WORLD PEACE FOUNDATION

"The Militarized Political Marketplace":

Challenges to Security Sector Governance

Seminar Note

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The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

Tufts University

The World Peace Foundation, an operating foundation affiliated solely with The Fletcher School, aims to provide intellectual leadership on issues of peace, justice and security. It believes that innovative research and teaching are critical to the challenges of making peace around the world, and should go hand-in-hand with advocacy and practical engagement with the toughest issues. It regularly convenes expert seminars to address today's most pressing issues. The seminar, "The Militarized Political Marketplace" was held August 18-20, 2014.

This seminar note is organized around prominent themes that emerged throughout the seminar. Participants' responses were non-attributable for a more thorough discussion.

OVERVIEW

The seminar aimed to bring together academics and practitioners working on the politics and policy of security sector governance (SSG) and reform (SSR). The use of the "governance" was intended to take the security sector conversation beyond "reform", which has become a field principally focused on how western donors apply policy tools to countries that they identify as in a post-conflict transition. Instead, we shift our focus to the *politics* of the security sector.

Our starting point is that institution-focused state-building efforts—the preferred approach of international organizations and donors—often do not reflect a country's real politics. Instead we assume that disputes are not resolved through formal political institutions and procedures, but through direct bargaining, usually involving threat and financial payoff. The framework for this is the "militarized political marketplace."

We explored this, and other themes across four primary cases: South Sudan, Indonesia, Bosnia and Iraq. Further, the discussion included reflections from practitioners.

Challenging the Framework: Three Ways of Looking at the Problem

In the first instance, both "security" and the traditional way of thinking about "reform" need to be problematized. In one sense, the term "security" describes individual and community's needs to be protected from violence, abuse and other risks. In another sense, "security" describes the political relations, set of institutions, and decision-making processes that govern the use of force to establish or maintain order, in opposition to both internal and external threats. Confusion between these two concepts has bedeviled the use of the term "security".

These two understandings of "security" are elided in the origins and subsequent evolution of the term SSR. Reforming and democratizing the military, police and other security institutions began as an initiative by several governments in the global South—notably South Africa. This enterprise was highly political, focusing on nationally driven processes of change, and in particular concerned with challenging the dominant role that security institutions often played in national politics. Subsequently, the concept of SSR was discovered by international donors, which took it up in a programmatic manner. In turn this inevitably involved the development of general norms and the promotion of institutions that resemble those of the donor countries themselves.

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As a menu-based, supply driven approach, SSR achieved important but limited successes. Practitioners were well aware of the power relations that underpinned their frustrations but were not equipped, analytically or with policy instruments, to tackle these issues. Historically and politically, SSR is connected with democratization. However, there are no simple or general formulae for democratization. In theory, both SSR and democracy are associated with building trust and bringing together armed factions and civilians in dialogue, increasing transparency, and creating accountability for leaders' decisions (above all, their decisions to use force). In short, the two ways of thinking about "security" meet at the point of democratization. But absent a serious grappling with the real politics that animates transition processes, security sector "reform" can amount to little more than training of an unreformed security sector.

One framework for analyzing power relations, in particular within and among security institutions, and between security actors and civilians is the "political marketplace." For the purposes of this seminar, this was used as a description of the logic of direct bargaining over power and resources in non-institutionalized states, and as a useful entry point for specifying different configurations of power: monopolies, oligopolies, or unrestrained political competition; "hard democracy" or "soft dictatorship." This analysis can identify potential stress points, which are cracks in power structures that dominate authoritarian, securitized states ("fragile Leviathans"), and identify likely stressors that can lead to

transformative change. It can also identify the shape and likelihood of counter-revolutions led by the old guard, and the survival strategies of security chiefs, who may present themselves as saviors of order in the face of armed insurgents. The marketplace framework helps us to delineate a category of countries as "contested kleptocracies," in which disorder is a system of governance and is used for rent seeking. All such systems may include pockets of institutional integrity, but we need to be alert to the political conditions that are conducive to these functional bureaucratic locations, rather than taking them for granted as the seeds of a future institutionalized state.

