Bringing the economy back in: The political economy of security sector reform

Guro Lien

A much-cited quote from then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s speech to the African Union in 2005 is that “the world will not enjoy development without security, nor security without development.” Although difficult to deny, the mechanisms underlying the relation between development and security are difficult to define and poorly understood. This has not inhibited donor countries, international organizations, and nongovernmental organizations to design and implement security sector reform (SSR) initiatives on the presumption that increasing security, usually by strengthening state capacity, will lead to increased socioeconomic development. But recent studies have shown that the relation between security and development is less straightforward than previously assumed.  

The argument in this article is that an overbearing focus on formal state structures in SSR efforts relies on two crucial assumptions whose nonfulfillment reduce the possibility of SSR success. First, it is assumed that a well-functioning relationship between state and society exists and, second, that all relevant actors desire a strong, democratic state structure, comparable to that of a Western state. Yet in many postwar settings neither is the case. Due to corrupt political elites, illegitimate government, and lacking public service provision, a proper state-society relation is often missing, and the continuation of low state capacity is, in fact, often the desired outcome.  

Some countries are what Egnell and Haldén call society-less: No political community or political elite demanding a well-functioning state exists. This does not mean that these spaces are ungoverned. The political and security vacuum that may emerge after conflict can be exploited by less than benign actors such as warlords, criminal networks, and corrupt political elites, or traditional governance structures can reemerge, but all with the result that the formal state is but one among several competing organizations that actually govern society.  

What is important, then, when designing security sector reforms is to be aware of the actually existing structures and their relation to the state that is being rebuilt. A fuller understanding of how the political economy of a country is structured may then yield more productive approaches to designing SSR initiatives. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to statebuilding, and designing SSR activities without taking into account the premises of local economic structures may only lead to short-term regime security.  

The first section part of the article provides an overview of the conceptual underpinnings of the argument. Principles of good governance form the basis of many SSR initiatives, but, as will be shown, these presuppose the existence of a specific relation between state and society. Applied to the cases of Afghanistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina, both of which attempted to undertake security sector reforms, we find limited success. In Afghanistan, the proliferation of warlords, some even supported by Western governments, is an effective hindrance to the reform initiatives. Coupled with an illegitimate, corrupt central government and a lacking sense of nationhood, this has meant that attempts at strengthening the state through SSR has led to unintended consequences. Bosnia and Herzegovina is an interesting case because of persistent problems with large-scale corruption, organized crime, and clientelism, which is undermining both the peacebuilding effort and the reform processes. In spite of year-long efforts from European and U.S. partners, the reform effort, especially on the political level, is painstakingly slow. Still, democracy is fairly well established, civil society is increasingly vibrant, and there has been some progress in security sector reform. Both cases show how local power structures and actors influence the statebuilding process and thus also the success of SSR efforts. The concluding section places this article in the wider context of critical political economy literature.  

This is a limited study of course, a mere snapshot of a complex and multifaceted topic. Only two cases are chosen, and only some of the relevant actors are analyzed. For instance, the study does not take into account the actions of external players. A more comprehensive analysis might result in different conclusions.  

Good governance and the social contract

Security sector reform is a complicated and ambitious undertaking. The concept denotes activities concerning the rebuilding and strengthening of effective and accountable security institutions and their oversight bodies in postwar settings. The SSR agenda is largely based on the idea of good governance, i.e., certain Western, liberal principles in which the state has a prominent place. According to the United Nations, good governance centers around five principles: transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation, and responsiveness to the needs of the people. In addition, the UN specifies four realms to which good governance reforms should be applied: democratic institutions, service delivery, rule of law, and anti-corruption. In relation to SSR, promoting good governance entails strengthening national security institutions, ensuring democratic control of the armed forces and the state’s monopoly of force over its entire territory, as well as establishing an independent judiciary and...
It is usually taken for granted that such a demand exists. But this is often not the case. On the contrary, actors who do not want a functioning state structure to emerge. However, the lack of a state or a political community does not mean the lack of governance. On the contrary, comparative studies have shown that people do not live in a political and administrative vacuum after the breakdown of state mechanisms. The power-holders in these types of societies attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

Policies designed to address failed and fragile states generally operate on the assumption that the problem of state failure is low capacity. This is not always the case. The postwar setting may result in different outcomes, two of which are explored here. First, in countries where a society is not the problem, but rather the SSR agenda, the idea of good governance is unattainable. Few would argue that the principles underlying good governance are unsound, based on the genuine desire to increase the security and wellbeing of the country’s population. The argument here is not that the principles are the problem, but rather the SSR agenda. According to Egnell and Haldén, “what is in effect an ideal-type description of the modern, Western state today is inherently European, not universal. The good governance agenda has been accepted almost by default, and there has been a lack of discussion about the applicability of the state system we have in Europe today.”

