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Roundtable Review 15-30

Flavia Gasbarri. *US Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War in Africa: A Bridge between Global Conflict and the New World Order, 1988–1994*. London: Routledge, 2020.

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Introduction by Timothy Scarnecchia, Kent State University

The reviewers of Flavia Gasbarri's *US Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War in Africa: A Bridge between Global Conflict and the New World Order, 1988–1994* are consistent in their overall praise for Gasbarri's work. The main adulations from Poppy Cullen, Frank Gerits, and Robin Möser tend to focus on the fact that Gasbarri's work takes diplomatic history into unchartered territory, that is, into the late 1980s and early 1990s. The primary source base analyzed by the author is impressive, including records from the Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and Bill Clinton presidential libraries, the British National Archives, and the Department of Foreign Affairs archives in Pretoria, South Africa. The slow pace of US declassification of files from this period at the US National Archives made it even more important to make use of the presidential libraries. Gasbarri also undertook interviews with key actors involved in diplomacy, in the US, the former Soviet Union, and South Africa. The reviewers applaud Gasbarri for providing a close reading of US decision-making in these years as they related to the end of the Cold War and the ending of Cold War rivalries in Africa, which resulted in an unravelling of the goals of US foreign relations after the Soviets no longer posed a serious threat to Western interests there.

All three reviewers positively respond to Gasbarri's revision of the periodization of US policy in Africa during these years as it relates to greater cooperation with the Soviets, or at least the realization that the interests of the two former enemies were no longer far apart. Gasbarri makes a strong case that this process was clearly in play by 1988 in Africa, rather than in 1989. Most European and American scholars tend to date the end of the Cold War period beginning in 1989, but, as Gasbarri demonstrates, the rather quick thaw between the two superpowers occurred in 1988 in the major Cold War conflicts of Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa.

In general, all the reviewers acknowledge that Gasbarri achieves the main goals of her research, which Gasbarri summarizes in the conclusion as "when and how did the Cold War end in Africa, and what impact did this process have on US foreign policy in this area of the Third World?" (161). Beyond this collective acknowledgement by the reviewers that Gasbarri successfully answered these two questions, there are both general and specific areas of criticism, although none that can be seen as critical of the book's central achievements.

Poppy Cullen raises some intriguing questions about the differing points of view between American and former Soviet diplomats over how they remember the interests of their opposing counterparts over assistance to Ethiopia. Cullen suggests that more could have been done to critically analyze these competing views, and to bring in more of the agency Ethiopian leader Haile Mariam Mengistu had in shaping these opposing viewpoints. This criticism points to a larger one made by Cullen: that Gasbarri could have done more to make use of various African perspectives and voices involved in these key Cold War hot spots in Africa.

Robin Möser, while praising Gasbarri's analysis of the American side of the Cold War in Africa, is critical of the book's treatment of the Soviet side. Möser does, however, agree that the book's focus is on US policy, and notes that during the unipolar situation the US found itself in after 1991, the US tended to replicate the Soviets' "declining interest in the continent."

Frank Gerits points out that since Gasbarri's focus is on "high-level Cold War considerations in Washington, DC," there is, from Gerits's perspective, a lack of consideration of the economic development side of US Africa policy in this period. Gerits suggests that more attention should have been devoted to the way in which US development and aid policy was a major driver of US policy in Africa.

Gasbarri's response does a better job than I can here in summarizing the nature of the above criticisms and her response to them, which includes an understanding of the value of their respective calls for further

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attention to African voices, Soviet voices, and economic development voices in shaping US policy in these years. This back and forth between reviewers and authors is what makes H-Diplo roundtables valuable, as they are most often done in a spirit of positive discussion that allows the field of diplomatic history to move forward and progress. It is terrific to see a novel monograph on this period of the end of the Cold War in Africa, and on what followed in terms of US policy in the so-called "unipolar" period of US power. Based on the reviews in this roundtable, it is safe to say that Gasbarri's book will become a foundational work for historians who work on US foreign relations with Africa as more and more researchers turn to analyze primary sources from the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Contributors:

Flavia Gasbarri is Senior Lecturer in War Studies, co-Chair of the Africa Research Group, and member of the Centre for Grand Strategy at the Department of War Studies, KCL. She holds a PhD in War Studies from King's College London. Her research and main publications focus on the end of the Cold War in the Third World, the development of post-Cold War US foreign policy, and US-Africa relations. She has also extensively researched and published on US policy in the Rwandan genocide and in the Great Lakes region.

