knowledge that we can tap into and ask the question of “what has worked and what has not.”

Tjip Walker: We have a lot of information, but sometimes we don’t know we have it.

Ann Phillips: Our knowledge management section of the bureau is tracking USAID experience with certain countries. The Center for Development Information and Evaluation is obviously working on compiling knowledge of experience also.

Tjip Walker: Can you share this with us?

Ann Phillips: We are still looking at the frameworks and pathways. We also want to look at patterns that are out there, and so I think it would be best to start at a higher, more conceptual level and then match that with specific experiences.

Tjip Walker: This is similar to OTI’s experience. Much of what we are talking about in terms of programs is not all together different from what USAID does, but it does it with a twist, which is sometimes difficult to describe. First of all, it does recognize the short term time frame. Second, we rely on the short term local capacity in these states. We have to move very rapidly. Sustainability is a secondary objective. This is in sharp contrast compared to what the agency thinks is necessary for development. Investing resources in things that may not survive goes against typical development thinking.

Fragile States Syndromes, Analytic Narratives and Other Issues

Jack Goldstone: We would like this tool to be used for early assessment and warning; to identify fragile states and to come up with responses. The assessment tool is fungible; parts can be used or not used.

Step one: Screening States – Which ones are fragile? Which states are in crisis and nearing crisis? We are now calling this “matrix” a screening tool. To be more specific,

you can ask a number of simple questions to fill in each of the boxes of the matrix. Completing the matrix will indicate a level of fragility. We can come back to the prioritization of issues later.

The matrix is able to do a quick screen of a country. One screen will clearly not be effective; it must be done at regular intervals over a period of time. Therefore, if you are grading states for many years, you can see if the state is regressing into a fragile state. This matrix is used just for a preliminary assessment. Once you classify a state as “fragile” then you need to carry out a detailed assessment.

Some of the common questions about the tool are, “How do we develop two or three manageable indicators?”, “How do we involve mission people?”, “Can this be done quickly and reliably on data that is already being collected?” The alert exercise will do precisely this. The political instability task force will develop the best warning of risk two years before a crisis, but they do not do a good job of telling us exactly what is going on.

Tjip Walker: Another task force is developing the early warning system. That system is both predictive and descriptive, and it relies on quantitative measures. We are still looking at how to integrate it into ongoing reporting.

Jack Goldstone: What we have tried to do here is ask how you know which states are fragile? Whether it is descriptive or participatory, it is still for the same purpose. There are stylized scenarios that occur in different combinations and sequences. For instance, a state could undergo several conflicts and then become predatory. The use of the scenarios helps to identify key actors, key conflicts and key interests in a fragile state. Under the failing or failed category, we would expect at least one or possibly more of these scenarios to be playing a part in the weakening of the state such as communal group conflicts, conflicts over natural resources, central authority, etc. We should also ask if there is state predation involved or if there is a particular faction pressuring the state. Other questions might involve the goals of rebel groups, the experience with democracy and disenfranchised groups. We can also look at individual leaders and the nature of their support networks. Each of these scenarios is designed to help an analyst make some short-cut moves to quickly identify key players that are driving the process of state failure. If the state fails, then we want to know what drove the change. Was there external intervention? Was there negotiated settlement? Was there a clear winner?

These scenarios are tools, therefore, for speeding up the analysis of what is going on in each of those fragile states. I see familiarity with these conditions as an important part of speeding up the assessment and treatment design. USAID may have people who specialize within each of these cells, but we will be able to identify these teams more quickly when we first identify the main scenario that is driving problems. Obviously, there are complexities that will take into account several scenarios and the cells are not mutually exclusive, but you will need to know what is going on in all of the cells. The main question remains, however, where the state is within its trajectory.

Once you screen the state and identify it as fragile and have looked at the dominant concerns, you can use them together to create an analytic narrative. It is a term that comes from comparative politics and political economy. The analytic narrative focuses on key actors and their incentives. The idea is if you can figure out who the major actors are and what their incentives are, the best way to change behavior is to change the incentives.

The broad way we have discussed the analytical narrative before may not have been practical. It is more practical to break the narrative down to specific cells within the matrix. For example, a narrative could be done for state effectiveness or for state legitimacy. The question to ask in regards to state effectiveness is whether the state can do what we expect it to do. If not, then the state is unable to draw revenue, enforce laws, etc.

Legitimacy is not as easy to define. It is a legal term, but it is not just a matter of passing a law. We see legitimacy as fairness, for example whether the state is acting justly towards its neighbors and its citizens, whether the state allows for political growth and whether citizens have a say in their government or is access restricted to only a few. In our view, if there are restrictions on access then that weakens the legitimacy of the regime.

USAID is already competent in these areas. If you judge USAID or other agencies on how effective they have been in regards to long term growth, it is a mixed record because problems persistently interfere with growth. On the other hand, if USAID is judged on improving institutions and capacity, we have been more successful. For example, the DG process takes into account legitimacy. OTI focuses on state effectiveness and looks at programs such as programs in health, education and conflict management.

Building Constitutional Order

The idea is that we do not want to have disaggregated efforts. We do not want to put separate bureaus in charge of all of these dimensions. The notion of constitutional order should guide the process. Once you screen the states, you identify the problems and then the treatments. It is important that these treatments are organized so that they will build constitutional order. For example, you would not want to dump a huge amount of money in construction for education or health infrastructure if you did not establish security to protect that work. So once you assign what needs to be done, you want to make sure you do not create perverse incentives. The priority of issues would look like this: security, political effectiveness, legitimacy, and then social issues and economic growth. There may be some cases where the social services (HIV/AIDS) are such a large problem, that you have to make some progress in those areas first, but overall, the guide should be a self-sustaining set of mutually reinforcing incentives. We also need to be cognizant of groups looking to take advantage of the aid package. Should we then also focus on groups in post-conflict situations who are fearful or mistrustful? Where does conflict mediation or youth training fit in?