Numerous theories explain the rise of the modern state system in the West. Social contract theory, developed by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, emphasizes a specific relation between the state and people. The people agree to form a state in exchange for collective protection and other public goods, and the power-holders in return are expected to provide security. Through taxation, the central state was able to provide collective protection and other public goods. However, the state’s monopoly of violence is fundamental to the modern state. Security sector reform (SSR) is closely linked to statebuilding: Increasing the efficiency of state institutions and security sector reform are closely linked. The postwar setting may result in different outcomes, two of which are explored here. First, in countries where a society requesting a state is lacking, a strong central state will be seen as alien and perhaps irrelevant, and “entrenched elements and traditional structures re-emerge.” These structures, often warlords, tribal structures, or patronage networks, existing before and within the state. The power-holders in these types of societies attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

Policies designed to address failed and fragile states generally operate on the assumption that the problem of state failure is low capacity. This is not always the case. The postwar setting may result in different outcomes, two of which are explored here. First, in countries where a society requesting a state is lacking, a strong central state will be seen as alien and perhaps irrelevant, and “entrenched elements and traditional structures re-emerge.” These structures, often warlords, tribal structures, or patronage networks, existing before and within the state. The power-holders in these types of societies attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

It is usually taken for granted that such a demand exists. But this is often not the case. On the contrary, actors who do not want a functioning state structure to emerge. However, the lack of a state or a political community does not mean the lack of governance. On the contrary, comparative studies have shown that people do not live in a political and administrative vacuum after the breakdown of state mechanisms. The power-holders in these types of societies attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

Policies designed to address failed and fragile states generally operate on the assumption that the problem of state failure is low capacity. This is not always the case. The postwar setting may result in different outcomes, two of which are explored here. First, in countries where a society requesting a state is lacking, a strong central state will be seen as alien and perhaps irrelevant, and “entrenched elements and traditional structures re-emerge.” These structures, often warlords, tribal structures, or patronage networks, existing before and within the state. The power-holders in these types of societies attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

It is usually taken for granted that such a demand exists. But this is often not the case. On the contrary, actors who do not want a functioning state structure to emerge. However, the lack of a state or a political community does not mean the lack of governance. On the contrary, comparative studies have shown that people do not live in a political and administrative vacuum after the breakdown of state mechanisms. The power-holders in these types of societies attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

Policies designed to address failed and fragile states generally operate on the assumption that the problem of state failure is low capacity. This is not always the case. The postwar setting may result in different outcomes, two of which are explored here. First, in countries where a society requesting a state is lacking, a strong central state will be seen as alien and perhaps irrelevant, and “entrenched elements and traditional structures re-emerge.” These structures, often warlords, tribal structures, or patronage networks, existing before and within the state. The power-holders in these types of societies attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

It is usually taken for granted that such a demand exists. But this is often not the case. On the contrary, actors who do not want a functioning state structure to emerge. However, the lack of a state or a political community does not mean the lack of governance. On the contrary, comparative studies have shown that people do not live in a political and administrative vacuum after the breakdown of state mechanisms. The power-holders in these types of societies attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

Policies designed to address failed and fragile states generally operate on the assumption that the problem of state failure is low capacity. This is not always the case. The postwar setting may result in different outcomes, two of which are explored here. First, in countries where a society requesting a state is lacking, a strong central state will be seen as alien and perhaps irrelevant, and “entrenched elements and traditional structures re-emerge.” These structures, often warlords, tribal structures, or patronage networks, existing before and within the state. The power-holders in these types of communities attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

