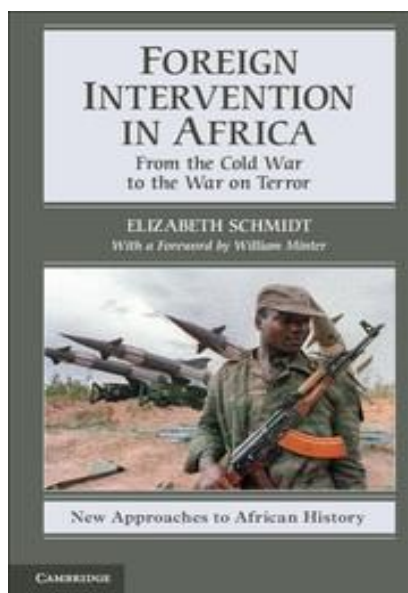


BOOK REVIEW:

FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN AFRICA: FROM THE COLD WAR TO THE WAR ON TERROR

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Schmidt, Elizabeth and Minter, William (Foreword). *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013. 231p. including index (paperback).

The book was published in 2013 and was written by Professor Elizabeth Schmidt, who is currently working at Loyola University Maryland. She received her Ph.D. in African history, holds Masters Degrees in African History and in Comparative World History, and a Certificate in African Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is well regarded in her field and has written extensively on issues such as West African Nationalism and Politics, Women's Issues, and the Cold War Diplomacy and its impact on Africa. She has made significant contributions to well-respected journals such as the *American Historical Review* and the *Journal of African History*.

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Introduction

I taught a Graduate Seminar on The History of Africa since the 1800s for Rutgers The State University of New Jersey this summer. This course is offered by our Graduate Department in Liberal Arts. This was my initial experience in teaching graduate level courses as I have taught on topics such as Decolonization of Africa and Modern Africa at the undergraduate level. Although, most of my students in the seminar were graduate students many of them did not have a strong background in African history or politics. The Schmidt text was an ideal choice because it was both sophisticated in its analysis yet, accessible for those who found themselves learning about these major issues in a short time. For, those of us who teach World History the text offers tremendous utility in the sense that it does not assume the reader is an expert rather, the text attempted to give refined examples and practical analysis.

Elizabeth Schmidt is currently Professor of History at Loyola University Maryland. She received her Ph.D. in African history, holds Masters Degrees in African History and in Comparative World History, and a Certificate in African Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is well regarded in her field and has written extensively on issues such as West African Nationalism and Politics, Women's Issues, and the Cold War Diplomacy and its impact on Africa. She has made significant contributions to well-respected journals such as the American Historical Review and the Journal of African History.

William Minter offers a foreword in the text that helps us focus our attention to some significant warnings he believed that often academicians, policy makers, and international relations experts have missed to fully comprehend. Minter reminds the audience to be cognizant of the fact that interventions in themselves can be troubling and distressful. Not every intervention results in a positive occurrence whether it is at the micro-level in one country or a macro-level in an entire region. Minter elaborates upon the tremendous dangers of too much intervention especially, in this decade especially under the guise of security after the Cold War era.

Content

Moreover, Schmidt's work is broken into an introduction, eight chapters with different regional and political agenda, and a section with concluding remarks:

Chapter one: “Nationalism, Decolonization, and The Cold War: 1949-1991,” The chapter introduces the Major external actors in Africa during the periods of Decolonization and the Cold War. Schmidt examines their motives and summarizes the book’s case studies. The major power players during The Decolonization Period were France, Britain, Portugal, and Belgium (lesser degree in WWII). The Cold War power players were The United States, The Soviet Union, but even more interestingly she dedicates time to the role of The People’s Republic of China, and Cuba shedding new light to the narrative.

Chapter two: “Egypt & Algeria: Radical Nationalism, Nonalignment, and External Intervention in North Africa: 1952-1973,” American pressure on the old imperial powers began after World War II. America searched for new markets in Europe and raw materials throughout the region. America looked to replace the Old system and have hegemonic control over the region. It advocated conflicting interests in the region while supporting (White/European) property rights while being anti-colonial. Egypt struggled to be independent and survive while under duress from External pressures. It became a classic case-study: Pan-Arabism/Pan Africanism under the leadership of Nasser. Algeria followed suit in creating an independent streak and rejecting external influence.

