

States at Regional Risk

A Broad-level Project of
Emory University's Institute for Comparative and International Studies (ICIS)
Supported by The Carnegie Corporation of New York

Executive Summary

States at risk occur in distinctive regional patterns across different world areas. These configurations are influenced by cultural, political, and religious histories of state-building or its absence and by patterns of external influence or intervention. Political and social problems internal to a nation are an interactive product of regional and international factors in relation to in-country dynamics. The causes as well as the consequences of state risk cross borders; reciprocally, recovery and peace-building require cross-border reinforcement, including international support and repatriation of civilians, professionals, and national leaders.

“States at Regional Risk” (SARR) addresses the relationship of regional to national state risk in West Africa, Central-East Africa, South Asia, and the Americas. The first three of these regions include 80% of the nations recently assessed as being at critical risk; the fourth region provides key contrasts and comparisons. In each region, different dynamics inform the types and degrees of state fragility, the relation between weaker and stronger states, the impact of regional and international influence, and prospects for security and peace. The project foregrounds regional dynamics and then considers them in global context, including how international relations ameliorate or reinforce relations between stable and unstable states.

The regional perspectives of this project orient the SAR field toward a practical goal: to cultivate networks of positive influence in regions of state risk. This goal is developed by bringing together policy makers, practitioners, and relevant academics concerning states at risk within and across geographic areas. Regional perspectives foster less nationalistic, less politically polarized, and more pragmatic views of fragile state dynamics. Complementing country-specific analyses and quantitative comparisons, regional perspectives can generate fresh networks of influence as well as new insights concerning the causes and consequences of state risk and recovery. Effective peace-building is mobilized by regional and international networks of influence during periods of state crisis and rebuilding.

The proposed project entails workshops and conferences that emphasize discussion and dialogue between academics, practitioners, and policy makers concerning states at risk within and across relevant world regions. It emphasizes the inclusion of influential policy makers who can learn and benefit from the pragmatic understandings and insights of practitioners and scholars. As part of the project, graduate students will be trained through seminars, workshops, and conference participation to develop and pursue career interests that practically engage states at regional risk.

Cultivating and expanding networks of practical influence in states at regional risk will be greatly facilitated by holding significant events that bring together scholars, policy makers, and practitioners in major cities in the regions at risk themselves.

The project will be undertaken by Emory University's Institute for Comparative and International Studies (ICIS). This Institute supports and orchestrates Emory's world area studies programs and develops comparative projects. The strategic mission of ICIS is to *cultivate global citizenship in a*

plural world; the international mission of Emory University as a whole is to *promote global scholarship for informed action*. In the proposed project, these objectives connect scholarly insight with practical networks to help ameliorate state risk and aid recovery.

The proposed initiative builds upon Emory's Carnegie-funded pilot project during 2006-2007: "States at Risk: Searching for a Fresh Start." This project has generated effective scholarly and pragmatic awareness concerning historical and cultural conditions that produce and underlie states of risk in West Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East. The proposed project expands these results geographically and intensifies their practical utility.

Expected outcomes of SARR include developed networks of practical influence; mentorship and career development of graduate students interested in states at regional risk; and scholarly papers, edited collections, articles, and web pages that connect academic insight, practical understanding, and policy-making concerning this vital issue. The project contextualizes regional patterns vis-à-vis broader features of geoeconomic and geopolitical interest that alternately remedy or reinforce states at regional risk. Cross-regional connections will expand the practical capacity of networks of influence.

The P.I. for this project is Professor Bruce M. Knauft, Samuel C. Dobbs Professor of Anthropology, Executive Director of ICIS, and author of seven books. Executive faculty consultants include the Director of Emory's Institute for Developing Nations (Dr. Sita Ranchod-Nilsson), and primary area studies faculty concerning Sub-Saharan Africa (Dr. Pamela Scully and Patience Kabamba), the Americas (Drs. David Nugent and Chris Krupa), and South Asia (Dr. Gyanendra Pandey).

Additional faculty and especially practitioners and policy makers will be mobilized drawing on networks established during the pilot study. The ICIS Senior Program Coordinator and Inter-areal Coordinator will provide in-kind staffing and logistical support. Further co-support by ICIS, Emory College, and the Emory Graduate School will enhance the scope and capacity of the project, including faculty and student research and the ability of qualified graduate students to gain career training that combines scholarly understanding with practical engagement in states at regional risk.

The project start date is January 1, 2008; its duration is forty-four months; the end date is August 31, 2011. This period of seven academic semesters and four summers affords for workshop and conference initiatives in pertinent world areas and a concluding conference that compares and contrasts the dynamics of states at regional risk and puts them in a practical global perspective.

SARR will be evaluated by: (a) the development and maintenance of practical networks of influence among policy makers, practitioners, and academics concerning states at regional risk, including in the regions themselves; (b) the training of graduate students to combine practical engagement with scholarly understanding of states at risk within and across regions; (c) the quality and quantity of research reports and publications, including edited scholarly volumes, papers, articles, and States of Regional Risk web pages.