The Clash of the Counter-bureaucracy and Development

Description

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â??In this essay, Andrew Natsios describes what he sees as the most disruptive obstacles to development work in agencies such as USAID: layers and layers of bureaucracy. He gives a first-hand account of how this â??counter-bureaucracyâ?• disfigures USAIDâ??s development practice and even compromises U.S. national security objectives. Most of all, he argues, the counter-bureaucracyâ??s emphasis on easy measurement is at odds with the fact that transformational programs are often the least measurable and involve elements of risk and uncertainty.

To overcome counter-bureaucracy barriers, Natsios suggests implementing a new measurement system, reducing the layers of oversight and regulation, and aligning programmatic goals with organizational incentives. Unless policymakers address the issue, he says, U.S. aid programs will be unable to implement serious development programs while complying with the demands of Washington.â?•

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