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The concept of "security cultures" is another useful framework for analyzing SSG and SSR. People tend to assume that they know what "security" means, but as well as the two basic perspectives—human security and security as political ordering—there are four identifiable security cultures within contemporary security institutions. One is the old geopolitical concept of security as protecting the territorial nation: this has given rise to an institutional model of an army drawn from 19th century European experience. A second arises from "new wars" and is associated with the protection of subnational units such as ethnic groups. A third security culture has arisen with the "war on terror" and is associated with the instruments of surveillance and targeted force in situations that are neither peace nor war. A final version is the liberal peace and the institutional and political agenda that accompanies efforts to achieve peace within a liberalized global order.

Different security cultures and their associated models can operate at the same time, giving rise to tensions. Examples include Timor Leste and Afghanistan. For example, the U.S. army command was pursuing war on terror objectives, while NATO was concerned with liberal peace. In some countries, for example South Africa, a genuine commitment to democratic reform has driven SSR. In others, for example Uganda, there has been a nominal commitment to reform that has served as an inducement for donor assistance.

The security culture of the U.S. is of particular interest, given its vast military capacity and global influence. The current U.S. position includes announcing a slew of new security initiatives—three in recent months—while pulling back its own active engagement of troops. Among the recent new policies are an African security governance initiative, and the emergence of a new set of peacekeeping doctrines that (marginalizing or circumventing the UN), are a mixture of counter-terrorism, peacekeeping and pacification. While these are presented as initiatives to promote security, they tend to involve considerable payments to African militaries, for example putting troops on the international peacekeeping payroll, in such a way that they serve as a disincentive to real reform. The transnational nature of security and military patronage is an important, under-analyzed development that is critically important to SSG.

South Sudan

South Sudan is an exemplar of a country in which the real objectives of the government's security sector policy diverged completely from its nominal policy goals—which happened to be identical with those promoted by international donors. At the time of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, that brought to an end the long-running civil war, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) numbered fewer than 40,000 men. With the CPA, the SPLA officially became the armed forces of the newly autonomous region of Southern Sudan. Following six years during which the key provisions of the CPA were implemented, the region became the independent South Sudan. At this point, the SPLA and other uniformed security forces had grown to over 300,000 men on payroll. It was also the highest-paid army in sub-Saharan Africa, and had the largest senior officer corps with 745 generals. This was financed almost wholly by oil revenues that constituted 98% of the government's income.

The Government of Southern Sudan officially adopted policies of SSR and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and received extensive international technical advice and assistance, including from the U.S., Britain, Ethiopia and Canada (the last for the police). It also had extensive technical advice on budgetary management and assistance for institution building, social services and post-war rehabilitation. With per capita government spending of $350 and an additional $105 in development assistance, South Sudan at independence was cash rich, far surpassing all its neighbors.

The actual policies of the Government were focused on using the oil money to buy the loyalties of political and military elites. Members of the elite staked their claims through connections and pressure in the capital Juba or, if they were in the rural areas, by staging local rebellions which attracted the government's attention and a payoff. This bargaining system was inherently inflationary and ran into crisis when, as part of a dispute with (northern) Sudan, South Sudan shut down its national oil supply in January 2012. The financial crash made the kleptocratic system unworkable, and civil war arose in due course, as a result of the financial structure of the army.

The Government strategy of massive military payoff had its own rationality. In order to secure the independence of the country, the government needed to prevent northern Sudan from renting the loyalties of southern militia commanders, as it had done during the civil war of 1983-2005. The method of doing this was pricing the northerners out of the market by inflating the market price of military loyalty. This strategy won separation but made the country ungovernable.

