

**Sasha Lezhnev.** *Crafting Peace: Strategies to Deal with Warlords in Collapsing States.* Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2005. xv + 119 pp. \$66.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7391-0957-1.



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Books written for practitioners must offer straightforward solutions to problems that scholars often identify as intractable. Sasha Lezhnev's project—to articulate guidelines for countering warlords in failing state—is more ambitious. The book takes a comparative approach to the subject, drawing on two case studies: Sierra Leone and Tajikistan. Furthermore, the author's template for analysis implicitly incorporates some key lessons distilled from the academic literature. Nevertheless, this study will resonate better in policy circles rather than in academic ones, since at times the narrative moves too quickly from evidence to prescription and leaves important issues and arguments under-theorized.

The narrative unfolds by offering a definition of warlordism in a globalized framework, then zooms out to consider the success of various efforts pursued in the context of the two cases, and closes with recommendations for designing strategies to deal with warlords. The author breaks down the definition of warlords by looking at their motivations and social make-up; the weak state environment that allows them to flourish;

the methods that warlords employ (converging on assaults on civilians); and the organizational structures that enable effective mobilization and control. Sierra Leone and Tajikistan are then analyzed to illustrate the definition, emphasizing the degrees of warlordism (the former being closer to the ideal type than the latter), and are used to sift through evidence of what works and what fails in eliminating warlords. Important differences, for example pertaining to identity politics and the nature of the collapsing state regime, are briefly mentioned but not integrated in an overall framework.

The book emphasizes that sustainable peace requires efforts to dislodge warlords and to transform the broader political and security environment, arguing for alternatives to the standard approach that incorporates warlords in power-sharing structures in exchange for peace. Lezhnev's solution is a mix of short-term strategies of coercion to deal with intransigent warlords, and longer-term strategies of state-building to transform political incentives. Coercive options include imposing "smart" sanctions that are resource-sen-

sitive and have a global reach; deploying internal, international or "transnational" (mixed) force; prosecuting warlords under international criminal law; and establishing programs for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. State-building policies involve undermining the power of warlords by supporting alternative sources of authority; promoting democratization; fostering economics reconstruction and employment; and, as a last resort, conducting structured peace negotiations that may provide for warlord reintegration.

The study is driven by a problem-solving imperative and moves swiftly from empirical analysis to policy recommendations. This sleek structure, however, comes at a price. Most of the key arguments are constructed at the interface of the Sierra Leone and Tajikistan cases, but in order to generalize them coherently the author needs a broader framework that is often missing. The field of ethnic conflict studies has moved to conceptualize the role of identity in recent conflicts and the dynamics of peace-building in such settings. Research on collapsing state structures, violence against civilians, and the globalized war economy has made rapid advances in the last years and is well integrated in the "new wars" literature. Similarly, the mushrooming literature on human security has developed the principles of multilateralism, regional focus, and rebuilding legitimate political authority in responses to warlord-driven conflict. Lack of deeper engagement with these bodies of scholarship will be puzzling for some academic readers. To be sure, however, the strategies to deal with warlords offered by Lezhnev are persuasive and relevant, even if they often reflect the underlying problem without capturing it explicitly. Since the book is addressed primarily to practitioners and policymakers, its target audience will be rewarded for picking it up.

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