Policies designed to address failed and fragile states generally operate on the assumption that the problem of state failure is low capacity. This is not always the case. The postwar setting may result in different outcomes, two of which are explored here. First, in countries where a society requesting a state is lacking, a strong central state will be seen as alien and perhaps irrelevant, and “entrenched elements and traditional structures re-emerge.” These structures, often warlords, tribal structures, or patronage networks, existing before and within the state. The power-holders in these types of communities attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:

Policies designed to address failed and fragile states generally operate on the assumption that the problem of state failure is low capacity. This is not always the case. The postwar setting may result in different outcomes, two of which are explored here. First, in countries where a society requesting a state is lacking, a strong central state will be seen as alien and perhaps irrelevant, and “entrenched elements and traditional structures re-emerge.” These structures, often warlords, tribal structures, or patronage networks, existing before and within the state. The power-holders in these types of communities attempt to control. As summarized by Münkler in his analysis of ungoverned spaces:
explores these ideas in regard to Afghanistan and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Violent entrepreneurs and the SSR effort**

As discussed, SSR essentially assumes that all relevant actors in a country want a strong state, socioeconomic development, and democracy. The following case studies show that this is not always the case. Actors such as warlords or organized criminal networks thrive in weak state structures. Violent entrepreneurs are different from other economic criminals in that they often provide a minimum of public goods, such as security and employment, especially in places where the formal state is unable or unwilling to provide such services. This may bestow nonstate actors with some public support, and even, in some cases, a degree of legitimacy.

Since these actors benefit from a weak state, they play an active role in disrupting SSR efforts, such as the warlords in Afghanistan and corrupt political elites in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Afghanistan, there is a strong central state, but outside the capital it has little actual power. This has alienated society from the state, so that in effect a society desiring a state structure is lacking. The warlords profit from this situation, gaining economic and political power, and thus attempts at introducing SSR are resisted or co-opted by local power structures. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the central state is inefficient, the public sector is too large, and the political elite is considered corrupt and nepotistic. Since the national elite benefits from the status quo, SSR has obstructed and delayed at the political level.

**Afghanistan**

There are two main hindrances to effective security sector reform in Afghanistan. One is that pervasive political corruption reverses attempts at statebuilding. The other is that “the real rulers outside of Kabul are the warlords.” This has led to the emergence of a “political economy of arms.” Interestingly, Western powers have supported both the central government and the warlords, thus undermining Afghanistan’s fragile state-society relation, if there ever was one, and alienating people from their putative state. Society does not see the benefit of a strong central state, and traditional power structures have reemerged.

Western strategy has been to support President Karzai and his cabinet, building a centralized government with a strong executive deriving legitimacy from elections and public service provision. But the Afghan government has not been able to provide services such as education and health care, thus eroding its popularity and legitimacy. The majority of the population also lack access to clean water and electricity. In addition, NGOs and foreign donors have provided direct aid and service provision, further undermining statebuilding efforts. This has created a dual public sector, with large amounts of money circumventing official government budgets. Large-scale election fraud and violence surrounding elections has caused great damage to the legitimacy of both the democratic process and the ruling regime. Voter turnout has dropped, and the entire political system seems to estrange people from the state. Historically, Afghan governments were decentralized and functioned as a mediating council between groups within Afghan society who retained a great deal of local self-rule. In contrast, in the new Afghan state, an enormous amount of power has been vested in the office of the president. The president is personally responsible for appointing all cabinet ministers, 34 provincial governors, 400 district subgovernors, and all government officials down to the level of district administrator, as well as the attorney general, the head of the Central Bank, the national security director, judges, military, police, and national security officers, and other high-ranking officials. At the same time, the Afghan constitution places almost no constraints or oversights on the president’s rule. This has led to a personalization of government and to a personalization of state-society relations. All this is alien to Afghanistan’s people who are unaccustomed to such a strong central executive. Political corruption is widespread in the Afghan state and affects almost every aspect of its interaction with society. Most damaging has been political corruption within state structures, where senior politicians or government officials have used state resources to build power bases through complex webs of patronage. In addition, some ministers “actively undermine the state in order to continue to profit from illegal economic activities (mainly drug production and export).” Any attempt at reducing or removing political corruption is seen as a direct threat to the ruling elite. This elite resists attempts at reform because it threatens their economic and political power. Reform of the civilian security sector and of the judicial sector has been protracted and inconsistent. Much effort has been invested in building an Afghan army and police force, and less attention has been paid to the civilian structures of security governance.