Monitoring and Assessment

We cannot assume a fixed order particularly because each state is different. As these treatments are being implemented, the screening with the matrix should be done at regular intervals to see if the state is still fragile. You want to maintain a holistic approach and stay consistent with the overall plan.

DISCUSSION

Ann Phillips: This raises the question of the role of local people. We cannot have illusions about our understanding of local dynamics in a society. Even if we think we know, we may not know. So I do not think it will be easy to understand incentives. It is equally problematic then to change incentives and influence domestic issues. There are also many different levels for influencing groups. We should not assume that because we have developed one system that it will work well in another one. We must also remember that outside actors have a limited ability to influence issues such as culture and government legitimacy. We need to strategize on how to engage most effectively on these issues. A lot of European donors feel that we are projecting our legitimacy issues on to others. That is why our work on legitimacy is rejected by our donor partners.

The second point is that the more specific a task is in transferring knowledge, the easier it is. The less specific a task is, the less effective we can be. If the diagnosis is perfect, we have to separate out where outside actors are most or least effective. That would help to figure out where to spend the money.

Konrad Huber: I am troubled with the steps after step 3, because we are taking a technical approach to these deeply entrenched issues. The more candid you are about the true politics, the less likely the host government is going to be involved

Jack Goldstone: In response to both questions, the answer may very well be that we cannot change the state. Legitimacy is a very controversial subject. We cannot talk about legitimacy in the sense of value sanctioning. Rather, we are trying to assess fair access. Fair access is more in line with international human rights and norms that we can all agree upon. It is really a question of distributional fairness between the state, community groups and individuals.

As for the local issues, the initial screening can be done with central aid teams reaching out for input from local missions. Once a state is identified as fragile, the analytic narratives will require local partners. It will be a practical matter as to who is the best partner. Once you complete Step 1, you have to be deeply involved with people locally.

Wendy Marshall: There are people within the agency who fundamentally question the fragility matrix. Right now, there are a lot of gaps in people's understanding of what it is USAID is currently doing. Building on the matrix to a next step, therefore, makes me nervous. The framework also does not seem useful to me because one has to contort it to make every issue fit.

Jack Goldstone: I had to break down all the issues with fragile states into a more manageable order of discrete tasks that could be used to plot an agency strategy. We also tried to figure out if this is a reasonable way to break down tasks of fragility. We asked ourselves how you map existing competencies within an agency to address these tasks and if this framework will structure what is happening. We need to talk about as a team what we are doing now and what we would like to do in a world of fragile states. Two questions arise in this: what I do is not in there and where am I going to fit into.

Wendy Marshall: Are those analytical steps sufficient? I do not think effectiveness and legitimacy are enough. With this being a multi-sectoral assessment tool, we cannot address all of these issues well enough with effectiveness and legitimacy.

Ann Phillips: What do you see that is not included within effectiveness and legitimacy? When I look at the framework, I do not see things that are not included. Part of the role of the framework is to focus the analyst on the intersection of these sectors to get a more holistic view.

Tjip Walker: One of the major debilitating issues in the effort to develop a fragile states strategy has been this inability to agree on core concepts. The actual process now is to turn this strategy into an operational tool. I had hoped that there was a sufficient amount of buy-in to the fragility framework that we would not have to go back to the first principles. As an intellectual exercise we can perfect it the framework, but from a bureaucratic standpoint, the concrete is pretty set and therefore we have to make the most of what we have. Through this team we are going to build upon this framework. There is a very large degree of consensus on the major issues of the framework. I do not want to shut down intellectual discussion, but on the other hand if you cannot get comfortable with the core concepts, this is not necessarily the place that one wants to be. If there are specific concerns and concepts, we will see during the test whether it works.

Sharon Morris: I do believe that there are other things that we may want to be included, so I hope there is a room for some additions.

Jack Goldstone: The framework is very plastic in its design. It builds multiple competencies into the framework. You can fit in specific issues. For example, women's rights fit into many boxes. We may also be able to add parts of the DG and conflict frameworks into our own framework.

Wendy Marshall: Let's take Zimbabwe as an example. If you wanted to do an assessment, you could easily assess that there is an effective regime able to maintain law and order. But then there is the question of legitimacy. Zimbabwe does not have a legitimate regime by our standards. Are we then going to bolster such a regime?

Nicole Ball: I do not feel comfortable with the box matrix. Trying to fit security into one box or two is not realistic. People are going to think in boxes. What IRIS thought was effectiveness and legitimacy indicators are not what I consider to be indicators. It makes

me concerned that this will be very far removed from the real world. Aspects of security are economic, social, etc.

Wendy Marshall: How much of this do you think is useful for early warning versus useful for going in and doing analysis for how to develop a strategy. The boxes do not uncover the ongoing dynamics.

Jack Goldstone: What you are saying is that these boxes cannot deal with the complexity of issues in these countries. These boxes are useful as a quick screening tool for step one, but this is not the same process to suggest responses. Our notion is once you get to understand the complexity within the box; you need to look at a wide variety of issues.

TjipWalker: We want this framework to be used for a number of purposes. The warning signals would give you one sort of sign, which would then translate into more issues.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the DG Assessment Tool

Wendy Marshall: The DG Assessment is a four-step process. The first phase has five elements: consensus, inclusion, rule of law, competition and governance. Steps two and three include the topics of incentives and institutional structures. One question, then, is whether these five categories will fit within the fragile states framework.

We define these terms as follows: “consensus” refers to the amount of agreement on a country’s basic political structure; “inclusion” looks at the involvement of various groups in the system; “rule of law” considers the structure of a nation’s legal system”; “competition” refers to several factors, including institutional checks and media control; and, “governance” looks at public administration systems.

Rule of law brings to light government predation, instances of impunity and issues of massive human rights abuses.

Competition brings to light the degree of authoritarianism and looks at underlying dynamics.

Governance is the degree that institutions are functioning or not functioning.

The DG assessment has worked well when applied to fragile states. It is useful in that it helps uncover the political dynamics underlying the behavior of governments in fragile states.

The DG assessment provides a richer analysis than the fragile states framework. It helps people to prioritize and sequence.