Timothy Scarnecchia is Professor of African History at Kent State University. He is the author of *Race and Diplomacy in Zimbabwe: The Cold War and Decolonization, 1960–1984* (Cambridge University Press, 2021) and *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe: Harare and Highfield, 1940–1964* (Rochester University Press, 2008) (Paperback edition August 2013). Scarnecchia has written many articles and chapters investigating the political history of Zimbabwean and Southern African decolonization and the Cold War, including, "Post-1989 Cold War Diplomatic Shifts in Southern Africa" *Comparativ* (Leipzig) 29:5 (2019), 74-89; and "Renegotiating Frontline State Relations after Zimbabwe's Independence. Cold War Influences on the Politics of Zimbabwe's Role in Frontline State Solidarity, 1980-1986," *Rivista italiana di storia internazionale* 1 (2023), 41-72.

Poppy Cullen is Lecturer in International History at Loughborough University. Her research has been published in journals including *Cold War History, International History Review, Britain and the World,* and *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History.* Her current research explores military decolonization in East Africa.

Frank Gerits is an Assistant Professor at Utrecht University since March 2020, and a Research Fellow at the International Studies Group at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. He completed his PhD at the European University Institute in 2014 and has held positions at New York University (2015), the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein South Africa (2016), and the University of Amsterdam (2017). He has been a visiting fellow at the London School of Economic, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, the University of Ibadan, Shanghai University, the University of Trento and the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU). He co-edited *Visions of African Unity: New Perspectives on the History of Pan-Africanism and African Unification Projects* in 2020 with Matteo Grilli. His first book, *The Ideological Scramble for Africa: How the Pursuit of Anticolonial Modernity shaped a Postcolonial Order, 1945–1966* was published by Cornell University Press in 2023. In 2023-2024 he will be working on a project funded by the Dutch Research Foundation (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijik Onderzoek, or NWO), entitled "Moral Empire: Belgium and the Global South (1830–2022)."

Robin Möser holds a PhD from the Graduate School of Global and Area Studies (Leipzig). His work appeared in *The Nonproliferation Review* ("'The Major Prize': Apartheid South Africa's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1988-91", *The Nonproliferation Review* 26:5-6 (2019): 559-573, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700.2019.1696543; and in *Comparativ* (Robin Möser and Anna-Mart van

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Wyk, "'1989' in South(ern) Africa: The Fall of the Nuclear Wall," *Comparativ* 29:5 (2019): 45-61, https://doi.org/10.26014/j.comp.2019.05.03. His forthcoming book *Disarming Apartheid: The End of South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Program and Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT*), *1968–1991,* will be published by Cambridge University Press in March 2024.

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Review by Poppy Cullen, Loughborough University

Flavia Gasbarri's *US Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War in Africa* covers a period of significant transition in the histories of both Africa and the United States. Rather than a history of the whole of Africa, as the title might suggest, the book focuses on two regions: Southern Africa (mainly Angola and South Africa) and the Horn (Ethiopia and Somalia). Moving chronologically through the history of these two regions, Gasbarri gives a clear picture of the events on the ground as well as US foreign policy towards these regions. The book opens with a chapter on the US and Cold War in Africa, then a chapter on 1988, followed by a pair of companion chapters on 1988–1994, first in Southern Africa, and then in the Horn. Throughout, Gasbarri pays attention to chronologies and turning points.

Gasbarri argues that the traditional European date for the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, is less relevant for Africa.[1] The Cold War "ended in various ways and diverse moments" and thus "the book identifies the unique temporal framework, crucial process, and turning points which were meaningful for ending the Cold War in this particular [African] scenario" (10). According to Gasbarri, 1988 was the key year of change. It was "a turning point that marked the split of the global-local dynamic in Africa and the beginning of the end of the Cold War in the continent" (32). In Southern Africa, the key event of that year was the Tripartite Agreement signed by Cuba, Angola, and South Africa, which called for Namibian independence and the withdrawal of South African troops, as well as the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. The parties signed the agreement in New York, with America having played a role in its negotiation.

The Tripartite Agreement thus marked "a watershed both in the regional history and for American policy in Southern Africa" (50), following the US strategy of linking the US's two issues of concern in the region: Namibia and Angola. In the Horn, Somalia and Ethiopia also signed an agreement in 1988, aiming for normalized relations and the disengagement of border forces. Less dramatic than the Southern Africa agreement, the Horn agreement of "1988 simply sanctioned a gradual disengagement of the superpowers and a progressive exit of the region from the global bipolar competition in the Third World" (55). Nonetheless, Gasbarri argues, 1988 was key to the transformation of relations. This move beyond a European and towards an African chronology is both welcome and valuable. Since other scholars have generally not considered 1988 as being so pivotal,[2] Gasbarri's book has made a significant contribution to rethinking the end of the Cold War in the continent.

