The failed or failing state is a relatively new focus of interest in international relations and policy making. As the author, David Chandler points out “State-building — the development of international mechanisms aimed at addressing cases of state collapse or at shoring up failing states — is increasingly becoming the dominant framework for the international regulation of non-Western states.” There is a fear that the territory of failed states such as Somalia will serve as a base for terrorists and criminals, as pathways for the trade in weapons and drugs. A failed state will also not provide the framework of governance needed to overcome poverty. In a failed state there cannot be efficient public administration to provide education, health and economic development policies. While some persons may profit from conditions in a failed state — some Somali businessmen and warlords have grown rich — overall development is impossible.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the transition from colonial status to independence was analysed under the concept of ‘nation-building’. See such leading works as: Karl Deutsch and William Foltz (Eds.) *Nation-Building*, Rupert Emerson *From Empire to Nation*, and Lucian Pye *Politics, Personality and Nation-Building*. However the term ‘nation’ can be confusing, having different meanings including subjective loyalty to the group. State-building is a clearer concept usually meaning public administration, governmental structures with a division of powers, clear administrative units and at least a minimum rule of law. All failed states at some point in time had a public administration.

Chandler devotes much of his attention to the problems of Bosnia and Kosovo, both parts of Former Yugoslavia. He is the author of an earlier study *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*. Yugoslavia is a failed state but one that once had strong state institutions and a developed economic-planning administration. In the cases where the existing Yugoslav republics became independent states — Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro there were no major administrative problems. However in the case of Bosnia-Hercegovina — partitioned into three sections and then given a con-federal form — and Kosovo, whose final status has not yet been decided — new concepts of the state had to be developed. In the case of Bosnia and Kosovo, administrators from the European Union (EU) and NATO played a part in the state-building process. However, neither the European Union nor NATO had state-building as an original mandate.

State-building can be expensive and requires transferring civil servants from national administrations to serve the state-building process. Unlike the colonial empires which had developed schools for colonial administrators, neither the EU nor NATO had trained persons for these new state-building tasks in foreign lands. The EU turned to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for much of the health, education, and social welfare aspects of state-building. However they had to rely on regular police and military for security functions. The EU police were not able to prevent the growth of the drug trade and trafficking in persons and weapons from former Yugoslavia.

Likewise, Iraq had developed if brutal structures of a centralized state. If, however, Iraq is divided and then given a con-federal form of government, the Americans will be faced with new types of state-building. The rebuilding of state structures in Somalia, Liberia or Sierra Leone resembles the earlier ‘nation-building’ approaches.
There is a relatively rich ‘lessons learned’ literature drawn from those who had been involved as well as guidelines drawn up by the World Bank and the EU. Some of these studies such as Oliver Richmond and Henry Carey (Eds.) *Subcontracting Peace: The Challenges of NGO Peacebuilding* can be of use to NGOs who participate in state-building efforts. However, the emphasis of Chandler is on the motivations of the state-builders. The national colonial empires of France and England in Asia and Africa were clearly part of national policy and admired as part of national goals by at least part of the population. Empire before World War II was not yet a ‘dirty word’. The theme of David Chandler is that both the EU and the USA are empires in denial: they have the aims of empires to develop states in their own likeness but do not admit even to themselves that their aim is to turn Bosnia into a European ‘look alike’—a state without the genuine capacity for self-government. As he writes “This book has not focused on an administrative or problem-solving critique of the state-building practices of Empire in Denial. It is a political one: that the denial of power is a dishonest, reactionary and elitist perspective which seeks to argue that power is not important, and that there is not much that power can do “to improve the lives of people after the breakdown of earlier state structures.

One of the slogans of West African anti-colonial movements in the 1950s was “Good government is no substitute for self-government”. This is a cry that is likely to be taken up by the ethnic Albanian citizens of Kosovo if a final status agreement is not reached soon. State-building is likely to continue as a theme for sometime, and Chandler’s emphasis on motivations is a useful approach.

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