The DG framework is fairly well accepted and has been used already by mission directors and ambassadors. Because they are funded centrally people are willing to undertake the

process. The scope of the work and level of effort is flexible which also makes the DG more inviting. However, problems arise when missions are invested in a current portfolio and they do not want change. It can be difficult to reorient them. On the question of whether there are bureaucratic issues, I would say that there are virtually none.

It is crucial that the teams have a diverse knowledge base, including solid USAID knowledge, country expertise, a political science background, and an understanding of how economics links with everything else. It goes without saying that the teams also need leadership and diplomatic abilities.

In terms of how we move from analysis to programmatic elements, it is important to ask what has worked and what has not worked. We have difficulty in moving towards addressing new questions. It has been difficult in cases of big patronage for example. We are getting better at anti-corruption, but another area where we had trouble was in a multi-country assessment. We are generally weak so far in knowing the programmatic tools.

DISCUSSION

Ann Phillips: Can you give an example of where missions have modified their DG portfolio based on the assessment?

Wendy Marshall: We do not generally try and go in when people are in mid-program. We go when they are establishing strategies. I cannot think of any good assessments that the mission did not use of the ones I have managed in Africa. We encourage them not to use the bad assessments of course. The key is being engaged with the mission the whole time. As long as you reach out to the missions, you are viewed as helping them.

Tjip Walker: The way that the DG assessment is designed is to move from the ideal to the feasible. As an approach, has this been working? Second, the assessments are designed by a three person team for three weeks. Is this adequate or not?

Wendy Marshall: It is a relatively small group, which makes it important to have all of the members proficient at doing assessments. It is important that the groups have good leaders and we are always trying to find and groom more. The assessments work but it takes a particular approach and understanding.

If you understand the main problems of the DG area it is still not an easy analytic task to distill it all down. We specifically look for people in-country who are able to work on these issues. For example, in Liberia we looked at rule of law as a big issue. There is a good chief justice, but the courts are not independent and the institutional structure was not good for capacity building. It is still difficult for a lot of analysts to work through it. The filters work, but they are not easy to use.

As for the level of effort, we frequently end up with four people because it is a good idea for a USAID person to be in the field. We can be flexible in small countries and we

hardly ever go over three weeks. We have never had to repeat the assessment multiple times. The nature of the assessment is that there is a lot of description in those primary variables and these variables do not change very quickly. Besides keeping up with day-to-day political events, there is not a need to do this type of analysis more than every few years.

Konrad Huber: What about the sensitivity of the assessments?

Wendy Marshall: The purpose of the assessments is to inform the USAID mission. We would like to use local analysts, but sometimes it is difficult to find ones that are non-partisan. The analyst reports are not provided to the government and not widely distributed. Because DG activities are a regular sector for donors, there were no questions raised about why an assessment was being conducted. For example, I was in Eritrea and we did not have to inform anyone that an assessment was going on. It should be noted though that the classification of DG assessments does become a hassle.

Konrad Huber: If the assessments are not widely distributed, how useful are they?

Wendy Marshall: The assessments are not meant to be a programming tool. They are meant to be a source of information for the mission. It does help with strategy, but the purpose of the analysis is not to drive activities.

Jack Goldstone: The DG assessment can become the basis of a practical strategy when you are applying it to a state trying to make progress towards democracy. In our view, the DG framework fits into our fragile states conditions of effectiveness and legitimacy. There is a very high level of overlap, and what you are doing in the second step of the DG assessment is exactly the same thing as an analytic narrative. If you are looking at Egypt, you will get low democracy indicators, but it will have a better level of fragility. So the DG assessment is not totally adequate to answer the question of fragility. For example, we have a U.S. policy in Egypt that is concerned with stability, not democracy, or a country like Columbia where it is doing okay for rule of law, but it is still considered fragile. This is because the concept of fragility goes beyond democracy and governance issues.

Wendy Marshall: I think here there is a difference in perspectives for each tool. The fragile states assessment is meant to elucidate the government dynamics of a country. It does indirectly create country rankings. The DG assessment is sector based. We are trying to get it to a cross-sectoral level, but it is a stretch.

Tjip Walker: We should not get too preoccupied with the boxes of the fragile states framework and forget how it all relates. Instead, we should be looking at scenarios. For example, if one is looking at constitutional order, it would fall into many areas of the fragile states framework. I do not think we are trying to pigeonhole issues into a small box. I think we can reformulate the framework.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Conflict Assessment Tool

Sharon Morris: The conflict assessment framework looks at incentives, motives, means and opportunities within a country. For example, as a citizen, are you regularly denied access to certain critical resources? We also look at greed-based incentives. Are there people who are benefiting from war? We mix incentives as well, like combining greed based and grievance based incentives.

The conflict assessment analysis looks at incentives for violence. Do certain groups have dominant access to resources? These can be extremist groups or religious organizations - any pre-existing organized group. For example in Rwanda there are dense, rich and vibrant ties among communities. Most people would rather not participate in violence, but the close association within communities made it very clear who should be killed.

We look at financial resources (i.e. where the money is coming from) and human resources (i.e. are there pools of at-risk youth within the population who could become recruits for groups that use violence).

We consider if there are institutions that are able to address or block access to conflict resources or are institutions within the society active participants in the conflict? Do they provide security resources or are they providing guns to various groups within the society?

A classic example is Nigeria. The country has a broad range of institutions, but to understand the rationale behind the conflict, we had to focus on the interplay of incentives.

We will often conduct both regional and individual country analysis with the understanding that there are external shocks which must be taken into account. For example, when we looked at Central Asia, we considered demographic trends. The population of young people is booming, but employment opportunities are minimal. All the young people have gone to work in Russia. So what happens if Russia cuts off this “safety valve” in the region and we have masses of unemployed, able-bodied people?

Another aspect we consider is windows of vulnerability. Are there triggers or moments where the potential for violence escalates suddenly (i.e. assassinations, natural disasters). Some things can be predicted from our past experience to definitely trigger instability, such as elections, decentralization programs and anti-corruption.