Gasbarri argues that another change came with the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. Until then, even if the Cold War dynamic was lessening, US policymakers still tended to view Africa through the lens of their country's relationship with the USSR. Africa was a place that could increase tensions between the superpowers, as when African issues contributed to destabilising détente in the late 1970s, or reduce them, as in the period Gasbarri focuses on in late 1980s. US officials certainly had other priorities in their post-Cold War relations with the USSR,[3] but paying attention to Southern Africa and the Horn shows the importance of these regions to superpower relations. The end of the USSR thus marked a "major transformation in the rationale that had often justified US involvement" (8).

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[1] Although this could have an impact, see Chris Saunders, "The Fall of the Berlin Wall and Namibian Independence," *New Global Studies* 13:3 (2019): 351-356.

[2] See for example Chris Saunders and Sue Onslow, "The Cold War and Southern Africa, 1976–1990," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 222-243.

[3] See for example M. E. Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

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1994 is the final year covered in the book. It was, most obviously, the end of apartheid in South Africa, but also marked the withdrawal of US troops from Somalia following the killing of eighteen American soldiers there the previous year, and the Lusaka Protocol in Angola that re-established a ceasefire in the hopes of ending civil war. In the years between 1991 and 1994, Gasbarri highlights a change in the drivers of US foreign policy, as public opinion became increasingly influential. Thus, domestic opposition to apartheid and peacekeeping in Somalia shaped policy more than public opinion had during the Cold War. At the same time, Gasbarri shows that "in the early 1990s, in fact, Washington was struggling to redefine its role and action in the international system during the 'unipolar moment' … the African continent particularly suffered from the inconsistency of US foreign policy" (166). This led to a disengagement from the region. While the book maintains a narrow focus on the two regions of Southern Africa and the Horn, it is clear that the whole continent was affected.[4]

The book covers a great deal, especially for one of less than 190 pages. Given its rich topic, I frequently wished it was longer, with more space to unpack some of the fascinating details and delve deeper into an understanding of American motives. For example, Gasbarri writes that in the 1980s, "Washington perceived Ethiopia to be Soviet 'business' because of the heavy Ethiopian military dependence upon Moscow and the big influence the USSR was supposed to exercise over [President Haile Mariam] Mengistu" (53). According to one of Gasbarri's interviews with an American official, "Moscow basically told him [Mengistu] 'No'": he could not develop US relations (53). On the other hand, her Soviet interviewee provides a "completely opposite version": that the Americans refused to work with Mengistu because the official quoted above viewed him as "a bloody dictator" (54). What are we to make of these two contrasting versions? Was this a case of the US and USSR misunderstanding the other's intentions with regard to Ethiopia, believing the other to be the hostile and intransigent party? Was one of these interpretations more accurate? On the other hand, is it possible to understand these perspectives without some further appreciation of Mengistu's own position? Was Mengistu in fact taking up various positions to make demands of the superpowers, or to resist their claims? Although Gasbarri does say that the American view was not entirely accurate and that the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship was "less linear than the Americans supposed" (54), the answers to these questions remain underexplored. Yet this seems to be essential: how accurate were the understandings of American officials, why and how did they come to them, and how were Africans involved in shaping them?

More broadly, this speaks to the relatively limited number of African sources in the book. Gasbarri is right that these are more challenging to access, and she does expand the book's source base beyond the American, including Cuban and South African documents, interviews with two Soviet actors and some Soviet documents, and one South African interview. But there are no documents or interviews from "Angola, Zaire, Somalia, and Ethiopia" and she acknowledges that "it has not been possible to provide a first-hand account of their role in the events" (12). Of course, this is a study of American foreign policy, and African perspectives are not its core purpose. But as the above example shows, in some cases at least, it is difficult to unpick American policy without more understanding of the African side.

It would also have been interesting for the author to have examined some American attitudes towards Africa in greater depth. Gasbarri quotes National Security Council Africa Director Robert Frasure, writing in 1991 about Frederik W. De Klerk and Nelson Mandela that "the 'de Klerk/Mandela phenomenon' was a 'uniquely promising opportunity on an expiring continent'" (102). What are we to make of this view of Africa as an "expiring continent"? Is this a one-off, or a widely-held US perspective that Africa was regressing? It seems to

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[4] See Michael Clough, *Free At Last?: U.S. Policy Toward Africa and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992).