Chapter three: “The Congo Crisis: 1960-1965,” The Belgian Congo was surrounded by 9 other African nations because it was loaded with valuable natural resources and a strategic region for Francophone influence in a sea of British and American Influence. It was a target of significant foreign intervention including the Anglophone powers, The Soviet Union, The United States, and the UN. Even with independence, the external factors would not let the region go by interfering through various means and supporting often corrupt oppressive leaders like Mobutu. The First Crisis was in 1960-61 which included secession, assassination, and rupture of government while the external forces supported a military coup d’état. A second rebellion took place in 1964-65 when Western intervention pitted the government against a Cuban-supported rebellion.

Chapter four: “War and Decolonization in Portugal’s African Empire: 1961-1975,” Portugal was a lesser power than the traditional European Powers. The political realities of having a fascist leader meant that they, unfortunately, held on longer to their colonies than would have been desirable. They held valuable territory in Guinea, Cape Verde, Sao Tome, Principe, Angola, and Mozambique. They fought devastating wars to maintain these sources of cheap resources and labor (Similar to French Algeria). The Chapter reviews the

national liberation movements and external actors in Portugal's three mainland colonies, the transformations in America policy towards NATO Allies.

Chapter five: "White-Minority Rule in Southern Africa: 1960-1990." In white-ruled territories of Southern African as elsewhere, Cold War concerns were superimposed on local struggles emanating from colonial conditions. Colonies with significant settler populations completely rejected ideas of independence and majority rule-Anglophone Southern Africa & Apartheid. The chapter covered:

A. South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Namibia

B. South African Hegemony

C. Comparative of International involvement of South Africa vs. The rest of Africa

Chapter six: "Conflict in The Horn: 1952-1993," The region was a strategic location in Ethiopia/Somalia-it bordered The Indian Ocean/Red Sea a critical supply line with connections to the Middle East. The US (Ethiopia) – The USSR (Somalia) as both supported regimes that would violate human rights/international law but in the 70s, they would switch sides based on mutual interests. Both powers used them while in their best interest and they activated much intensity in the region through their proxies.

Chapter seven: "France's Private African Domain: 1947-1991," This chapter does not focus on a specific case study or state rather it would focus on the francophone realm through the Cold War Era. France actively intervened to protect its interest. They remained active in the region even as late as the 1990s. It was second only to Cuba in the number of active soldiers they had in the region, 40,000+ soldiers. They held influence in 16 different states and would act according to their interests in fighting and intervening in the region. They called it a Private domain that was fiercely anti-Anglophone and would contest international law, however, they were Fearful of the United States and its involvement in the region.

Chapter eight: "From The Cold War to The War on Terror: 1991-2010," The fall of the USSR changed the landscape with the United States assuming the role of dominant superpower. Foreign intervention after the Cold war assumed a new character. State and foreign backers no longer monopolized means of coercion. Intrastate wars: Sudan, Somalia, Congo, & Liberia.

Audience

In Schmidt's concluding remarks, she offers a few points to remember in understanding the History of Africa and its evolution in time. For example, the scale and character of intervention varied across space and time reflecting not only interests of foreign powers but, African states using them for their own goal. The future of the continent is not a legacy of the War on Terror rather it is the intrastate conflicts and interest that will shape Africa. This will shape the future dialogue more so and it would benefit us not to be so narrow in our analysis.

Future

Finally, Foreign Intervention in Africa is an excellent text for an audience such as a graduate seminar or undergraduate course that has a theme in topics such as decolonization or international relations. It could also, offer in small segments or chapters and opportunity for people teaching AP World History or AP Government classes a unique opportunity to shake up their traditional lectures and lessons. Although the text is not an all-encompassing text on the History of Africa it is a great starting point which when mixed with articles and other short readings can be used in tandem to teach a vibrant and refreshing version of History. Beyond this, just an average reader who may not be too knowledgeable would benefit from the text as she carefully chose themes and be a quick read for someone looking to become more familiar with historical problems and dialogues in this region. The text would be an excellent one to include in a syllabus for classes on the History of Africa, Foreign Policy, or Modern World History as it is accessible even to those who may have no background in African History. I would definitely recommend it as a reading assignment for both my graduate and undergraduate students, as well as those with general interests as the Schmidt text brings the audience into an intimate and free flowing dialogue on Africa.

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