There are many places where the conflict assessment framework intersects with the fragile states strategy. However, I think there are things missing from the fragile states strategy. It is hard to see what the contributing factors are that move a state to being classified as collapsed. The conflict approach is particularly useful in this manner. Conflict does not simply happen because of risk factors. It happens when risk factors converge in a series of events. Violence occurs when incentives and resources are

combined with institutions. Unless you see how things come together, you have limited your ability to cut into the chain of events which are leading you somewhere unfortunate.

When we designed the conflict analysis tool, we hit every one of these boxes presented under the fragile states framework. You have to find where the sectors come together and focus your efforts there. You also should make the effort to show specialization officers where they fit into the program.

What has proven to be cumbersome? It is difficult to keep all the balls juggling. It is hard to find interagency and multidisciplinary team members who want to talk to each other, which is especially hard in the field.

There have been some reasons that the conflict framework has not been widely accepted. First of all, the reports can often be classified, limiting their access and perhaps impeding their usefulness. Second, ambassadors sometimes get upset about the report findings. Also, it is difficult to generate a high quality report if the local community will not openly talk to you.

You do have to involve the bureaucracy in this process and that is a mixed blessing. Sometimes having them on board gets your foot in the door in some places. However, very often you are not wanted there. Forcing a mission to do something they are not willing to do is a waste of time.

The teams that are most successful are interdisciplinary, combining very strong country expertise and USAID development experts. You must take your findings to a programmatic level. Our bureaus and missions are generally supportive, but one must get the ambassador on board at the beginning of the process.

Quality analysis is critical. It is the first step in a very complex process. Once you complete your analysis, you have to make it relevant. Depth and richness of analysis creates the same in a program, but analysis will not tell you everything that needs to occur for a successful program.

DISCUSSION

Jack Goldstone: The programmatic stage is about trying different approaches, incorporating local knowledge and key expertise. When you said things are missing from this framework, you are assuming that if it is not explicitly there, then it is assumed to be not there?

Sharon Morris: I believe if a natural resource person sees the fragile states framework, they will have difficulty plugging into it.

Wendy Marshall: The DG and CAF assessments are not sufficient to get to programming. CAF assumes that there is already enough information available and an understanding about all the issues to have existing programs. It is not trying to replace

that. The DG assessment is complemented by the CAF, but there are certain things that come to light through CAF that impact DG programming. However, neither will give you all the information that you need. The idea of having a whole different assessment framework that is going to be sufficient to give programmatic direction across all USAID sectors is not possible.

Jack Goldstone: Could other assessments feed into the fragile states framework?

Sharon Morris: I think it is very possible to use a similar model for the fragile states assessment.

Tjip Walker: We have a tendency to go back into the model of transformational development and look at what needs to be adjusted when what we need to do is use a paradigm that is different. The fragile states framework cannot be doing the same range of country activities and set of analysis as other frameworks. This may be my OTI hubris, but when we do an assessment, there is nothing that is off the table in the beginning. Anything is possible. Therefore, relatively small teams are able to make reasonable judgments about critical transitional leads. This suggests that there should be further analysis. One of the things we are trying to avoid is doing a whole series of sector based analyses and then creating some kind of capstone. We are trying to take a general approach, but one that is fast, flexible and able to be conducted repeatedly.

Sharon Morris: How do the sector assessments look different in the fragile states framework compared to what we have had in the past?

Dennis Wood: We are not going to step into each country. Instead, we start with the scenario and looking at it analytically – i.e. what is the overriding problem and difficulty? What does the analytic scenario tell us? What happens if you are seeing a predatory government and attempting to make changes through the health sector? You would see that the predatory government keeps impeding your efforts. You want to focus on the large forces that drive states towards fragility.

Konrad Huber: Have you seen any traction on key issues among other agencies? Will the framework bring the fragile states issue to the forefront for other agencies? What is the value added to the fragile states framework? What has been the result of the conflict assessment?

Sharon Morris: I think that analysis is a critical first step. However, I do not think that we tell people things they do not know already. Rather, our analysis encourages people to talk. A number of missions take the analytic piece and try to work its findings into their strategy. Apparently, the resulting program design is better, but it is still unclear what the direct programmatic result is of the conflict assessment tool.

Bob Leavitt: The development of any new framework will have organizational implications within the mission, starting with leadership and the specialization officers.

The simplicity of a framework is critical. It must help everyone understand how our actions impact a country.

Jack Goldstone: It sounds like you want a fairly transparent tool that will encourage people to think carefully about what they do to address fragility indicators.

Charles Weden: I am not sure what this framework brings to mission directors. It is likely that fragile states resources will be directed to the State Department.

Tjip Walker: Given the current political environment, there is understandable hesitation about asking for additional resources. However, what we are suggesting with the fragile states framework is an implicit part of resource allocation. If we can explain to Congress what we are doing, we have a stronger case for allocating more resources. Everyone needs to bear this in mind when we are developing budgeting to outlining technical assistance. We need to have the leadership and the organization to support this type of effort.

Sharon Morris: You want to involve everyone in a mission in order to conduct a truly interdisciplinary assessment. To do that effectively, you are going to have to show how existing funding streams fit in. You should also consider using language that resonates with specialized officers.

Ann Phillips: The idea of treating fragile states separately is attractive to a lot of people. Other government agencies are expecting something from us on fragile states. The separate funding issue is linked to how we approach the fragile states.

Sharon Morris: I think it is a language question. In order to include people in this process, you have to become familiar with the language of specialized officers and cast the discussion in terms that are understandable to them.

Ann Phillips: The analysis should tell you what our priorities should be. In spirit, the fragility framework is linked more closely with the conflict assessment. Both frameworks look at the nexus of sectors to find the most vulnerable sections and identify leverage points. The difference is that we would see conflict as an expression of state fragility versus the primary focus.

