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Reviews

Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror
by Elizabeth Schmidt
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Pp. 288. $29.99 (pbk)
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Elizabeth Schmidt's *Foreign Intervention in Africa* presents a comprehensive account of Western intervention in Africa over the past seventy years. Attempting to dispel popular myths and misconceptions about the ongoing crises faced by many African nations, Schmidt traces the lasting influence of foreign interventions – both military and politico-economic – through six case studies spanning four roughly delineated periods: decolonisation (1956–75), the Cold War (1945–91), state collapse (1991–2001), and the War on Terror (2001–10). Six of the eight chapters present Schmidt's case studies: Egypt and Algeria (1952–1973); the Congo (1960–5); Portuguese Africa (1961–75); South Africa (1960–90); Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea (1952–93); and Francophone Africa (1947–91). Bookending these cases are an introductory chapter outlining the scope of Schmidt's analysis, and a concluding chapter offering insight into how interventions on the continent have changed over time.

The book presents several key propositions (pp. 1–17, 227–30). First, Schmidt argues that foreign intervention into the decolonisation process reflected the colonisers' geo-strategic, political and economic interests. In the face of mounting African nationalism, the strongest among them, namely Britain and France, initially granted their colonies limited self-governance in order to fend off radical nationalism and retain economic and political control after independence (p. 19). These powers would intervene militarily only when their neo-colonial structures were threatened, such as in Madagascar in 1947 (pp. 168–70). In contrast, weaker colonisers such as Portugal resorted more frequently to military campaigns in order to preserve their colonial and/or neocolonial power (p. 79). Curiously, Schmidt excludes the Algerian War and Kenya's Mau Mau uprising from this discussion, a decision that weakens the book's intended contrast between the interventionary characteristics of more powerful states vis-à-vis weaker ones.

Schmidt's second major argument posits that the Cold War conflict led both the US and USSR – but especially the former (p. 26) – to support repressive strongmen as tools for securing geo-strategic and ideological interests. Schmidt uses this premise to explain the substantial American assistance to anti-democratic leaders – including the Congo's Mobutu Sese Seko (p. 74) and Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie (p. 145) – in nations whose relative economic importance to the US was quite small. The end of the Cold War rendered these strongmen obsolete, which produced power vacuums and political

instability throughout Africa, as dictators fell from power in the absence of superpower support (pp. 195–212). Schmidt's final chapter argues that the global war on terror has triggered a resumption of the American policy of sponsoring dictators in the search for regional stability.

Schmidt's concluding proposition posits that foreign intervention has done much more harm than good in Africa. During the Cold War, support for dictators fostered political repression, economic instability and violence in newly independent African countries. Their abandonment in the 1990s ushered in a period of chronic political fragility leading to a succession of failed African states. Now, during the war on terror, intervention has resumed under the legitimising banner of humanitarianism. Sadly however, America's most recent interventions in Africa demonstrate the same obliviousness to the political and cultural complexities of the region which characterised the interventions of the Cold War, as the prioritisation of short-term counter-terrorist objectives over human and economic development has further intensified anti-American sentiment (p. 216). Still, Schmidt holds out hope that the expanding economic influence of Brazil, China, India and the Gulf States may yield more positive results for Africa's economic and political development in the future – even if the legacy of earlier foreign interventions will not be easily overcome (p. 221).

It is unfortunate that Schmidt excludes several key case studies from her analysis. It also would have been helpful if she had engaged more thoroughly with the historiography of her main themes. Despite these minor omissions, however, Schmidt's book provides a thorough and thought-provoking introduction to the history of foreign intervention in Africa.

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Africa and the Expansion of International Society: Surrendering the Savannah, by JOHN ANTHONY PELLA, JR.
London: Routledge, 2014, Pp. 204. £85 (hbk)
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This is a well-written and thought-provoking study on one of the most underdeveloped and marginalised areas of research in the English School (ES) literature, that is, the analysis of non-European regional societies and the role of their experiences, institutions, norms and values in the expansion process of European international society. It serves as a significant contribution to the existing scholarly work both on the ES literature of regional international societies and African studies.

The book is divided into two general parts; the first two chapters are devoted to the existing theoretical debates in the ES literature and their limitations with regard to the regional international societies. Focusing his research on West-Central Africa, Pella argues that three common fallacies in the ES literature do not allow us to avoid Eurocentrism in our analysis of (the history of) non-European societies including Africa. The first involves the prevalent view that Africans were 'passive recipients' of the dictated expansion process and did