

State Collapse and Reconstruction

Political Science Department
Chapman University
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Course Description:

The end of the Cold War and with it the dissolution of the bipolar system of world order has witnessed an increased interest in the developing world. It has become a major source of violence in the international system. Many states are collapsing with their structures of political order, law and authority falling apart. This course explores the conditions under which a state collapses and the prospects for reconstructing it in the event of the total disintegration of its institutional structures of governance. Within the context of civil war, insurgency or secession, we will examine issues related to non-state actors (Warlords, Jihadists) who embark on flag-bearing of nationalism in protecting their "people." Concurrently, we will extrapolate from and discuss issues such as self-determination understood as the right of groups to their own state rather than the right of individuals to elect their government and to hold it accountable. The course will also examine the effects of collapsed states on neighboring countries and human rights. Reference will be made to present-day cases of failed, collapsing and collapsed states, such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Libya, Colombia, Sri Lanka and Haiti. We will conclude with prospects for state-reconstruction, using the cases of East Timor, Kosovo, Iraq, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Various state-reconstruction models with solutions ranging from protection of minority rights to power sharing and secession will be explored.