Political Dimension

Ron Oakerson: The fragile states framework is an abstract idea, which has its benefits, but we must work to operationalize it. We can start with an arrow diagram - institutions flow into capacity, which impacts fragility. Therefore, it is important to focus on dimensions of capacity rather than institutions themselves.

Each capacity can be addressed in terms of effectiveness and legitimacy. The arrow diagram, as presented here, is the true heart of the fragile states matrix. The arrows show that all institutions can exert influence on all capacities.

“Constitutional order” is an important term because it refers to arrangements of institutions. Intervening variables provide choices for key actors, and institutions create incentives for these choices.

An important part of this framework is in understanding the mismatch between institutions and core problems. The framework can be further specified by stipulating specific syndromes describing patterns of key interactions between people. Equipped with the knowledge of various syndromes, the focus has to be on the logic of the situation. You need to provide some discussion of the typical institutional weaknesses associated with various types of institutions. One example is the neutral ground notion; it can be served by many institutional arrangements in a society. What are the typical sources of institutional weakness that one might be able to look for? Since institutional capacities are very broad, one must zero in on those rules which are critically related to the strategies the key actors are choosing.

Institutional analysis needs to be added in order to operationalize this concept. One should attempt to understand why the rules of the game create incentives that lead to perverse outcomes.

DISCUSSION

Ann Phillips: Is the focus on function?

Ron Oakerson: The focus is on capacity and how it is arranged. It should be country specific.

Wendy Marshall: How do you determine core problems?

Ron Oakerson: In many cases it is obvious. If there is a predominant problem, I doubt it is going to be really difficult to get. There are only going to be a couple of major things that can drive a state to failure.

Wendy Marshall: It may seem to be the obvious thing, but in fact it is the primary issue at hand and one that is at the core of the analysis.

Jonathan Haughton: How can we get people to move forward with this framework?

Sharon Morris: The discomfort comes from the fact that the matrix appears to be static and two-dimensional.

Jack Goldstone: You are saying that people’s natural tendency is to find the box they fit into and then try to fit everything they can into their box.

Wendy Marshall: This framework easily says that our development activities should focus on increasing the legitimacy of a particular regime. I do not know how the framework would generate programmatic recommendations since you can increase legitimacy in many different ways. Is this a program tool or an early warning system?

Tjip Walker: So you are saying that this framework will encourage one to consider choices which would cause us to support only particular policy choices?

Sharon Morris: Promoting legitimacy does not trump all other objectives. A similar criticism was raised about the conflict framework – does this justify us clamping down against legitimate groups for the sake of stability?

Security Dimension

Nicole Ball: What is security? Security is protection against violence for a state and for its people. Security is achieved by promoting conflict prevention and maintaining a strong capacity to deal with security issues.

There are three main requirements to creating a reliable security sector: democratic governance, operational effectiveness, and remedial measures for past conflicts. Development actors can make contributions to requirements one and three. However, addressing these tasks requires partnerships with local folks, other donors, and the security sector.

In order to understand the security challenges a country faces, you have to understand the multiple dimensions such as the political aspects of democratic accountability and trans-border crime, or economic aspects like access to state resources.

There are ten key principles that can be followed from the development perspective in terms of proper development of the security sector.

- Accountability of security forces to elected civil authorities and civil society.
- Adherence of security forces to international law and domestic constitutional law.
- Transparency on security-related matters, within government and to the public.
- Adherence of security sector to same principles of public-expenditure management as non-security sectors.
- Acceptance of clear hierarchy of authority between civil authorities and the defense forces, clear statement of mutual rights and obligations between civil authorities and security forces.
- Capacity among civil authorities to exercise political control and constitutional oversight of the security sector.
- Capacity within civil society to monitor security sector and provide constructive input to the political debate on security policies.
- Political environment conducive to an active role on the part of civil society.

- Access of security forces to professional training consistent with requirements of democratic societies.
- High priority accorded to regional and sub-regional peace and security by policymakers.

There are five analytic processes that do embody the norms expressed previously:

- Adherence of the security sector to rule of law
- Capacity for policy development, planning and implementation in the security sector
- Professionalism of security bodies
- Civil oversight of the security sector
- Capacity to manage security sector expenditures

If one compares assessments that we have done of security sectors and development, one will see that the process and issues covered overlap significantly with the DG assessment.

DISCUSSION

Konrad Huber: What is the difference between the needs in the security matrix and what USAID can actually do?

Tjip Walker: If stakeholders are within the military or police, there may be rules restricting us. However, this is an analytical exercise and therefore we should look generally at security issues. There is a very separate, but overlapping discussion about security issues and that discussion will have to occur with the State Department. Our discussion today is to help us understand what the general dynamics of security are and later on we can sort out operational issues.

Jack Goldstone: Nicole's presentation is rich on many levels. There are four central elements of which three fall within understanding the country context. These are the same questions which we want to address in our screening matrix - is the country at war? Do security bodies have inadequate funding? The key principles she outlined fall within a whole different level; these are normative goals.

Nicole Ball: I came up with measures because I thought that was our goal,

Jack Goldstone: Our goal is to find the areas have the most red flags in fragile states.

Tjip Walker: I think we are trying to move beyond red flagging areas of concern and beginning to look at what the questions are that need to be asked when someone goes into the field. We may need to look at what has already been done in the DG assessment.

I think we do have a major intellectual gap regarding the security sector. We need to know how to answer questions like how does one ensure a certain degree of order so people can move away from conflict and violence? Maybe the solution is that we have to

approach the problem differently depending if we are trying to achieve stability or reform.

Nicole Ball: There are many kinds of stability that are all equally important. If you could isolate those issues which are cross cutting and can be readily addressed, your activities would add more value to your overall mission.

Jack Goldstone: What I keep hearing from you guys is we have to do surgery and we have only been given a stethoscope and some general instructions. What I am trying to figure out is what level of specificity are you requiring?

Nicole Ball: I think finding the cross-cutting issues to focus on is different than simply requesting specificity.

Tjip Walker: You want a framework that will help guide you to what the key questions are. For example, the right set of questions about civil-military relations will give you adequate insight into the motivations of the players. There may be common scenarios we can evaluate.

