

disarmament has not worked, largely due to the lack of effective and comprehensive approaches to governance and security that would address underlying problems that lead to conflicts, and also provide genuine security for pastoralists. In the conclusion, he argues for just such approaches to curb both the demand and supply of small arms.

While the health and police data sources are less than ideal, and the probable biases of some informants could be discussed, the author is to be commended for taking on this challenging area of research. He notes that his research was hampered due to the very insecurity that he was studying. Nevertheless he was able to uncover many critical aspects of this vexing issue, and provide valuable data and argument for those committed to tackling the problem of pastoralist conflict.

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**China's African Challenges** by SARAH RAINE

London: Routledge, 2009. Pp. 271, US\$19.95 (pbk).

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This is the latest in a veritable deluge of books on China's relations with Africa, much of which is of mixed quality. Sarah Raine, who was previously in the British diplomatic service, has written an interesting, engaging and relatively comprehensive book on the subject. In it she covers some of the same ground as other offerings, detailing the history of Sino-African engagements for example. However, the optic in this book is different, as she examines, in particular, the challenges which China faces in its deepening relations with the continent.

She eschews simple generalisations that China is simply involved in a giant 'resource grab', to examine the multifaceted nature and complexity of its current engagement in the continent. Along with others such as Ian Taylor, Raine disputes the idea that there is a grand Chinese 'African strategy', but does examine the way in which the Chinese state seeks to deliver on key strategic objectives and to retain sufficient control over engagement to balance broader interests, including good relations with the USA. This is a nuanced and well-developed and supported position, and probably accurately reflects the balance of opinion of the academic literature.

One of the things which distinguish this book is that Raine has a good understanding of Chinese political economy, and how this manifests in overseas relations. She provides a good discussion of provincial-centre tensions in China, for example, which is important given that much Chinese investment in Africa is undertaken by provincial state-owned enterprises. She also provides interesting detail on institutions which have to date largely escaped academic treatment in the 'China in Africa' literature, such as the China Development Bank and the China-Africa Business Council, amongst others.

The book, however, does suffer from many of the same problems as much of the literature, with a heavy reliance on journalistic sources and lack of field-work and empirical verification. At one of the few points where a source is quoted directly we are told 'the managing director of a Western mining company with

interests in Zambia has estimated that his Chinese competitors pay their local workforce as little as 30% of the salary that his local workers receive' (p. 109). However, this is unsupported, and in contrast to the finding of other academic studies in Zambia. This speaks to the problematic positionality of the author. While the book is ostensibly about the challenges for China in Africa, it is in reality speaking to a Western policy audience.

The book is packed with interesting details, such as the fact that despite all of the media attention about China, in 2006 the USA had \$13.8 billion invested in Africa, whereas China had only \$1.6 billion. This coverage makes it worthwhile for those undertaking research on these issues, and its accessible style also makes it a good introduction to the subject area for lay and perhaps undergraduate readers. However, it does not offer any new theoretical understandings; in part, perhaps, because of the dearth of empirical research.

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