

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

PETER WOODWARD, *Crisis in the Horn of Africa: politics, piracy and the threat of terror*. London: I. B. Tauris (hb £56 – 978 1 78076 220 3; pb £14.99 – 978 1 78076 221 0). 2012, 240 pp.

CHRISTOPHER L. DANIELS, *Somali Piracy and Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*. Plymouth: Scarecrow Press (hb £39.95 – 978 0 8108 8310 9; pb £18.95 – 978 0 8108 8694 0). 2012, 254 pp.

These are two quite different books. Ostensibly linked by their titles and the proximity of their publication dates, they have very little else in common in terms of approach or analysis. Therefore I will not attempt to review them in a single narrative.

In *Crisis in the Horn of Africa*, Woodward is particularly concerned with the post-Cold War context of the Horn of Africa, and how the region was engaged within the emerging theoretical frameworks of the past two decades: liberal democracy, ‘good governance’, free market economics and, increasingly in the context of continued insecurity and humanitarian need, the ‘responsibility to protect’. He seeks to examine the context at the end of the Cold War in order to address the question of whether a new liberal political, social and economic order could emerge in the region – a key theme in the post-Cold War international relations debate.

Woodward questions whether the apparent failure of any of these frameworks to gain significant traction in the region is a reflection of a flawed assumption. Given the limits of superpower influence during the Cold War itself, when intervention certainly had impacts but not always the desired outcome, why should external influence – whether by the remaining superpower, the USA, or by China, the other major power identified by Woodward as exercising a major influence on the Horn of Africa (especially Sudan, and later Ethiopia) – be expected to gain traction in the post-Cold War environment? Western promotion of democracy, human rights and open market economic policy has had limited effect in practice. States in the region, where functioning, reflect authoritarian tendencies, with a strong state role in the economy and limited tolerance of opposition or open democratic competition. All have sought to constrain the political influence of donors, despite the sometimes massive expenditure on aid, for example in Ethiopia and Sudan. The analysis ends by focusing on the agency of the political structures controlling each state, and by considering the limited impact of external actors.

An update of Woodward’s previous overview of the region, *The Horn of Africa: politics and international relations*, this volume is aimed at a non-specialist audience. The book is very lightly referenced. Indeed, a reader familiar with the literature on the region will wonder about a number of references that might have been added. Nevertheless, the volume provides a concise and thorough overview of the main trends in the region since the end of the Cold War. This is a useful time period to consider. The post-Cold War theoretical scaffold that Woodward erects and then deconstructs in the introduction and conclusion, respectively, is almost unnecessary but understandable, given his disciplinary location in international relations and the likely target audience of policy makers and development practitioners. The end of the Cold War coincided with dramatic changes to the state in the three main countries under consideration in this volume – Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia – with the Islamist coup in Sudan in 1989, the overthrow of the Soviet-allied regime in Ethiopia in 1991 (and subsequent independence of Eritrea in 1993), and the collapse of Siad Barre’s regime in Somalia in 1991.

Woodward's analysis traces events through to about 2011, long enough to allow consideration of the major development of South Sudan's independence in August of that year, but slightly too soon to capture the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in Ethiopia the following year – another momentous event that continues to have repercussions. Given the region's complex interlinkages and somewhat unique history in the context of the 'African' colonial and postcolonial experience, he starts with a chapter on the 'Evolution of the Horn' before moving on to individual chapters covering Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea and Djibouti. Somalia's chapter has a subsection on piracy – a nod to the title of the book, which feels like something of an appendage but is essential for policy audiences. Two synthesis chapters examine 'Regional relations' and 'International politics' before moving on to the conclusion.

These latter chapters provide the most useful insights for those new to the region and its interlinkages. 'Regional relations' flags up the significance of the competing ideologies of the ruling parties in Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea from the 1990s in the evolution of their relations (which frequently involve efforts to destabilize neighbours). It might have been interesting for Woodward to contextualize the somewhat unique concentration of ruling elites with strong ideologies in the Horn of Africa – compared with other regions of postcolonial Africa in particular, and even compared with other liberation movements-turned-ruling parties. The chapter on 'International politics' accurately surveys the range of external actors with a stake in the Horn of Africa – from neighbouring Egypt, the Gulf States, Iran and Europe (including the EU) to the USA and China, which are identified as the key players in the current context. This chapter emphasizes the limits of external influence, and highlights the ready willingness to shift from orthodox policy promotion to pragmatic cooperation – particularly with regard to the USA since 9/11. The limits of China's ability to refrain from politics and the promotion of particular economic models are also explored in the context of its involvement in the oil sector in Sudan.

