

## **Praise for *Interim Governments***

*“Key to the success of any nation-building mission is the construction of an interim government that can oversee the transition from conflict to stable peace. Over the past fifteen years, the international community has become increasingly engaged in fashioning and on some occasions providing such transitional regimes. Karen Gutteri and Jessica Piombo have assembled a first-rate group of authors to examine this phenomenon from both historical and functional perspectives. Their conclusions will sometimes surprise—for instance, that imposed nondemocratic regimes have proven more enduring than democratic ones— and always inform. Interim Governments is thus to be welcomed as an important addition to our understanding of how efforts at state building, democratization, and post-conflict reconstruction actually play out.”*

—James Dobbins, Director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corporation, and lead author of *The Beginner’s Guide to Nation Building*

*“Interim Governments raises many important questions and provides solid answers. Constructive definitions are offered and brought to life in lively and balanced case studies, showing which elements are unique and what lessons are most transferable to other situations. This text is timely, fills a subject space that needs to be addressed, and will prove to be a valuable tool to practitioners, trainers, and academics.”*

—Frederick D. Barton, Center for Strategic and International Studies

*“This is a well-conceived, well-executed project that is sensibly organized and timely. With thematic coherence among the chapters, which are written to a uniformly high standard, the analysis is fresh, even in areas that have received considerable attention elsewhere.”*

—Richard Caplan, University of Oxford

*“This volume offers a unique set of insights into the study of interim governments. When surveying the number of countries that are currently experiencing or may soon experience some form of interim government, the relevance of this study becomes obvious. It is particularly critical for policymakers in intergovernmental organizations and governments to understand the political, governmental, social, and security complexities associated with supporting or standing up a post-conflict interim government.”*

—Jeff Fischer, independent consultant specializing in elections and conflict

*“Protagonists in today’s deeply divided societies, wracked by war, often and usually eventually arrive at the realization that politics—not poisonous violence—is the least costly and most desirable way to redress their differences. When they do, the findings and lessons in this volume on interim governments should well serve as a guide on how to make the difficult and inevitably turbulent transitions from war to peace. Rigorous and engaging, this book will set the standard for the study of interim regimes for years to come.”*

—Timothy D. Sisk, University of Denver

*“There are few transitions as fraught with danger as the transitions from autocracy to democracy or from civil war to civil peace. Combine them, as is often the case, and the dangers multiply. The editors and authors of this wide-ranging and insightful volume are superb guides to the analytical and policy challenges these transitions entail. Both scholars and policymakers are well-advised to pay attention to the thoughtful chapters gathered here.”*

—Michael W. Doyle, Columbia University, and former UN assistant secretary-general



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# Interim Governments



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Institutional Bridges  
to Peace and Democracy?

*Edited by*

***Karen Guttieri and Jessica Piombo***



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To all the bridge builders  
who work and sacrifice for peace





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<i>Richard H. Solomon</i>	

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## Foreword

**I***nterim Governments: Institutional Bridges to Peace and Democracy?* is a significant and timely contribution to the increasingly important study of transitional regimes. With a broad spectrum of countries currently under or likely soon to be under some form of interim government, the centrality of the volume's subject to ongoing scholarly and policy debates about nation building and post-conflict reconstruction is readily evident. After all, a firm understanding of transitional experiences in societies that have recently emerged from conflict is vital for defining best practices in the present, particularly within today's context of regional upheavals and international activism. It is also vital for ensuring successful transitions in the future—that is, for strengthening efforts to institutionalize security and democratic governance in all post-conflict societies.

Although peace and democracy are the stated objectives of virtually every present-day transitional regime, tellingly, editors Karen Guttieri and Jessica Piombo have framed the volume's subtitle as a question rather than fact. Do interim governments reliably serve as bridges to peace and democracy, particularly as the international community becomes increasingly engaged in shaping and even administering transitional regimes? The volume explores many meaningful aspects of this question: how have interim models changed since the end of the Cold War; how does international involvement in the transitional process transform the balance of power among domestic elites; how does an interim regime affect the nature of the posttransition government? The fundamental question posed in the title gets to the volume's core, helping the contributors focus on pragmatic, practical, and pressing issues of transitional governance.