Nicole Ball: Using scenarios is dangerous though because the same scenario applies differently to various countries.

Bob Leavitt: You had mentioned the importance of participation in your presentation. Guinea had a highly participatory process that went on for years, and the result was a cheap cost effective approach where those participating in the process understood the methodology. If we are developing a new framework for developing the security sector, to what extent do you think participation is required especially since we are moving beyond analysis into operational recommendations?

Nicole Ball: When developing a country's security sector, the government must be on board for the long term. This process has to be fully participatory and multidisciplinary. It is assumed that since we are doing an assessment, our activities cannot be used for programming. This assessment is about prioritization and there is another process that looks at programming. So even though this is not a programming issue, it has to be participatory in the analytical sense. We have to look at how to encourage the government to start having a meaningful dialogue on security sector development.

Jonathon Haughton: What if participation is lacking?

Nicole Ball: Regardless, we should still take these steps.

Konrad Huber: Thus, legitimacy appears to be a precursor for effectiveness.

Economic Dimension

Jonathon Haughton: If we begin with effectiveness, there are two terms key to how one must look at the economic dimension of fragile states - “sustenance” and “secure.” There are various measurements for these (e.g., goods, employment), but we must organize our ideas within country-specific contexts to ask how widespread is the deprivation, is the private sector investing, is land registry important, and what level of record keeping exists for transactions?

For economic legitimacy, one should look at whether certain groups are being excluded from resources, as this can ignite conflict.

Then, we must take the narrative outside the matrix. This is where analysis comes in to play and we have the ability to prioritize our recommendations. Some issues are easy to address, such as changes in inflation and exchange rates. What about fiscal discipline and tax collection? Is there institutional capacity, and is it formal or informal? Are countries working with donors? The private sector in particular needs attention in the narrative analysis. Are property rights protected? If not, there can be serious setbacks. In addition, we must analyze food aid. Is the provision of aid hurting the economy?

DISCUSSION

Judith Dunbar: We do not have an EG representative on the USAID side and we often do not know what DG is doing. What criteria would make it into the economic assessments?

Sharon Morris: I agree that we need to talk to USAID economic experts more. Maybe something different can be done with current economic assessments. The phrase “systemic exclusion of one group in economy” gets to fragility, but do other elements of economic assessments in existence touch upon fragility as well? Are the economic dynamics in fragile states really different than in other states?

Konrad Huber: What about trade, treasury and structural adjustment issues?

Jonathon Haughton: Yes, there are a lot of country-specific issues. The approach to fragile states is unique in how you select the programs as trade-offs are different for fragile states.

Tjip Walker: Our experience in post-conflict situations is that there are three things of continuing importance for economic well being. One is jobs – even temporarily hiring people - but just getting them off the streets and getting them employed. This is perceived as one of the most important things security-wise and it also adds liquidity to an economy. Second, you try to establish rules that do not stand in the way of economic growth for the future, like tariff barriers. Third, you ensure that whatever regime is established post-conflict is not a monopoly power.

I would argue that EGAT would not really be able to add anything more. These three areas are where they put their resources. Are there certain economic characteristics that are typical of a fragile or failing state? There may very well be certain economic problems that are particularly common in fragile states.

Jack Goldstone: You have to put money into jobs as well as the environment. Otherwise you have folks who have jobs and pay taxes that fund militia groups which are creating instability and conflict.

Joe Siegle: You also have to take into account that there is a timing element of immediate intervention versus post conflict.

Jack Goldstone: This is why security is important. Money can contribute to instability if the area is not secure.

Sharon Morris: This is not a question of sequencing. You really have to do things all at once in order to get things right.

Jack Goldstone: You have to look at how your elements interact with things on the ground. It is more of an analytical task, but less of an operational task in the sense of trying to do everything all at once. Rather, one needs to align and execute strategies properly in order to get things done correctly.

Social Dimension

Jack Goldstone: The question at the entry point is whether economic growth is high but directed towards one small group. Another important question is whether institutions are promoting certain outcomes. If so, we can look at methods for influencing institutions to change outcomes. Of course, if local communities provide access to resources, like clean water, it may not matter what institutions are producing.

Another example is education. We always hear about donors building schools. But are the schools in areas where students can attend? Is the curriculum acceptable? Are the schools located within a security net? Are they in isolated areas? These factors influence how people feel about government.

This is what I had in mind when I spoke of the outcomes of legitimacy and effectiveness. I was surprised that some of you thought the boxes were too small. We approached this as if USAID had unlimited authority concerning world development. We wanted to determine areas of need, regardless of USAID's actual authority.

In Haiti, for instance, we discontinued aid when the elections appeared to be illegitimate, but did we expect this to encourage stability? Looking at U.S. foreign policy as a whole, there is a short-term emphasis on effectiveness or legitimacy but not coordination. We

have failed to merge these two concepts. Our goal is to determine the elements that must get on the table.

DISCUSSION

Wendy Marshall: We should not lose focus. We are getting into interagency processes and coordination, but we should not mix that with USAID programming tools.

Tjip Walker: Our task is to develop a diagnostic guide for fragile states. Eventually, others will look at programmatic responses. Jack was correct when he said that we must look at needs to address in the future. If we adopt this view, we may be able to gain a broader understanding of what needs to be done, within and beyond USAID's parameters.

Jack Goldstone: The framework should be different from other assessment tools in several respects. First, our analytic framework looks at whether the provision of services is supporting or undermining the state (e.g., whether a clinic is operated by rebels or the government). Second, we assess the degree to which a state can provide and regulate services. These questions must be answered with local knowledge, but once we integrate them into the analytic narrative, we will move towards the development of interventions that remedy fragility.

Dennis Wood: Ron was right when he focused on the driving forces behind country capacities. We should develop an assessment tool that provides a new fragile states paradigm for the White Paper strategy. This is a significant opportunity.

Ron Oakerson: I am troubled by the way we are equating social capacity with governmental capacity to provide services. I would like to see more of a focus on self-organizing capacities of local communities and civil society. We should not presume that services provided by central governments are superior. To the contrary, reliance on government can increase fragility.

