



## **Editor's picks**

### **EU Military Cooperation and National Defense; Peace-building and State-building from the Perspective of the Historical Development of International Society; Islamist Violent Extremism; War Economy, Governance and Security in Syria's Opposition-Controlled Areas; and The Conundrum of DDR Coordination**

Since the U.K.'s vote to leave the EU in June 2016, a plethora of new initiatives to bolster EU military cooperation have emerged. In "EU Military Cooperation and National Defense," Mr. Daniel Keohane suggests the EU military cooperation should be understood more in the context of its utility for national defense policies across Europe, and less through its relationship with NATO or its role in European integration. In particular, the positions of France, Germany, Italy, and Poland will be crucial for the future success of EU military efforts. If the EU helps its governments better spend their defense budgets and deepen their military cooperation, NATO will benefit too, as 21 countries will remain members of both the union and the Alliance. However, that will require EU governments to capitalize on the convergences and manage the divergences of their disparate national defense policies.

In "Peace-building and State-building from the Perspective of the Historical Development of International Society," Dr. Hideaki Shinoda examines the relationship between post-conflict peace-building and state-building. In so doing, he illustrates the process of the expansion and transformation of "world international society." By comparing the process of the formation of sovereign states in modern Europe and state-building activities in post-conflict societies in the contemporary world, he seeks to identify dilemmas of peace-building through state-building. First, Professor Shinoda describes the dilemma at the level of overall international order concerning world international society and regional discrepancies of peace-building through state-building. Second, he highlights the dilemma at the level of state-building policies concerning the concentration of power and the limitation of concentrated power. Third, he illustrates the dilemma concerning liberal peace-building and local ownership. Then, he argues that post-conflict state-building needs to be understood in the context of the long-term state-building process.

Islamist violent extremist (IVE) groups are frequently involved in civil conflicts. In “Islamist Violent Extremism: A New Form of Conflict or Business as Usual?” Drs. Andrew Glazzard, Sasha Jespersen, Thomas Maguire, and Ms. Emily Winterbotham assert that some groups owe their origins to conflict, and tens of thousands of Islamists have chosen to participate in conflicts taking place in foreign countries in the past 35 years. Increasingly, IVE groups appear to have the capacity to influence the conflicts they are involved in, and are, in turn, influenced by their experiences. As a result, for those working on conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, the involvement of IVE groups raises questions of whether traditional responses remain adequate. Drawing on three country case studies – Nigeria, Kenya, and Iraq/Syria, the authors examine the similarities and differences between IVE groups and other conflict actors, and what this means for development, state building and peace building responses.

Dr. Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic and Dr. Rim Turkmani in “War Economy, Governance, and Security in Syria’s Opposition-Controlled Areas,” explore the links between the war economy and civilian security by using evidence from the three opposition-held areas in Syria. The study of Eastern Ghouta, Daraa and Atareb shows how different types of behavior by non-state armed groups engaged in criminal war economy, shaped by the broader war economy conditions, impact the ability of the local populations to address their security predicaments. Their findings will challenge the assumption prevalent in the scholarship on the war economy that civilian security is unequivocally undermined by insurgents’ criminal war economy dealings. They show that in some local contexts a diverse range of economic choices and actors provide the local population with more opportunities to develop coping strategies by engaging in different parts of the war economy.

Dr. Guy Lamb and Mr. Theo Stainer analyze the nature of coordination between the various stakeholders during the design and implementation of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process in “The Conundrum of DDR Coordination: The Case of South Sudan.” The authors make detailed reference to the contemporary DDR program in South Sudan as this African country is a relevant example of significant international and local efforts to facilitate DDR coordination in a fragile and complex political and operational environment. The analyses showed that in South Sudan, coordination appeared to have been negatively affected by hierarchical, convoluted and inflexible organizational structures and arrangements. In addition, further contributing factors included: inadequate communication; uncertainty over roles and responsibilities; and unequal access to financial resources. Moreover, it was apparent that these arrangements and dynamics fostered inter-organizational tensions and eroded trust between stakeholders. This ultimately resulted in fragmented and sub-standard DDR outcomes.

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