This strategy also made any attempts at SSR and DDR wholly impractical. All failed utterly. Subsequent to the outbreak of a new civil war in South Sudan in December 2013, the issue of SSG has not been adequately addressed. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), although it has a Chapter VII mandate, is not equipped to do more than provide protection to the tens of thousands of people who have fled to its camps to seek safety. In recognition of the weakness of UNMISS, African neighbors and the U.S. have proposed a "Protection and Deterrent Force" (PDF) drawn from the armies of the neighbors, to give muscular backing to ceasefire monitoring team. This is likely to result in a new layer of regionalized SSG in South Sudan.

The prospects of transforming the SPLA are dim. Most of its soldiers are illiterate and they have expectations of high rewards for little input. It continues to consume more than half the government budget and 15% of GDP. Reform efforts will need to focus on the commanders. The current trend is towards mobilization on the basis of ethnicity, expecting peace based on a shareout of oil revenues. This is not sustainable, but no formula has been found—not even examined—for how to handle the problem of the SPLA.

Discussion of the South Sudan case focused on comparisons with other countries. The South Sudanese governance system is derived from how the (northern) Sudanese government used to govern its peripheries, but without the same level of political business management skill, and with resources devoted overwhelmingly to the military.

South Sudan is very different from, for example, neighboring Ethiopia. The former Ethiopian insurgents, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front had, while still in the field, become an administration in waiting. They learned how to govern and how to operate politically while in the field. Ethiopia is also not a rentier system.

Somaliland, the unrecognized state that has formed in northwestern Somalia, is an unusual case of success, in democratization and SSG, based on a close alliance between a domestic business class and a national leadership, which set up a government without the assistance of outsiders. It is also an instructive case because it is an exception to the general rule that one should not pursue SSR/DDR during armed conflict. In 1994, the government's military consolidation and DDR program continued during an intense, albeit brief, civil war.

There are clear parallels with Libya, where rent seeking rebellions are also common, and where the political system is geared entirely towards extracting rent from oil revenues.

Indonesia

Indonesia has a complex history of SSG. The army has possessed enormous power during Indonesia's post-colonial history, but successive presidents over the last fifteen years have been able to subordinate or overrule the military in pursuit of key political objectives, such as the referendum in Timor Leste and peace in Aceh. This session examined the challenges of SSG from two viewpoints: the center of political power and the experience of the peripheries, which have been subject to violent depredations in different configurations.

Each of the country's presidents has had a different relationship with the army, leading to different forms of SSG and prospects for SSR. Having come to power in a 1967 coup and used the army as a main instrument of repression, President Suharto ruled through the military while also keeping the armed forces subservient to his personal executive control. He deployed his powers of patronage to good effect, and

ensured that senior army officers were competitors with each other. Spreading the army commands over the vast archipelago, Suharto was also able to ensure that the army was not organized in a centralized manner that could threaten his rule. He permitted army commanders to run businesses and to secure funds autonomously for their own budgets.

Following the overthrow of Suharto in 1998, President Habibie confronted the army and notably announced a referendum on independence in Timor Leste, without first consulting the armed forces. He cut back on the military's autonomous funding base. His successor and Indonesia's first elected president, Abdurrahman Wahid possessed more legitimacy and compelled the armed forces to reconfigure themselves, in principle as the professional instrument of a democratic government. However, Wahid became erratic and earned opposition of both army and parliament, and he was removed.

President Megawati Sukarnoputri gave the army a great deal of freedom of action. During her tenure (2001–04), hardline generals were promoted, and there was a state of emergency and military clampdown in Aceh.

Sukarnoputri lost the presidency to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a former general who enjoyed the strong backing of the army. He was able to use this political capital to promote reformist generals and remove hardliners, making possible the peace talks in Aceh and other steps to entrench democracy. Nonetheless, he needed to use financial incentives to generals to push through his key policy measures. As of 2014, the Indonesian armed forces have become much less active participants in governance. Joko Widodo, elected in 2014, is the first president not to have been a general or member of the ruling elite, and is now in a much stronger position to control the army than his predecessors.