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me to be potentially reminiscent of Robert Kaplan's 1994 polemic in "The Coming Anarchy."[5] Is this a justified comparison? It would have been fascinating to see US language about Africa further interrogated here.

This is not to downplay the interest of this book and its impressive scholarship. This history will prove highly valuable for scholars of the period. Gasbarri follows others in saying that "to some extent the global character of the Cold War imperatives had helped to keep Africa on Washington's radar screen" (166),[6] but breaks new ground charting the importance of 1988 in particular.

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[5] Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, Tribalism, and Disease Are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of Our Planet," *The Atlantic* (February 1994): https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670/.

[6] See, for some of many examples, Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Nancy Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter in Africa: Race and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016); F. Ugboaja Ohaegbulam, "The United States and Africa after the Cold War," *Africa Today* 39:4 (1992): 19-34.

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Review by Frank Gerits, Utrecht University

In 1989, the Berlin Wall came crashing down and the struggle between communism and capitalism came to an end. While it was clearly impactful for Europe, did the end of the Cold War also have an effect on the large African continent? Flavia Gasbarri argues that it did, but in unexpected ways. The Cold War attached local conflicts to the international in "an overlap of global, regional, and local political and military dynamics" (162). Africa—in Gasbarri's reasoning—entered international affairs through the Cold War. The end of the Cold War therefore brought with it a "split of the global-local overlap" that had given African leaders a lot of influence (162). The book locates the end of the Cold War in Africa in the year 1988, when the New York Accords—which ended the South African occupation of Namibia and enabled Cuba's withdrawal from Angola—were concluded, the Ogaden War between Ethiopia and Somalia and the Afghanistan War came to an end, and Cuban and Soviet troops withdrew from Southern Africa. These accords, which were mediated by the US in particular, are credited by the author with bringing about the end of the Cold War. While others have conducted detailed research on the individual conflicts described in the book, the author brings these episodes together in one place and studies these events through a US foreign policy lens.[1]

This book sustains Odd Arne Westad's Global Cold War framework, which claims that the Cold War was primarily connected to the political and social developments in the Global South. However, Gasbarri also innovates by focusing on the end of that period, a time which is understudied.[2] Since the focus of this book is the United States, the author relies on documents from the presidential libraries of presidents George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton; the national archives of the United Kingdom and South Africa; and the National Security Archive in Washington, DC. Access to those documents, even in 2023, is still difficult, meaning that the mere writing of this book therefore is in and of itself an achievement.

In four chapters Gasbarri explores two arguments. The first involves the "deep interaction" between the global Cold War and the regional developments; the second explores the contention that the United States' gaze on Africa was determined by Cold War interests.

Chapter 1 explores the US strategic interests in Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. As the "Cold War superstructure disappeared," the US government could no longer justify its support for the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, or UNITA) in Angola, which had been pro-capitalist (16). Washington's "middle ground" policy towards South Africa—in which it tried to establish itself as a mediator between the Afrikaner white minority government and the Black majority— also became unsustainable after Apartheid's collapse (24). In the Horn of Africa, the relaxing Cold War tensions enabled the US to criticize the human rights violations of Siad Barre's regime, which had been established in 1969 and only now came under scrutiny.

Chapter 2 zooms in on 1988, the author's turning point in the Cold War. During the new period of détente that was ushered in by the dialogue between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan, Reagan took a lesson from the failure of previous détente efforts. The second round of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II), which limited the production and use of strategic atomic war heads, had failed. Congress did not ratify the treaty in 1987 because of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. Regional developments (Reagan believed) were essential to détente's success. The strategy of managing regional

[1] Louise P. Woodroofe, *Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden: The United States, the Horn of Africa, and the Demise of Detente* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ, 2013); Emmanuel Ike Udogu, *Liberating Namibia: The Long Diplomatic Struggle Between the United Nations and South Africa* (Jefferson NC: McFarland, 2011).

[2] Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2017).