Jack Goldstone: Applicable questions include, 1) what is the history of service provision in a particular country and 2) has this history encouraged fragility? For instance, in post-revolutionary states, one of the best ways to establish credibility is to sponsor public health and literacy programs. If civil society provides these programs, does that threaten or support stability? Are church hospitals better than rebel hospitals?

Where services are absent, government support can strengthen the state. If service provision is biased towards one group, the state can make improvements through regulation and quality control. Another question we should ask is whether social service outcomes are accepted or rejected by the population?

Ron Oakerson: In addition, how do local people survive and maintain their well being in a predatory state? Strong local capacity provides assurance that local needs will be met because predatory states cannot provide these services.

Jack Goldstone: I am referring to central states with local government services. For instance, in the U.S., the government wants people to attend parochial schools, but in other countries, the U.S. wants children to attend non-religious schools. Does education support or diminish existing institutions? We should not prejudge the issue.

Ron Oakerson: The local population may be concerned about survival given a predatory government. The key is to maintain local capacity because USAID can never ensure the long-term stability of governments and the continued provision of services.

Judith Dunbar: One thing that we have not discussed is local networking for rapid response. How do we access societal structure versus the state? The framework focuses on the existence of institutions and the state in particular.

Jack Goldstone: I think the point is that we need to link social services and state support. As far as the feedback, if we do not have that, then it is a bad assessment tool. The assessment tool is only one part of the fragile states framework, however.

Ann Phillips: Our goal is to move fragile countries towards transformational development. We are accountable for these countries, and we must tailor our approach to their needs.

Tjip Walker: I am not sure whether we will get there or not. Because the use of transformational strategies in fragile states can be counter productive, we must approach these states in a unique way. Many fragile states are suffering from humanitarian issues, which requires an emergency focus. Unfortunately, this causes neglect on issues regarding national capacities, effectiveness and legitimacy.

But programs last longer than crises, and we have a legacy of stovepipe programs. There is tension between and local and central government solutions. Local problem solving contributes to survival strategies, but central government services provide legitimacy. We should recognize this tension and sort through some of these dilemmas. Each is a very legitimate concern.

There are several reports out there, like the World Development Report, which focus on service delivery. One of service delivery's most important distinctions is between the provision and production of services. Provision refers to the creation of conditions to produce services, but provision and production do not need to be provided by the same person. So what is the appropriate role for governmental entities? And who does the actual production? Should the government be involved in everything? We can introduce these questions and make important contributions to humanitarian assistance and longer-term issues like child survival programs and education.

Summary

Joe Siegle: Summary Points

- Fragile states offer a unique context for analysis, which has been strongly emphasized in written documents. Now we need to clarify further how exactly the fragile states context is distinct, how the assessment tool will be distinct and how the programming in fragile states will be distinct.
- There is a concern that the fragility matrix is static and that the eight cell matrix is potentially very limiting and constraining in how we think about the problems in fragile states. We need to think more carefully about how to improve the presentation of the matrix.

We all agree that we do not want to have four sectoral recommendations that could have been conceived of independently without thinking about the cross cutting nature of fragile states. As part of this, we suggested that the analytic narratives have the potential to serve as a cross-cutting device, which bring out the overlap to the different dimensions.

I would also like to highlight the value of the pathways that were introduced in the initial document and about which there was excitement for how these pathways could fit in to an assessment tool. The pathways are a valuable guide for painting different potential scenarios, which can guide programming for new and upcoming fragile states issues. This is a line of thinking that can be developed, but it needs to be refined further to be of value.

- We have discussed how the fragile states assessment tool and the matrix would factor into existing tools that are out there (DG and the CAF). We know there are significant overlaps among the tools. This provides an opportunity to build on and learn from these bodies of knowledge that already exist and to see where there are areas of potential collaboration. I think there is much to learn from both the DG assessment tool and the CAF. I came away from both of those discussions with the idea that there are multiple filters in those tools which allow for prioritization of different programmatic elements. We want to make sure something similar comes out of the fragile states tool when it is ultimately developed. The DG assessment tool and the CAF were iterative processes and a lot of time went into devising them. It was a process of refining and experimenting and now they are seen as fairly effective and are widely used and accepted within the agency.

A high value was also placed on the fact that it is very difficult to identify good people to do the assessments, but it is also critical to the success of the tool. The assessment teams are small groups of talented people, which incorporate local

people and mission involvement. Local awareness and programmatic familiarity are also very important.

There is a large value on mission buy-in in order for the analysis to be effective, and, more importantly, for anything to do be done with the results of the assessment. Both Wendy and Sharon emphasized that the follow on after the analysis was the most important part of the process. The missions have engaged your offices to use the information you provided to them to program their interventions. This is an important lesson and objective to bring into the fragile states tool. To the extent that the fragile states mechanism becomes another tool for missions, we need to see how it adds value to what is already being used and we need to be cognizant of the fact that missions may feel that they are already over assessed.

- We need to think more carefully about local stakeholders and identify the extent to which local governments are to be engaged. Certainly for the security sector, we must engage with the national and provincial governments in order to have impact the security sector. While USAID has not really focused on security, there is a real opportunity here for USAID because Nicole's experience of taking a multidisciplinary approach is very important and it is necessary. DOD is focusing on engaging local stakeholders now, and it seems that there would be potential for synergy there.
- The reality is that these issues stretch far beyond the mandate of USAID and its resources. Interdepartmental coordination will be crucial for effective programming on issues that come out of the fragile states assessment. The operating assumption is that we have to take a broad conceptual starting point to approach this analysis in order to see the broad key issues and then narrow matters down. This analysis should be done before we begin any interdepartmental coordination.

Tjip Walker: About a year ago I started on the process of developing an early warning system for USAID, and we hired two consultants to help us think the system through. We asked them to look at all the existing early warning tools specifically focused on conflict. I assumed that the solution would be very simple and that there would be an appropriate existing tool we could use. However, the consultants came back with something very complicated and initially a lot less satisfactory. As I have come to think about it more, I realize the product became much stronger because of the way in which they added additional inputs into the system.