Turning to the subnational causes and components of conflict, different perspectives come into focus. Indonesia is vast and still, in most peripheral areas, a highly militarized system of governance. This point was illustrated by three case studies: Timor Leste prior to independence, West Papua, and Maluku, which has suffered a sustained conflict. Governance in these areas consists of a hybrid political order including formal and informal elements, a semi-patrimonial democracy that includes religious organizations, paramilitary groups, and cultural leaders as well as elected officials and government appointees in positions of authority. In all cases, the patterns of violence are intimately associated with the governmental and commercial roles of the security sector.

Timor Leste was the site of an intense insurgency from 1975-79, with a high number of deaths, and then a second period of intense conflict in 1999 at the time of the independence referendum. The army not only had a political interest in maintaining Indonesia's territorial integrity—linked to its own sense of identity and pride as the custodian of nationalism—but also had commercial interests in the area.

West Papua has had three phases of conflict, beginning in the 1960s when there was a contest over independence or joining Indonesia. Here the army has major commercial interests in mining and logging. The area is now controlled by units including military police that operate off-budget. Outside access is

severely restricted. Security operations are justified as counter-terrorism, which has the added advantage of immunizing them from U.S. criticism.

The pattern of violence in Maluku has been different again, consisting of sectarian violence that erupted at the time of democratization and economic hardship at the end of the 1990s. The army did not at first know how to manage sectarian violence, and different battalions took different sides in the conflict. The governing institutions, including security apparatus, fractured. However, once the army made a clear decision on how to address the problem, the violence could be resolved.

The conflict and peace in Aceh has followed yet another pattern. The politics of peace in Aceh is partly an international process (well documented) and partly an internal process within the military (poorly documented). The full story of peace in Aceh will show how it was secured through the government paying a "withdrawal fee" and a "non-combat activity fee" to the hardline generals. This was a bribe that literally bought peace. The military remain involved in the economy and its power remains, but Bambang did succeed in subordinating the personal and factional interests of the army commanders to national political priorities.

Indonesia has been the locus of a number of SSR programs, run by Britain, the European Union and Australia, especially in the 2000-04 period. The U.S. provided training to the army, with a particular focus on counter-terrorism, but not SSR. These efforts were secondary to the domestic political calculations and pressures. Arising from these efforts, and other wider societal changes, the new generation of Indonesian soldiers are more professional, less political, see themselves as less privileged, and are reformers.

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Bosnia

Bosnia-Hercegovina differs from the other case studies in that the European Union and NATO have imposed a firm framework in which their priority of a professional security sector were well-addressed while the country's domestic politics remain hamstrung by the post-conflict structures. In many respects, Bosnia's current security structures are not dissimilar to other southern European countries—what makes it extraordinary is that it went through a civil war that involved exceptional atrocities, and those events leave a deep imprint on politics.

At the end of the war in 1995, Bosnia had an enormous security and military apparatus, with the three armies and their paramilitaries estimated to comprise more than 800,000. International armed forces monitored the peace agreement, initially with 32,000 NATO and other forces, decreasing steadily and transferring the mission to 7,000 European forces in 2004, and down to 1,600 by 2007. By 2009, the Bosnian armed forces numbered 7,000, and the police at 17,000, giving the country a ratio of soldiers and policemen to population comparable to that in other southern European countries. The war definitively

ended. The borders are secure—a high priority for European countries that were concerned that Bosnia would prove a soft entry point to western Europe. The army is not a political actor or a threat, and indeed its principal recent relevance has been responding to floods. International forces have also been hugely reduced. Bosnia is not a threat to its neighbors. It faces similar problems of migration to the EU, and relations with the EU, of other countries.

In these respects, SSR and DDR have been very successful: the size and power of armies and armed groups have been reduced, and the security sector is fully subject to the authority of civilian politicians. Much of this has been achieved under international tutelage and with a clear set of deterrents and incentives from Europe. Neither NATO nor the UN had a clear plan for SSR and they allowed different donors to follow different models and procedures. There was no clarity on whether Bosnia should have a centralized, ethnically integrated police service, or whether police powers should be devolved to local authorities, creating ethnically homogenous police departments. The key international concerns were that the country should be stabilized so as to allow the return of refugees from Europe, war criminals should be excluded from positions in the security structure, and that the country would not provide a haven for illegal transnational migration and trade. Once these goals had been achieved, external interest in further reform waned. For members of the local elites, the major protection concern is protection from prosecution (for war crimes or continuing corruption), not protection from others. For the broader population, the reform agenda still has far to go in terms of providing economic opportunity, decreasing corruption and increasing transparency and accountability.