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conflicts therefore featured prominently in his discussions with Gorbachev. The author points to quotations from Reagan as proof that the global and the local become interlaced in the 1980s. When both superpowers disengaged from the region, it was therefore to be expected that President George H.W. Bush would focus on the domestic conflicts in the Horn and Southern Africa. The turn to managing local conflicts was thus not simply an expression of the US drive to spread the values of democracy as the "world's indispensable nation," in the words of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in the 1990s. That mission was already rooted in the 1980s.[3]

Chapter 3 traces US engagement with Southern Africa in terms of US involvement in the Bicesse Accords of 1991, the Lusaka Protocol of 1994, and the dismantling of Apartheid. The chapter in essence rehashes the argument of previous chapters that the end of the Cold War rendered untenable the old partnerships that were rooted in Cold War necessity. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose is quoted to elucidate how support for Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire became an unsustainable relationship, once the Cold War justification disappeared. In an interview by the author, Moose explained how everybody "knew that" the partnership with Mobutu "was not a sustainable partnership" "with the end of the Cold War" (111).

Chapter 4 details the US involvement in the Horn of Africa. In that region Mengistu Haile Mariam's Ethiopia unexpectedly gained importance in August 1990 because of the Iraqi invasion in Kuwait. Ethiopia was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and had to support the invasion. The end of the Cold War also opened up the possibility of a US humanitarian intervention in Somalia. US involvement in the region sprang from "the need to manage the legacy of the Cold War." (149).

This book presents interesting ideas, but also raises questions. First, if 1988 signaled the delinking of Africa from the world, how can we then explain the increased involvement of African countries in international affairs, a development which has become more noticeable since 1989. With the emergence of the continent's rapidly growing economies—the so-called lion economies of South Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, Mauritius and Tunisia—the power of these countries has also increased.[4] South Africa has emerged as a leading member of the BRICS coalition, the economic group which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This can hardly be called a retreat from global affairs. Moreover, the conclusion of decoupling can only be drawn through an intense study of African archives. Is the decline of importance on the US strategic vision for Africa after the Cold War not precisely the result of a relative decline of the influence of the United States as superpower and an increase of the strength of Africa in international relations?

Second, Gasbarri focuses on high-level Cold War considerations of Washington DC. However, my own research on the 1950s and 1960s shows that US perceptions of Africans and the problem of development also played a role in policy-making.[5] A focus on the development and modernization programs that were being executed in Africa would have elucidated the dynamics beyond the East-West struggle. However, the book does not discuss the debates on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and debt relief—a key topic of 1980s Africa diplomacy—does not feature in the book. Should these economic dimensions not have been included, particularly since 1989 is widely considered the victory of the neoliberal

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[3] Michael Dobbs and John M. Goshko, "Albright's Personal Odyssey Shaped Foreign Policy Beliefs," *Washington Post*, 6 December 1996.

[4] Haroon Bhorat and Finn Tarp, eds., *Africa's Lions: Growth Traps and Opportunities for Six African Economies*, (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2016).

[5] Frank Gerits, *The Ideological Scramble for Africa: How the Pursuit of Anticolonial Modernity Shaped a Postcolonial Order, 1945-1966* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2023).

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model?[6] Does 1988 or 1989 not simply mark a shift in the US view on Africa from the Cold War to financial markets, rather than a decoupling from international relations?

Third, the book's findings suggest that very little actually changed on the ground with the end of the Cold War. While the US exchanged the logic of containment for a humanitarian one, the country itself remained involved. US liberal internationalism simply became a genuine reality, rather than a Cold War justification after 1989 in Gasbarri's reading. The question is therefore whether Africans on the ground discerned a change in the presence of the US. Moreover, the US also took its liberal internationalism seriously in 1945 despite the Cold War calculations that shaped it. 1989 might therefore not have meant that big of change on the level of the US embassies. These questions are left for exploration in future works.

While some of these questions may be answerable with the opening of more archives in the future, for now this book is an excellent teaching tool, with its concise chapters and clear arguments. Most importantly, Gasbarri's narrative provides readers with a prehistory to the unipolar moment and highlight that the US interventions in Somalia and Kuwait did not emerge out of nowhere.

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[6] Fritz Bartel, *The Triumph of Broken Promises: The End of the Cold War and the Rise of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022).

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Review by Robin Möser, University of Potsdam

Flavia Gasbarri has produced an interesting, well-structured, and very readable account on the end of the Cold War in Africa. She particularly focuses on how the winding down of global superpower confrontation affected subsequent US foreign policy towards the continent.

Since Odd Arne Westad's monumental *The Global Cold War*,[1] a growing corpus of scholarly publications have appeared that adhere to the goal of integrating parts of the world that had earlier been insufficiently researched, thereby forming a more inclusive and nuanced narrative.[2] This is much-needed in the case of Africa, where the ongoing global superpower confrontation directly and indirectly contributed to enduring regional conflicts. This had, unsurprisingly, long-lasting and intensifying effects on Africa's political dynamics for the most part of the Cold War and beyond. Yet, as the author shows, towards the late 1980s the ceasing of superpower hostilities contributed to the (temporary) resolution of two of Africa's regional "battlefields": the Horn of Africa and the Southern part of the continent. Engagement with these two regions is at the heart of the book at hand.

