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Democratization in Africa: Progress and Retreat

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equally important events for American foreign policy in times of uncertainty.

One of the major considerations for both policy makers and scholars is the impact these events had on the military. Whether to increase or decrease the active forces was a complicated issue that caused disagreement among government officials in both 1989 and 2001. Readers of this journal will find particularly interesting the varying opinions regarding the military, especially in light of currently anticipated force restructurings and budgetary constraints.

While each chapter can be read on its own, an author sometimes refers to another chapter, establishing a continuity that may be lost or underappreciated otherwise. This is especially true for essays written by policy makers. The editors are to be congratulated on a timely and helpful volume that not only studies American foreign policy in the recent times of uncertainty but provides food for thought for the uncertainty of now.

NORAH SCHNEIDER
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Diamond, Larry, and Marc F. Plattner, eds. *Democratization in Africa: Progress and Retreat*. 2nd ed. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2010. 360pp. \$30

In some ways, publishing a book that purports to capture contemporary African political trends, particularly involving the “progress of democracy,” faces the same basic problem as do books attempting to explain state-of-the-art computers. Both information streams are now flowing so quickly that the truth you write about today may be very different from that of tomorrow. In

fact, the African scholar has even harder going than his information-systems contemporary, because unlike computer technology, the course of democracy in Africa frequently changes direction and from time to time even reverses itself.

The editors of *Democratization in Africa: Progress and Retreat* are, as the title indicates, well aware of this challenge. This is not surprising. This volume is part of the International Forum for Democratic Studies’ Journal of Democracy book series, and both Diamond and Plattner have edited numerous volumes.

The book is well written, well researched, and well organized. The reader is first treated to a selection of seven readings, all looking at themes involving “progress and retreat.” The remainder of the book is divided into three sections, covering West Africa, East Africa, and southern and central Africa. Given the events in North Africa, the lack of coverage along Africa’s Mediterranean shore is regrettable and underscores the point about “lag time.”

In general, the first section of the book is thought provoking and arguably the most useful. The topics are broad, and their panoramic view allows the authors to chart the many directions of emerging trends. For example, John Clark of Florida International University argues that the military coup as an instrument of regime change is in decline. While certain events indicate that the end of the African military coup is nowhere near in sight, in the main it seems that Clark is correct.

Despite the editors’ best efforts, shelf life remains a problem. Although updated for this new edition with new information, many of the book’s chapters were written far enough in the past that the

situation itself is out-of-date. Despite the book's 2010 publication date, twenty-one of the twenty-four essays here were originally published between 2007 and 2009. Not all these essays are "expired," Clark's being a case in point. However, the careful reader is forced to spend far too much time checking other sources to learn the actual current "state of play." In some cases, however, such as Côte d'Ivoire, the changes from the time of initial publication to the present is extreme. In others, such as Zimbabwe, current events have not called the author's findings into question.

In the end, despite powerful writing, careful scholarship, and the best of intentions, *Democratization in Africa* is too much of a "fly in amber." Teachers, students, and lay readers alike would be better advised simply to subscribe to the *Journal of Democracy*. For a slightly higher cost they would reap much greater gain.

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Cohen, Eliot A. *Conquered into Liberty: Two Centuries of Battles along the Great Warpath That Made the American Way of War*. New York: Free Press, 2011. 405pp. \$30

The American way of war—a product of two centuries of war with . . . Canada? How can that be? Civil War history and the experience and history of World War II have driven out of our minds a truth known to James Fenimore Cooper, Francis Parkman, and Kenneth Roberts. The American colonies, thereafter the United States, fought battle after battle with France, Britain, and Canada throughout most

of the seventeenth century and until the early nineteenth century. The place of these battles was then called the Great Warpath, stretching from Albany to Montreal and Quebec.

American readers who pick up Eliot Cohen's *Conquered into Liberty* will most likely be embarrassed by learning how much they do not know (or only vaguely remember) about American war fighting in the colonial and early national periods. However, by the time the first chapter, about the Schenectady raid of 1690, is finished, American readers will feel embraced, as though part of their American selves has been returned. Non-Americans will be surprised at first, and by the end of the book astonished.

Cohen teaches strategic studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and he was a senior adviser to the secretary of state on strategic issues from 2007 to 2009. This book is a military history, as good a one as might ever be done. As a historian, Cohen's strongest suit is that he treats war as it is made by political and military leaders, by the regulars (and irregulars and Native Americans), and by "leaders and managers who got things done." By the last he means those (mostly citizen-soldiers) who improvised in combat and managed to supply forces under nearly impossible conditions. His insights regarding these sorts of men make up a large part of his understanding of what the "American way of war" is about. Cohen quotes Germany's Field Marshall Erwin Rommel to affirm that what was an eighteenth-century American quality has endured—the American speed of adaptation to armored warfare, Rommel wrote, is explained "by their extraordinary sense for the practical and the material and