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There are still places that race and poverty are a huge problem in the U.S., and we've got to deal with that.

— Secretary of State  
 Condoleezza Rice,  
 Sept 14, *cnn.com*.

State and is charged with enhancing our nation's institutional capacity to respond to crises involving failing, failed and post-conflict states and complex emergencies (<http://www.state.gov/s/crs>). A month later the new center at the Naval Postgraduate School was established (<http://www.csrs-nps.org/public/home.cfm>).

Both stem from the work of the bipartisan Commission on Post-Conflict Reconstruction, whose 2003 report, based largely on the lessons of Iraq and Afghanistan, outlines how and why failed and failing states matter (<http://www.csis.org/isp/pcr/playtwin.pdf>). "We need to put as much effort into stabilization as war efforts, and we need everyone at the same table using the same playbook," Rep. Sam Farr, D-Calif., one of the seven members of Congress who served on the panel, says.

Meanwhile, in July, *Foreign Policy* magazine released the first Failed State Index, a joint project with the Fund for Peace to conduct a global ranking of weak and failing states ([http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story\\_id=3098&print=1](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3098&print=1)). The problem is more serious than generally thought. Some 2 billion people live in insecure states, with varying degrees of vulnerability to widespread civil conflict. The 10

most at-risk countries — Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Chad, Yemen, Liberia and Haiti — have already shown clear signs of state failure.

Though the index points to no easy fix for failed states, it does give some clues to the most reliable early warning signs of a problem. Among the 12 indicators used to identify weak and failing states, two consistently rank near the top: uneven development within states (as opposed to poverty), and criminalization or delegitimization of the state. For a complete discussion of the indicators and methodology used go to [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com) or [www.fundforpeace.org](http://www.fundforpeace.org).

### Cultivating a Career in Foreign Affairs

Young Professionals at State, or YPro, is an innovative grass-roots networking organization for entry and mid-level employees at the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. According to the group's 2004-2005 annual report, YPro "aims to create a sense of continuity in a dynamic workforce by linking tomorrow's foreign affairs leaders through professional and social networking activities."

Established in 2003, the organization currently has more than 500 members. YPro sponsors volunteer work, a monthly professional reading group, lunchtime seminars and a mentoring link, among other activities. Since its formation, the group has hosted more than 130 professional development and networking events.

YPro receives no government funding, and membership is free and open to all direct-hire employees of State and USAID, regardless of age, occupation or career track. You can find it at [www.ypro.us](http://www.ypro.us). ■