Without a doubt, Gasbarri's monograph is characteristic of the ecosystem of these transnational histories. It will surely become a standard reference for those who are working on African and Global history subjects, most importantly US foreign policy towards the Third World. Needless to say, the author succeeds in establishing an authoritative account of the complex interactions between US domestic and international politics in shaping and constraining Washington's foreign policy decisions regarding the African continent during the final phase of the Cold War. Her argument for an eventual "regionalization" of the conflicts once the prevalent core-periphery dynamic dissolved stands to reason (34-35). This, in turn, mobilized resources for conflict resolution on behalf of the US and the USSR at the eclipse of the superpower confrontation, fundamentally changing the continental security environment. Crucially, they did so for different reasons: while the USSR opted out of its Third World engagements mainly for domestic and economic reasons, the US jockeyed to manifest its position as the sole remaining superpower.

Converging interests in confliction resolution in the "periphery" overlapped with Moscow's effort to keep its superpower status, or at least to be perceived as one. Taking part in resolving regional disputes, in parallel or in partnership with the US, served this purpose (58). A case in point is the way in which the Soviets went about managing the proliferation threat emanating from South Africa and facilitating the resolve thereof jointly with the Bush administration. Pushing the so-called "Frontline States" of Angola, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to accede concurrently to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) improved regional security.[3]

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[1] Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[2] With a focus on the region concerned, these works include: Chris Saunders and Sue Onslow, "The Cold War and Southern Africa, 1976–1990," in Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Cambridge: University Press, 2009): 222-243; Piero Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976–1991* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); and Jamie Miller, *An African Volk: The Apartheid Regime and its Search for Survival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[3] Robin Möser, "'The Major Prize': Apartheid South Africa's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1988-91", *The Nonproliferation Review* 26:5-6 (2019): 559-573, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700.2019.1696543. As Sarah Bidgood shows, US-USSR joint non-proliferation efforts were not an entirely new phenomenon: Sarah Bidgood, "The 1977 South Africa Nuclear Crisis," in William Potter and Sarah Bidgood eds., *Once and Future Partners the United States, Russia and Nuclear Non-proliferation* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2018): 55–78, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/19445571.2016.1494248.

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While the book's narrative skilfully lays out the shifts and contours of US foreign policy vis-à-vis the African continent, the same is not the case for the Soviet side. This gap is strikingly visible because Gasbarri's narrative raises the bar by carefully dissecting US policies to account for domestic, regional and global influences in them. Yet, as the title and introduction suggest, this volume is indeed about US policies.

Most interesting in this account is, in my view, how the George H. W. Bush administration subjected to the challenging task "[…] of balancing two different and connected pressures: finding new approaches to US foreign policy in Africa and managing the legacy of eight years of constructive engagement"—a policy that had become a cornerstone of the foreign policy of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker and President Ronald Reagan towards the continent (162). She claims, rightly so in my opinion, that the focus on conflict resolution seemed to be a suitable approach to address both of these two issues, and even more so following the New York Peace Accords of December 1988, when the elephant in the room, Apartheid, was still not resolved in South Africa. The US advocated first resolving regional issues to make it easier for the white regime in Pretoria to transition away from minority rule, which informed its foreign policy to that region (Angola, South Africa, and Namibia) as well as to the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia and Somalia).

In addition, the narrative offers an alternative interpretation of the periodization of the events unfolding in the two regions under scrutiny. Gasbarri argues that 1988 was the watershed year for the region, as well as for US policy in Africa. Prior to this temporal marker, three different levels of political dynamics interacted, namely domestic affairs, regional developments, and the global scenario. Afterwards, the settlement of the crises in Southern Africa and at the Horn had "[…] the very effect of breaking the connection between those three political dimensions" (50). Moreover, two additional markers on which she pegs her story are 1991 and 1994, though with varying importance, respectively. Notably, she leaves out 1989, which, arguably, was also a crucial year at least for South Africa with the election of the reform-minded F.W. De Klerk as president, or 1990, with reference to Namibian independence, the release of the soon-to-be-elected first post-Apartheid president Nelson Mandela from prison, and the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and other previously banned political movements.