The second major impediment to effective SSR in Afghanistan is the power of the warlords. Restricting the power of the central government outside of Kabul and challenging the state’s monopoly of force, they often provide a minimal level of public goods such as security, food, and employment, and this gives them a degree of legitimacy. For instance, Ismail Khan, a well-known warlord from Herat, served as governor of Herat from 2000. He provided for security, payment of government employees, and made investments in public services. But he refused to pass on to the central government revenues gained from custom taxes imposed on goods transiting from Iran and Turkmenistan through Herat. Thus he effectively hindered the larger statebuilding effort and helped to undermine the legitimacy of the Afghan state. Since 2005, he has served as Minister of Water and Energy in the Karzai cabinet. During this time, he has been accused of human rights abuses in connection with attacks on journalists as well as illegally distributing weapons to his supporters. Thriving within existing state structures, warlords usually are not secessionist. For instance, Atta Mohammad Noor, a well-known and powerful warlord, serves as the governor of the Balkh district. Although progress has been made in both security and
The political economy of security sector reform in Afghanistan


Supporting warlords may lead to short-term stability, but this is unlikely to lead to long-term security. Warlords rarely make good statebuilders. By building private armies and collecting local taxes, they are able to exert influence over their territories in the process.

Building a stronger state with more capacity to enforce central rules and regulations means that warlords will lose their political and economic power. They therefore wish to keep the weak and easy-to-manage state intact, so that they can continue to keep their control over the warlords' patronage networks, local personal government, and informal power structures.

In Afghanistan, the inclusion of warlords in the central government has been strongly opposed, partly due to the reluctance of the Ministry of Defense to undertake structural reforms. Partly due to demands from international organizations and Western powers, many of these reforms have been implemented at a lower level. These reforms have included measures to improve the transparency and accountability of the state, reduce corruption, and strengthen the rule of law. However, these efforts have been met with resistance from warlords, who often see these reforms as a threat to their power and influence.

In the absence of a strong central state, warlords have been able to maintain their control over large regions of the country, which has contributed to the persistence of informal power structures and the continued existence of warlordism.

In conclusion, the political economy of security sector reform in Afghanistan highlights the challenges of building a strong state with effective control over warlordism. The success of these efforts will depend on the ability of the Afghan government to address the economic and political incentives that support warlordism, as well as the ability of the international community to provide support and resources to the Afghan government. This will require a sustained commitment to reform, as well as a willingness to engage with warlords in a constructive manner.
Corruption threatens democracy because it weakens trust between people and the authorities. It also reduces predictability for businesses and foreign investors, and it impedes economic development. Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Index 2012 shows that corruption is widespread in BiH, affecting the judiciary, tax and customs administration, public utilities, procurement and privatization schemes as well as all major political processes. The TI also claims that the executive places undue pressure on the institutions responsible for implementing anti-corruption laws. In addition, TI reports that the government's regulatory capacity to fight corruption has been weakened by the informal employment of judges. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of this state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

Several analysts argue that corruption and crime have hindered reforms and capacity-building of the Bosnian state, including its security sector. Reforms have been slow to take hold and are often blocked by political parties or interest groups. Donors argue that strong institutional reforms have been a key factor in their decision to support reform efforts. But compared with Afghanistan, BiH has been more successful in implementing anti-corruption laws. The government's regulatory capacity to fight corruption has been weakened by the informal employment of judges. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.