A concise and comprehensive survey, the volume will provide a useful introduction to the region for the non-initiate. Editing lapses provided some irritation – for example, Siad Barre belonged to the Marehan clan, not Majerteen (p. 36); Ethiopia switched its alignment to the USSR in 1977, at around the same time as Somalia launched its military effort to take the Ogaden, not in 1987 nor in 1997 (pp. 32–3) – and in some cases would not be detected by introductory readers. Nevertheless, it is a useful primer.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Daniels' *Somali Piracy and Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*, even though its stated goal is to provide an introduction to the issues for students of international relations. The short introduction alerts the reader to the fact that the target audience is clearly policy makers in the USA. Indeed, the reader has the sense that this monograph originated as a policy report. It opens with an account of terrorist training camps in Somalia where recruits shoot pictures of President Barack Obama for target practice. This is followed by a chapter, 'The road to state failure in Somalia', outlining general trends in Somalia's political and economic history from around independence to the collapse of the state in 1991. Largely narrative, little is added for readers familiar with Somalia's history, nor does the author engage critically with the few academic sources on which the chapter draws. The intention appears to be simply to narrate Somalia's progress towards state collapse, rather than to support any overall argument. This is followed by a chapter on 'Piracy on the high seas' that is similarly narrative. It is also based almost entirely on media reports, which is odd for a book published in 2012 – given the bevy of policy research that the author might have felt comfortable drawing on. Subsequent chapters

on the international responses to piracy and terrorism in Somalia add further detail to the narrative, but little in the way of argument. Finally, a concluding chapter reiterates the global ramifications of insecurity in Somalia, before making a series of policy recommendations. Given the short shelf life of such recommendations in the ever-changing context of policy making, it is odd to see them in a hard cover monograph.

This is a slim volume, with about half of its pages given over to a series of appendices, including a discussion of other ‘Further reading’ – much of which is not specific to Somalia or to the Horn of Africa but to terrorism studies or state failure – and a number of international agreements and UN resolutions. These add little value to the work, either as a reference or as a policy tool – except perhaps pedagogically, should the text be used in a course. However, even for teaching purposes, the intense focus on terrorism and the dearth of material from political scientists, historians or anthropologists of Somalia is disheartening. It is telling that the volume already feels dated, the narrative at times seeming to be rooted in the late 2000s, rather than 2011 or 2012, when it was published. Moreover, the narrative appears overly influenced by US and Israeli terrorism analysis – some academic, but mainly from conservative policy institutes or media outlets.

Such analysis starts from an assumption, captured in the label ‘terrorist’, that does not allow for an exploration of al-Shabaab or other violent militia groups in Somalia as political actors in the context of an ongoing civil war. Rather, al-Shabaab’s leaders and fighters are portrayed in two-dimensional, emotive terms, with a focus on the heinous nature of some of their attacks. The reality of al-Shabaab’s continued existence and military capacity despite almost a decade of external military intervention suggests that – in order to understand the dynamics of the civil conflict – an analysis of al-Shabaab as a political movement is needed. Indeed, given the ‘link’ between piracy and terrorism in Somalia that the book purports to make – i.e. that both stem from the lack of law and order in the country, and the failure to restore a functioning central government (which is not a difficult or original conclusion to have drawn, even for a casual observer) – a policy-relevant study would presumably aim to tackle this question with urgency. Given these factors, I can find little to recommend this volume.

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GEORG KLUTE, *Tuareg-Aufstand in der Wüste. Ein Beitrag zur Anthropologie der Gewalt und des Krieges*. Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag (hb €68 – 978 3 89645 732 5). 2013, 696 pp.

Georg Klute’s *Tuareg-Aufstand in der Wüste* (*Tuareg Uprising in the Desert*) is an impressive book: it provides a detailed analysis of the armed rebellion that shook northern Mali in the 1990s, foreshadowing, in its own way, more recent events. Since Islamic groups took over much of northern Mali in spring 2012, analyses of the region have multiplied, seeing the area as yet another instance of the bid to power by region-wide ‘terrorist networks’, often coupled with ‘trafficking’ – of guns, people and drugs. Historically and empirically grounded analyses are few and far between, however, and this book provides a much-needed historical corrective to contemporary media coverage and comments by more recently