While espousing and bringing to the fore the US perspective via excellent archival research in four different US Presidential Libraries, the National Security Archive in Washington, and through interviews with former key actors (the two successive Assistant Secretaries of State for African Affairs, Crocker and Herman Cohen), the narrative does not escape a certain one-sidedness. While the author notes this in pointing to notoriously difficult archival access in South(ern) Africa and in part the former Soviet Union's holdings, one cannot but suppress a longing for an account that is written with similar vigour illuminating the USSR's perspective. Gasbarri did manage to interview two well-placed Soviet actors, Deputy Foreign Minister Anatoly Adamishin and the Ambassador to Angola, Vladimir Kazimirov.

A similar case can be made about the inclusion of African voices. Besides a few of Pretoria's foreign affairs records and interviews Gasbarri conducted with former South African foreign minister Roelof "Pik" Botha and the erstwhile Chairman of the Atomic Energy Corporation, Waldo Stumpf, an engagement with the Frontline State's actors based on their archival records or interviews is absent. Where their views do come up, they are somewhat filtered and interpreted through a US analytic lens.[4] To be fair, with the author's focus on Washington's policies towards the region, there is, perhaps, no immediate need to integrate these perspectives. On a different note, the book's title is a bit misleading, as the actual geographical scope is limited to the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa.

[4] The author did make an applaudable effort, however, to include available digitized Cuban documents.

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In addition, there are a few points in the book that are not clearly spelled out and thus could have profited from more elaboration. For example, the contention that "[US] African policy was particularly influenced by considerations in terms of domestic consensus, a feature that also became more relevant in the formulation of US foreign policy after the end of the bipolar conflict" is questionable (166). If one takes US-South African bilateral relations during Reagan's second term into account, when Congress overrode the presidential veto against the institution of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, the US State Department's sensitivities towards domestic consensus appear to have been no less relevant during that phase.

Connected to this, Gasbarri claims that "it seemed that no other administration could have been more influential at that moment, especially over the South African government" (44). This is not, however, followed by a compelling argument on how US diplomats in early 1988 were again able to yield a certain political sway over Pretoria, to convince them to participate in the discussions leading to the Peace Agreement in Angola despite the increasingly parlous state of bilateral relations beginning in the mid-1980s. In particular, there is no discussion of this in light of Chester Crocker himself conceding that between 1985 and 1988, when US-South African relations deteriorated and experienced a long-drawn-out low, it was left to the UK to bear Western influence in Pretoria and continue the US efforts to re-engage the South African government in talks in 1988.[5]

Last, in the introduction as well as in the conclusion, Gasbarri cites Artemy Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko's claim that "[…] the end of the Cold War in the Third World did not have a neat end-date like it did in Europe."[6] While it seems that she agrees with this statement, she nevertheless suggests 1988 as precisely such a "neat end-date" for the Cold War in Africa (162). After reading this book I was left with the question as to whether there must necessarily be a neat end-date, or can we also do without exactly pinning it to a year? Nonetheless, I believe one can safely argue for 1988 as *the* marker of the beginning of a process that lead to the eventual end of the Cold War in the region. In reality, however, the end was more frayed and petered out over several years. This makes analytic comparisons of temporalities rather difficult.

In conclusion, the major outcome of Gasbarri's research is a profound analysis of the US foreign policy transformation with regard to the African continent between 1988 and 1994. The book includes pertinent information as to why and how after 1988 US policies changed but continued to reflect a great deal of variety and inconsistencies towards the continent. This is even more so, since the USSR gradually retreated from its Third World engagements. Importantly, she shows not only how superpower clashes and détente affected the African continent, but also how the reverberations of regional conflicts and their endings had a bearing on US-USSR relations as well as on Washington's continued involvement in Africa. A crucial take-away is the fact that, at times, events in Africa did influence superpower affairs, as Gasbarri shows *inter alia* with respect to the conflict at the horn and the two Shaba crisis that contributed to the shattering of détente in the late 1970s.

US Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War offers a thrilling narrative by juxtaposing events on the ground with the trajectory of US foreign policy, shaped as the latter was by the reality of an imminent end to the Cold War and US domestic political considerations. For as long as the USSR had been a relevant actor in Africa, Gasbarri brilliantly reveals, it still served as a reference point in US foreign policy towards the continent. Following Moscow's ultimate disengagement from the region, the Bush and even more so the Clinton

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[5] Chester Crocker, *High-Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighbourhood* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992): 387, 460.

[6] Artemy Kalinovsky and Sergei Radchenko, "Introduction: The End of the Cold War and the Third World," in Kalinovsky and Radchenko *The End of the Cold War in the Third World: New Perspectives on Regional Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2010): 6.