To help navigate these questions and attendant political, governmental, social, and security issues, Guttieri and Piombo enlisted a team of world-class scholars from the fields of comparative politics and international relations. Productively organized around three main sections—theories, case studies, and conclusions—the volume presents penetrating theories and wide-ranging empirical findings in a coherent and integrated fashion. The five theory-based chapters each offer keen insight into the latest thinking on

transitional governance, offering many stimulating and useful prescriptions, such as encouraging self-rule, promoting agents of change, and engaging minorities. The nine case-study chapters—which either individually or comparatively examine the transitional experience of countries ranging from Afghanistan to Liberia—each provide insights into the broad challenges faced by interim regimes, such as local spoilers, endemic corruption, and budgetary and resource constraints.

While I will leave it to the reader to discover how the volume's many questions are explored and/or answered, I trust the editors and contributors will appreciate my highlighting two salient themes. Although each transitional government is unique in context, form, and structure, the first theme is a common one: legitimacy, governance, and security are inextricably intertwined aspects of stabilization; they are mutually reinforcing elements essential to the success of any transitional regime. As is so starkly evident in present-day Iraq, without meaningful security, good governance and the provision of public services are difficult to attain; without public legitimacy, meaningful security and the rule of law are threatened; and without good governance, legitimacy and public acceptance are lost. Somewhere within this precarious triangular construct sits the role of economic development, which is equally critical to achieving a long-term, successful transition.

While these elements form the core of any transition plan and are touched on throughout this volume, one additional element needs consideration: the role of personality. The personal qualities of interim leaders not only sway the interactions and decisionmaking of key actors in transitions, they also influence the legitimacy and functionality of any government structure—interim or not. As a corollary to this factor, the leadership style of local politicians can greatly affect public perceptions and attitudes. Just as a weak leader can undermine an effective government or transition process, so too can a strong leader help a country heal and evolve. Although these are highly subjective matters not easily measured nor frequently cited as significant variables in comparative politics or international relations, they are wild card factors that warrant serious study.

The volume's second salient theme is that the role of the international community in interim governing structures has a significant bearing on the legitimacy of the transitional and posttransitional regimes—and, by extension, on the security, governance, and economic development of the country. As Guttieri and Piombo argue, the identity of those international agencies forming and administering governments is strongly related to the overall legitimacy of resulting regimes. Further, they observe that the very idea of internationalized interim administrations “harks back to an imperial era, the [bitter] memory of which for many around the world is still fresh.” Although this observation about past grievances is not elaborated, the idea of historical memory and perception is highly significant and warrants consideration as

another subjective element contributing to a transition's success or failure. In short, internationalized interim regimes are not formed or administered in a vacuum. When creating, implementing, and overseeing transitional regimes, the international community in general—and the United States in particular—must be acutely aware of this fact. Their administrative actions in one country can have a dramatic effect on perceptions elsewhere, and thus have broad implications and unintended consequences for future internationalized transitional regimes and nation-building missions, even in distant parts of the globe.

*Interim Governments* is only the most recent in a long line of important and timely volumes on peacemaking and nation building in USIP's publication catalog. Just within the past year, the Institute has published, among many other volumes, *Friends Indeed? The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the Resolution of Conflict*, by Teresa Whitfield; *Human Rights and Conflict: Exploring the Links between Rights, Law, and Peacebuilding*, edited by Julie Mertus and Jeffrey Helsing; *Council Unbound: The Growth of UN Decision Making on Conflict and Postconflict Issues after the Cold War*, by Michael J. Matheson; *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, edited by Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall; and *Constructing Justice and Security after War*, edited by Charles T. Call.

Although transitional regimes are by intent meant to be temporary, their presence on the international scene will undoubtedly remain a constant as long as violence and conflict plague the world. But should decisionmakers and policy implementors pay heed to the thoughtful, astute, and telling observations and conclusions contained herein, perhaps there will be less need to ask whether interim governments are reliable bridges to peace and democracy.

**Richard H. Solomon, President  
United States Institute of Peace**

