

## RESCUING FRAGILE STATES

Book presentation

The book *From Fragile State to Functioning State* is the result of a research project of the Marshall European Center for Security Studies conducted between 2006 and 2008. The book editor Sabine Collmer and eighteen researchers from twelve different states studied examples of fragile states<sup>1</sup>. The aim of the study was to determine possible ways of ensuring stability and democratic reconstruction in these states. The authors of the book focused on examining the circumstances that lead to instability or inability of a state to operate. They further investigated conditions necessary for positive development, reconstruction and transformation of the state. The end purpose of these processes is the establishment of basic functions (security, welfare and the rule of law) that a government should provide in an organised and stable state. The results of the study are based on the analysis of four states representing typical models of circumstances, on the basis of which states are classified as fragile or non-functioning. States included in the study are Afghanistan, Georgia, Kosovo and Moldova. Afghanistan is an example of a state with long-standing history of wars, instability, internal conflicts, foreign intervention, economic recession, and efforts of the international community for the establishment of a functioning state. The second state examined, Georgia, is a state located in an unstable region. It is marked by unstable internal policy, frozen internal conflicts, disputes and military engagements with the neighbouring state as well as transition efforts towards a stable democracy. Moldova, the poorest state in the region, is another state in transition with frozen internal conflicts. Kosovo, on the other hand, is a state which was founded with the help of the international community. It is a state in transition, on the path toward a stable democracy and market economy, and a state in conflict with the

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<sup>1</sup> *The term is used to define states whose governments have failed to ensure security, welfare and the rule of law. These states witness threats of internal and interstate conflicts, and risks of destabilisation of the region and global instability. Their common denominator is the existence of international interest in their stabilisation and the elimination of security risks, and the efforts to prevent their downfall. As there is no general definition agreed for these states, various terms such as weak, crisis, ineffective, incapable, failed, collapsed and similar are used to describe them.*

neighbouring country and confronted with large political, social and economic challenges, the solving of which is supported by the international community.

The book has three parts: In the first, theoretical, part Sabine Collmer describes the approach taken and outlines the research conducted. Greame P. Herd analyses the challenges presented to global security by fragile states. He addresses questions regarding the strategy leading to their stability and the roles of international organisations and superpowers. Steven Hearne describes influences of environmental security on stability of the state by analyzing conditions required for stability, security and sustainability of states, and criteria for identifying the reasons for non-functioning of the state. In the conclusion of the first part, Ann L. Phillips examines effects of external assistance and success of receiving states in applying this assistance for development.

The second part of the book presents the results of case studies. In the study of Afghanistan Bahar Jalali gives an overview of the situation, security challenges and risks. Jalali also provides an assessment of the efficiency of international community's efforts to remedy the situation. Gregory Gleason and Yury Bosin write about the approach towards the consolidation of Afghanistan by highlighting the differences between the views of the Western and Muslim world. Conrad Schetter and Rainer Glassner analyse the complex security architecture, noting that tribal and other forms of rule at the local level refute the thesis of a non-functioning state.

In her study of Georgia, Maia Chiabrishvili assesses the success level of a state's transformation in economic, social and defence areas and analyses Georgia's challenges stemming from its dispute with Russia. Sebastian Mayer presents the role of the European Union and the effectiveness of its policy toward Russia and Georgia. Martin Malek includes in his study also the states of the former Soviet Union situated in the Caucasus Mountains area and defines characteristics and indicators, based on which states can be classified as strong and functioning or weak and non-functioning.

In their study of Kosovo, Lulzim Peci and Ilir Dugoli present a comprehensive analysis of Kosovo's challenges, highlight the reasons for Kosovo's classification as a weak state and propose solutions. Dragan Lozančić describes common characteristics and specifics of states in transition in the region of the Western Balkans, and presents unresolved problems as well as internal and external factors that influence these states. Frank Odendahl explains results of the study on threats posed to Southeastern Europe by stocks of small arms and explosive ordnance.

In the last case study Tatiana Busoncian analyses the success level of democratization, economic development and security sector operations in Moldova. She also analyses security threats posed by the frozen conflict with Transnistria. The study of Elena Kovalova focuses on the impact of crime and corruption on security and formation of a stabile state. Cristian Urse examines the parallels and the possible impact of conflict between Russia and Georgia on the settlement of the dispute

regarding the autonomy of Transnistria, and the related policy of the neighbouring states and international organizations.

In the last part of the book, Sabine Collmer defines, based on case studies, factors and processes which lead to instability and the weakening of states or which may be the reason for their poor functioning. Collmer describes the role of political elites, civil society and the media and offers possibilities for future developments in Afghanistan, Georgia, Moldova and Kosovo in the context of physical, political, economic and social security.

The authors' main message is how to identify circumstances that contribute to the development of fragile or non-functioning states, and how to turn the spiral of negative development and destabilization in the positive direction. As the international community is, nowadays, confronted with numerous national political formations that pose a threat to common security or to citizens of this community, their message is of interest. These communities share a common influence on stability outside their borders, and in certain cases this is a global problem as well. This book can be a rich source of information for all who study contemporary security and political situation in the world and make risk assessments of the emergence of new crises, or for those who seek advice on how international community or individual states can contribute to the reconstruction or stabilization of states.