



Arab Reform Initiative

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Managing Civil-Military Relations in Times of Armed Struggle

→ Gavin Cawthra & Veton Surroi.



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For the political transitions underway in the Arab world, different lessons may be drawn from experiences of countries that have passed through democratic transitions. While Tunisians may look for best practices in security sector reform from among peaceful past transitions, the Syrian opposition, currently embroiled in major conflict, may be looking for very different lessons: how to build trust among opposition forces, how to prepare for negotiations, or how to plan for future reintegration of a country divided into armed camps.

The Arab Reform Initiative is pleased to share two papers, one focused on South Africa and one on Kosovo, about managing civil-military relations in times of armed struggle. The Kosovo paper, by Veton Surroi, analyzes how armed forces can work together with political leaders to forge a common front for bringing an end to conflict. The paper on South Africa, by Gavin Cawthra, describes how the South African transition is seen by some as a model for managing security during transition, but was in reality a highly uncertain and volatile experience. The incoming leadership, having negotiated a political resolution to their armed struggle, was cautious in reforming the security sector, and had to trust the outgoing regime's forces to maintain order during a turbulent transition.

Security sector reform in South Africa: lessons for countries in transition by Gavin Cawthra

Kosovo: How (not) to unite politics and the military by Veton Surroi



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About Arab Reform Initiative

The Arab Reform Initiative is the leading independent Arab think tank working with expert partners in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change. It conducts research and policy analysis and provides a platform for inspirational voices based on the principles of diversity, impartiality and social justice.

- We produce original research informed by local experiences and partner with institutions to achieve impact across the Arab world and globally
- We empower individuals and institutions to develop their own concept of policy solutions
- We mobilize stakeholders to build coalitions for positive change

Our aim is to see vibrant democratic societies emerge and grow in the region.

Founded in 2005, the Arab Reform Initiative is governed by a Plenary of its members and an Executive Committee.

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