Arising from the Dayton Accord, Bosnia has an extremely complicated state structure. The agreement ended the armed conflict by turning governance into an institutionalized ethnic oligarchy. By strictly regulating political competition, Dayton removed the reasons why political leaders might want to build up large and powerful armed units. What has emerged after the settlement is patronage through political parties and small-town corrupt politics, with the police serving as an instrument of holding the corrupt local systems together. Judicial appointments are another arena of corrupt and patrimonial politics, as judges are politically appointed and have the power to halt prosecutions. Within the firm framework provided by the international context, there is a marketplace in political allegiances, but that marketplace is not now militarized.

Bosnia's SSR efforts were externally driven, in response to European priorities, and were successful in achieving those externally-specified goals. There are many social and political reasons for concern about Bosnia today, but SSG is not among them. The reform agenda in Bosnia is reaching its limits under the current political framework, but internal pressures for further reform are continuing.

Iraq

The Iraqi case is distinguished by an exceptionally high level of external engagement in driving SSG, enormous funds (the U.S. spent over $50 billion on the Iraqi National Army), and near-total failure. Iraq has

come to resemble a deregulated and militarized political marketplace in which the scramble for oil rents, organized along sectarian lines, has undermined the entire political order. Corruption is endemic and the moral cohesion that undergirds social order is being eroded.

From the beginning—the U.S. decision to invade Iraq made in the wake of 9/11—the question of SSG was not given adequate attention. Both the White House and the Iraqis who anticipated and encouraged a U.S. invasion glossed over the inevitable challenges and dangers of the occupation. Those perils were multiplied by the decision to dissolve the army in 2003. Since then, Iraq has been a laboratory of experiments in DDR and SSR. Between them, NATO and the UN spent $1bn on SSR with focus on capacity building and training. Most efforts were ad hoc, half-hearted and unfocused and those that looked promising were not sustained.

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One feature of the post-invasion Iraqi security sector is the proliferation of security and military organizations with overlapping chains of command. The question of non-state armed groups was simply not on the agenda in 2003. Eleven years on, the entire security system is based on absorbed non-state groups and private contractors, with large numbers of former insurgents comprising a large proportion of the 1 million security-military payroll. The much-heralded 2007 U.S. "surge" of forces to stem the civil war included putting 90,000 militia on the government payroll, turning the political marketplace to political advantage. As a consequence, the security sector is not only the largest employer in Iraq but also the de facto largest welfare provider.

The establishment of a competitive, militarized political patronage system has meant that violence and intimidation are central to political practice. Different state security institutions are affiliated with different leading political actors. Thus for example, the national intelligence apparatus competes with other institutions and aligns with political parties. Positions in all elements of the security apparatus are earmarked for people for personal advancement.

This year, with the rise of the Islamic State insurgency, has seen the collapse of any pretense that Iraq has a national army. The government is openly using militias for defense against the IS. Security governance in Iraq is also regionalized, integrated with its neighbors, so that any solely national institutional framework is largely fictional.

Countries dependent on oil revenues face special circumstances and risks.

A second feature is the dominance of the politics of oil-based rent-seeking. Iraq is not only corrupt but its corruption shapes politics in a particular way that is particular to oil states. Countries dependent on oil revenues face special circumstances and risks. Oil is an enclave product that generates high revenue but little employment; it is a strategic commodity that is of high geopolitical interest, is a depletable resource,

and is characterized by high price volatility. These characteristics combine to make it very tempting as the means for quickly accumulating personal wealth and political power, and also mean that good strategic management requires exceptional discipline. It is rare for an oil state to overcome the negative attributes of oil—Norway is a rare such instance. In most other cases, oil production leads to rent-seeking in a very intense way with an accompanying political tension between those with money who feel omnipotent and rest who feel powerless. A minimum of stability needed in order for the oil to flow: when a petro-state approaches the moment of collapse, its rulers commonly step back from the brink (South Sudan is an exception).