After today's meeting, I thought that we would have a clear sense of how we would move forward with the tasks at hand and that the tasks would be assigned so that we could talk about roles and responsibilities. I think right now, though, that the bottom line is if we try to force the issue right now along the lines we originally thought, we would have unhappy people and an ineffective product.

I am not sure at this point how exactly to proceed. I think there are some interesting ideas that are worth pursuing. One of the things we all agreed on is that this assessment tool would be much more effective if we emphasize the dynamic qualities rather than the static ones. Several aspects of the strategy are dynamic elements, such as pathways and scenarios. The scenarios that have been described for the five or six ways of failure are much more dynamic than the actual characteristics of failure. It may be that there are many ways to fail, but a limited number of standard paths to recovery.

We may need to review the previous work of Karol Soltan and the logic of neutral ground may need to be used and written up with further elaboration. Ron has offered several very interesting ways to look at this especially with the arrow flow diagrams. Giving Ron the opportunity to further develop his ideas would seem to be a very useful contribution as well. During the meeting, Nicole has also helped us to think about the big cross cutting issues. That is, at the moment, all that I can say with any great degree of certainty.

DISCUSSION:

Jack Goldstone: The main question to ask now is where do we go from here. There were two assessment models presented today and I am not sure if we should now identify failed states and provide a mix of assessments, or whether we complete a different kind of assessment. My question for Sharon is whether conflict assessments are required for certain countries.

Sharon Morris: Conflict assessments are required for conflict prone countries. We need to discern how a fragile states assessment would be different than existing assessments.

Wendy Marshall: What are USAID's goals for fragile states? Do no harm? How do programs relate to fragility in particular? Our objectives are still weak. Do we have "causes" here?

Jack Goldstone: In terms of operating efficiently, it seems that the fragile states framework will identify the states that will need the conflict tool applied to them. For fragile states the conventional conflict analysis is not going to be complete, which means that we must devise another form of assessment that will apply or take the place of the current conflict assessment.

Sharon Morris: When you look to build on existing frameworks, you have to start as soon as possible. What you are really trying to do, is take what is being done and ask yourself what needs to be done differently?

Jack Goldstone: If that is the case, then the next logical step is for IRIS to work with people who developed existing assessment tools and ask them how we could use them differently. Rather than reinventing the wheel it may be a matter of looking at how to improve existing tools.

Wendy Marshall: What do we think USAID goals would be for these programs, not in the sense of strategic objectives, but in the sense of trying to “do no harm”? How do these programs relate to fragility, particularly in the social dimension? I have a sense of the connections for democracy and governance, but I do not have as good of a sense of connections for the other dimensions. Basically we need to see the connection between these dimensions and fragility. When Sharon was developing CAF, she looked at what caused conflict and then related sectors. With fragility, do we have a sense of what the causes of fragility are?

Jack Goldstone: At an abstract level, the deterioration of efficiency and legitimacy is precisely causing fragility.

Sharon Morris: That definition has to be unpacked so people can get their heads around this.

Ann Phillips: Instead of adding onto all of the existing frameworks, another possibility is that we look at the data in a few countries and see what we would come up with in terms of using the fragility framework as a start. I am not sure that going through our old frameworks will help us in addressing fragile states. We need to think about transferability and see if we can honestly impact every problem and solve everything. Let’s be careful not to set the bar too high when we are talking about fragile states. We’re demanding of weak governments standards of 21st century market democracies. We need to look at where we want to engage or support.

Wendy Marshall: There are elements of problems that we can or cannot solve. However, it is difficult for me to get to the level where I understand what that is when I don’t have a clear sense of that level looks like.

Jonathan Haughton: In the course of doing the work, we did try to write analytic narratives. We got stuck because we were not in the field enough and we were trying to do something quick and dirty as a means of illustration. What I am hearing now is that we should go back to that with a bit more resources and really look at things perhaps through field visits.

Ann Phillips: We can run tests at our desks first, to get an idea of what will happen before we invest in field testing.

Ron Oakerson: I thought that was where we were headed.

Tjip Walker: That is more high risk because we would actually be in the field. Developing more commonality and some desk studies would be a place to start.

Jack Goldstone: In my research in Nepal, we found that provision of social services was very limited. Expectations were high that under democratization access to social services would increase, but the distribution of services got bogged down so the democratic part of the government was rendered powerless.

TjipWalker: Maybe there is another way of dealing with this. We have plenty of completed DG assessments that we could review to see what is missing and what we would do differently for fragile states. It may also be helpful if we can find countries where there have been several assessments done recently.

Dennis Wood: Even in Tjip's suggestion of going through assessments and asking generic questions it is very much like going to the doctor. The doctor asks whether the patient needs treatment. If the patient is not healthy enough to go on, what does the doctor do? We have to bring the country to the doctor to know what to do with it and be able to diagnose the state's condition. Regardless of how many questions, connections and analytic scenarios we have to write, we must come away with a sense that this is a patient that requires treatment.

We had thought that our advisors would individually write memos on how we would do an assessment in each of their dimensions. But now we are saying let's explore our current frameworks and then see where there are deficiencies. Then we can build our own framework based on our findings. We would have to work with our advisors to connect with the USAID team members. We will send out past assessments, solicit comments and then parse our findings out to the team.

Tjip Walker: I think we would have to talk through the logistics and the practical implications for this suggestion. There are a couple of interesting ideas here that I believe deserve further attention. One of the tools that IRIS is providing to the group is a web site, which will allow us to post our material. The site is password protected, which means that we will be able to hold the assessments fairly closely. We also want to establish a web board to keep our ideas in one place.

However we decide to proceed, we have to put our heads together to think about how make this a true discussion group rather than the labor of individuals. I want to thank you all for being candid and sharing experiences. We are in a messy place, but I have confidence that it will be a much better product as a result of thrashing through it.