In the postwar period, a series of liberal market reforms were introduced in BiH. This led to a reduced state sector, increased emphasis on private industry, and reliance on exports that were not labor-intensive. The result was higher unemployment, an increasing share of foreign-owned companies in BiH, and the development of a larger informal economy. Remittances from overseas make up the majority of the state's revenue, and much to the state's discrimation against those in power to gain from blocking reform efforts.
But there have also been less successful SSR initiatives in BiH. For example, veterans’ and widows’ benefits have been unreasonably large in some parts of the country and at one point were 2 to 3 times larger than the defense budget, clearly not sustainable. The reason for this was that prior to the elections in 2006 politicians promised to pay benefits to anyone who applied, regardless of need, efforts made at finding work, or willingness to retrain. The result is that BiH have more war veterans today than at the end of the war in 1999. In addition, police reform in BiH has been far less successful than hoped for. Reluctance to cede control over police forces is attributed to the fear of surrendering the right to self-government. An 2009 analysis by Celador concludes that much-needed reforms were overshadowed by the Bosnian government’s inability to agree on a police restructuring plan as well as to a lack of local ownership. The division of the police force makes fighting organized crime difficult because criminals can evade prosecution simply by moving from one entity to the other.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, overemphasis on market liberalization coupled with endemic political corruption and criminalization of the state has eroded public trust in the BiH government and severely damaged state-society relations. Many actors, both within organized crime and in government, benefit from a weak and fragmented government with limited resources to prosecute crimes or undertake reforms. But in spite of lacking progress in some areas, BiH has made steps in the right direction, much due to pressure from international organizations, and has undertaken a series of security sector reforms. But for any lasting change to take place, and to avoid further decoupling, a social contract between society and state will need to be reestablished. To achieve this, it is necessary to tackle corruption at all levels of government and introduce more transparency in both business and politics. Without dealing with political economy factors such as corruption, organized crime, and the large informal economy, SSR efforts are likely to continue to be slow and disjointed. It takes more than formal statehood to ensure SSR success.

**Conclusion**

As mentioned at the outset, that postwar countries can be stateless and society-less does not mean that they are ungoverned. The political and security vacuum emerging after war can be exploited by actors such as warlords, criminal networks, and corrupt political elites. Other, traditional structures also often reemerge, and the state becomes but one among several competing organizations governing society. Security sector reform must examine its assumptions, or at least make the implicit assumptions more explicit.

A number of scholars have criticized the technical-bureaucratic nature of security sector reform and humanitarian and development aid. For instance, Mark Duffield and Lisa Denney both have questioned the supposition that increasing security will inevitably lead to development, the so-called “security first” discourse. There are very few, if any, examples that simply increasing security automatically leads to increased development. Similarly, Michael Pugh has found that many of the economic reforms implemented in postwar countries, such as privatization and a reduction of the public sector, have had adverse consequences. He also makes an interesting point that many of the Western states preaching neoliberal reforms abroad have strong and active state institutions themselves. Others, like Mary Kaldor, have stressed the notion of human security—that the security of individuals is paramount, and that through human security we can solve the problems of global insecurity. In addition, she claims the state-society relationship is of limited use in today’s globalized world, where people have multiple loyalties, and sets forth a theory of a global civil society as an answer to war. Mark Duffield, on the other hand, asserts that the focus on human security effectively authorizes further policing of other states and creates a divide between the insecure South threatening the secure West. Then again, scholars like David Chandler argues that human-centered approaches are of limited use and emphasizes a revisit to the structures of economic, political, and social relations. Human beings, he claims, do not act merely as individual and separate “human agents.” On the contrary, we are shaped by the institutions and structures we live under, as well as shaping them in return through our “subjective constructions of political collectivity.”

This debate goes straight to the core of what SSR entails: transforming and reshaping the relationship between state, society, and political community. These overarching perspectives are currently lacking in the security sector reform agenda. Much of the debate within SSR is about which reforms to implement and how to implement and sequencing them, rather than about the fundamental questions concerning the very relationship between security and development and the role of the state. The case studies in this article demonstrate the importance of looking beyond both formal state structures as well as individual actors, and suggest a renewed emphasis on the fundamental principles of security sector reform. As described by Edmunds:

the legitimacy and coherence of the wider political community matters in SSR. A consolidated political community provides a clear framework against which to premise the normative objectives of SSR. If the political community is weak or contested then these fault lines are likely to be reflected in the reform process itself, with a consequently negative impact on its viability and effectiveness.

**Notes**

Guro Lien is a researcher at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment. She may be reached at <Guro.Lien@ffi.no>. The views expressed in this article are her own.


14. On Ismail Khan, see Middlebrook and Sedra (2005).


References

Balkan Insight. 2013. “Bosnia Federation President Faces Corruption Indictment.”