Iraq is a classic petro-state. After independence the first act of Iraq was to sign a new oil concession. This led to a strong centralized government with a vast army and huge weapons procurement, and an authoritarian kleptocracy. The U.S. did not make naïve errors when it dismantled this system: it had clear intent to wipe the country's history clean and build a client state from scratch. This was reckless and led directly to the current state failure and sectarian violence. Approaching the Iraqi challenges from the point of view of war studies did not lead the U.S. to a plan for post-conflict reconstruction, including SSG.

Specific problems within Iraq are manifestations of this broader pattern. In Basra, the insecurity arose from a rentier marketplace in which militia commanders, army commanders and terrorists collaborated in an integrated political-financial system. By taking a comprehensive approach and identifying sources of political-military financing, it was possible for coalition forces to stabilize Basra. But this approach was not followed through properly.

The rise of the Islamic State insurgency poses a greater challenge. It can be understood both as a product of the rentier political marketplace—a particular adaptation to the system—and as an attempt to challenge the system as a whole. The IS cries out for analysis as a political-military business. It would be an error to treat it as just another insurgent group.

Iraq has emerged as a competitive authoritarian system fed by oil rents, dominated by an insatiable elite thoroughly resistant to reform. The question arises, what would happen if the state were faced with an existential threat, such as a major drop in the oil price?

Reflections by Practitioners and General Discussion

One observation from the viewpoint of the practice of SSR was that the entire discussion on the political economy of SSG was orthogonal to the established field of SSR, and did not speak to the professional practice of SSR. There is a well-established history of SSR dating back to the aftermath of World War Two, which is concerned with institutional aspects of civil-military relations, the democratic control of the armed forces, the legislative and budgetary elements of SSR, and the implementation parameters for successful programs. The lessons from this experience are that substantial funds and political commitment are necessary, and that modeling programs on European examples is not a panacea. Nonetheless, by examining what practitioners do, and what are the good practices that have emerged, it is possible to

assist and advice governments and overcome resistance from within the security sector and other parts of government.

Other observations engaged more directly with the substance of the case studies and the underlying theme of the political economy of the security sector, in particular drawing on the recurring themes of human security, security cultures, and how SSG/R cannot be separated from wider political developments in the country concerned. Among these observations were the recognition that once a group of people has become used to a certain level of privilege and money, it is difficult to enforce change; that deeper understanding is needed of political-military elites and their control over, and use of, resources; and that the security sector in apparently strong but brittle states ("fragile Leviathans") needs study. The trend towards militia governance in several parts of the world, and its dangers, were underlined. The two approaches to security—political ordering versus human security—are differently emphasized by the political processes in different countries, and countries also vary in their relative prioritization of stability versus democracy, giving rise to a wide variety of possible approaches to SSG/R.

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Of the case studies, the Indonesia case, of unsteady democratization while the army remains a major political and economic player, is the one with the greatest commonality with other countries. There are likely to be similarities with countries including Egypt, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Pakistan, which it would be fruitful to pursue.

One of the major conclusions of the discussions is that addressing the political context has the potential to change SSG and make SSR achievable, but the specific policy and programmatic requirements of SSR are a distinct and separate requirement. Another conclusion is that in a political system dominated by direct bargaining over power and resources, using threat—a political marketplace—institutionally-focused initiatives will not succeed, no matter how much money and time is invested. Rather, they will be co-opted by the market. The transnational nature of patronage and bargaining, especially in the security sector, is making this a more prevalent feature

For more information about the WPF project analyzing "militarized political marketplaces," see our blog, Reinventing Peace: http://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/tag/political-marketplace/

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