

# Responsibility to Rebuild: Linking Infrastructure, Governance and Democratisation

18 June 2010 - 19 June 2010

## Workshop Report

The focus of this workshop was to problematise some of the core assumptions at the heart of the “stabilisation agenda”, now a major priority for the UK government and the wider international community. Whether in a situation of conflict such as Afghanistan, or following a major natural disaster such as in Haiti, securing a stable environment for the process of international development is crucial to recovery. In responding to the challenges posed by complex political emergencies and modernisation projects, intervening governments have committed to the ‘Responsibility to Rebuild’, one of the three key elements of the ‘Responsibility to Protect’, adopted by the United Nations in 2005. The field of international intervention in situations of underdevelopment, insecurity, and state failure is particularly suited to multi-disciplinary research.

The aspiration of the workshop is to establish links between academics, policymakers from different branches of government, the military and civilian practitioners from the armed services, the UN and international NGOs, and representatives from the private sector. The aim will be to map out, through presentation and debate, an interdisciplinary research agenda bringing together the social sciences, law, and the natural sciences/engineering.

The workshop sought to address three questions:

- How can the ‘Responsibility to Rebuild’ be delivered in practice?
- What should international intervention post-conflict or natural disaster look like?
- How can the different strands of physical infrastructure, governance, and civil society participation be woven together?

In addition to the above aims the workshop also sought to start a multidisciplinary dialogue on this very important topic bridging the academic-practitioner divide. In order to achieve this pressing objective, the workshop invited contributions from the Armed Forces/Ministry of Defence, the Stabilisation Unit, and the Royal Military Academy.

The Stakeholder meeting organised at the end of the workshop - funded by the Department of Politics - was particularly useful in helping the organisers to map current debates about “International Intervention” ultimately informing our discussions about the future establishment of a Centre for Research into International Intervention.

The workshop was an overwhelming success. It has helped to consolidate the position of the Department/University within the field of International Relations. In particular it provided an opportunity to discuss current challenges facing global politics and the role of critical approaches to help us understand the rationale of current policy initiatives.

## **Themes and Keynote Speakers**

The work presented at the workshop focused on three main themes:

- Responsibility
- Post-Conflict/Disaster Reconstruction
- Securitisation

The papers presented at the workshop outlined key debates around each of these themes. Particularly important were the contributions of Prof. Paul Rogers (University of Bradford) on the theory and application of “securitisation”. His introductory keynote talk set the context for the dialogue that took place during the rest of the workshop. The Roundtable on the Responsibility 2 Protect also set out some of the main theoretical and legal challenges to the application of this principle. Equally, however, it further challenged the primacy of Westphalian conceptions of sovereignty as organising principles of global politics in the 21st century. Equally important to understand the approach of the UK government to stabilisation was Lt Col. Armitage presentation on the “Military Doctrine” and the impact the stabilisation and securitisation agendas have had in shaping policy. Finally Prof. Randolph Kent (UCL, Humanitarian Futures Programme) brought the discussion to a close with a detailed evaluation of current and future trends in (social, political, military and economic) interventions.

## **Next steps**

1. Dr. Roberta Guerrina, Sir Mike Aaronson and Dr. Monika Barthwall-Datta are now working to submit a proposal for a special issue on “Responsibility” to the International Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding. Dr. Guerrina has already been in contact with Prof. Chandler, editor of the Journal, who is interested in publishing the keynote papers presented at the workshop.
2. Dr. Roberta Guerrina has also submitted a panel proposal to the British International Studies Annual Conference (2011) to continue the discussion/debate started at Surrey in July. This will bring together some of the contributors to the workshop in order to discuss the possibility to pursue a more interdisciplinary agenda for the project through the publication of an edited collection. Target publishers: Cambridge University Press; Oxford University Press

## **Acknowledgements**

The organisers would like to thank the Institute of Advanced Studies (University of Surrey) for sponsoring this event and giving us the opportunity to bring scholars of international standing to our institution to discuss such a topical and important issue. Particular thanks go to Mirela Dumic for all her help in bringing together the event. Roberta Guerrina, Mike Aaronson, Monika Barthwal-Datta and and Maxine David, Department of Politics, University of Surrey