**A Rock Between Hard Places: Afghanistan as an Arena of Regional Insecurity**

A Book Launch with Author Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh

What drives neighboring states to intervene in the Afghan conflict? This book challenges mainstream analyses which place Afghanistan at the center – the so-called 'heart' – of a large pan-Asian region whose fate is predicated on Afghan stability. Instead Harpviken and Tadjbakhsh situate Afghanistan on the margins of three regional security complexes – those of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Persian Gulf – each characterized by deep security rivalries, which, in turn, informs their engagement in Afghanistan. Within Central Asia, security cooperation is hampered by competition for regional supremacy and great power support, a dynamic reflected in these states’ half-hearted role in Afghanistan. In the Persian Gulf, Iran and Saudi Arabia fight for economic and political influence, mirrored in their Afghan engagements; while long-standing Indo-Pakistani rivalries are perennially played out in Afghanistan. Based on a careful reading of the recent political and economic history of the region, and of Great Power rivalry beyond it, the authors explain why efforts to build a comprehensive Afghanistan-centric regional security order have failed, and what might be done to reset inter-state relations.

Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh teaches at the Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po), Paris, and is Associate Researcher at PRIO.

**Thursday, September 1, 2016**
**4:30pm - 6:00pm**
**1957 E St, NW, Suite 412, Voesar Conference Room**
**Please RSVP: go.gwu.edu/booklaunch**

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