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administration had to find an alternative rationale. Replicating its erstwhile opponent's path, the US also displayed a declining interest in the continent and became more and more disengaged in the early 1990s. Bill Clinton thus became the first US president since the end of World War Two to formulate US foreign policy towards Africa in the political void that was left by the disintegrated Soviet Union. Thanks to Flavia Gasbarri's no-nonsense approach, we know a great deal more about why the Clinton administration found itself in this unique position.

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Response by Flavia Gasbarri, King's College London

I am thrilled and deeply appreciative of H-Diplo's decision to organize a roundtable discussion on my book, *US Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War in Africa: A Bridge between Global Conflict and the New World Order, 1988–1994*. I extend my sincere gratitude to the reviewers, Poppy Cullen, Robin Möser, and Frank Gerits, for dedicating their time to thoroughly read and review my work. Their insights and perspectives are invaluable to me. I eagerly welcome their feedback, both their appreciation for the strides made in my research and their constructive criticism which will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in refining and enhancing the quality of my present and future work. This collaborative exchange of ideas is an essential part of academic growth, and I am truly excited about the opportunity to engage in this discourse.

I was pleased to see that all the reviewers have acknowledged the contribution of my book in directing attention towards the African continent. Despite the expanding body of literature on the Global South during the Cold War, Africa continues to face challenges in securing its position within that discourse.[1] Additionally, as highlighted by Gerits, there exists a notable scarcity of research concerning Africa during the specific timeframe addressed in my book—the concluding phase of the Cold War. Möser also defines as a "crucial take-away" of my book a point that I particularly wanted to establish: beyond the profound impact of the Cold War on the African continent, the repercussions stemming from local conflicts and their resolutions equally contributed in shaping the dynamic between the US and the USSR. Möser thus asserts that my monograph "will surely become a standard reference for those who are working on African and Global history subjects, most importantly US foreign policy towards the Third World." More humbly, I hope my work will act as one of the catalysts to ignite attention and interest in Africa within Cold War history scholarship, especially given the reviewers' commendation of the authoritative nature of my research, along with the book's accurate and clear narrative. In Gerits's words, this makes my book "an excellent teaching tool" too.

I am glad that the reviewers display a particular interest in a key argument I put forth in the book. This argument revolves around the distinctive timeframe that marked the conclusion of the Cold War in Africa. Indeed, when I embarked on my research to explore the impact of the Cold War's endgame on US foreign policy in Africa, I felt the need to deeply reflect on the definition and meaning of the "end of the Cold War." My book originated from the observation that while the Global South has acquired increasing centrality in the study of the Cold War, there has been a notable lack of similar scrutiny on how the Cold War concluded in those regions.[2] This discrepancy becomes evident when comparing the extensive debate surrounding the timeline and pivotal years that denoted the conclusion of US-Soviet rivalry and the Cold War in Europe, with the relatively limited efforts dedicated to systematically identifying and analysing the diverse endpoints and narratives that characterize the Cold War's conclusion in other regions of the world.

In *US Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War in Africa* I undertook this task for the African continent. I pinpoint the unique temporal framework, pivotal processes, and transformative moments that played a role in

[1] Two recent major works that deal with the Cold War in the Global South notably do not engage with Africa: Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (New York: Harper, 2019) and Lorenz M. Lüthi, *Cold Wars: Asia, the Middle East, Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[2] As noted by Artemy Kalinovsky and Radchenko Sergey, the dozens of books about the end of the Cold War published in 2009, the anniversary year of the fall of the Berlin Wall, "barely mentioned the Third World. In the media, too, all of the focus was on Europe." Kalinovsky and Radchenko, eds., *The End of the Cold War in the Third World: New Perspectives on Regional Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2010), 6. On this point also see Odd Arne Westad, "Beginnings of the End: How the Cold War Crumbled," in Silvio Pons and Federico Romero, eds., *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War: Issues, Interpretations, Periodizations* (London: Routledge, 2004), 68.

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concluding the Cold War within this specific geographical context. Importantly, these elements do not necessarily align with the political processes and symbolic events that marked the narrative of the Cold War's end in Europe, such as the notable example of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. I argue that the benchmark year for the end of the Cold War in the two African regions that I analyse in my book is in fact 1988.

Poppy Cullen in particular praises this reframing of the Cold War's conclusion timeline, and welcomes the book's shift beyond a European and towards an African chronology. She also stresses that the book breaks new ground in the literature by emphasizing the importance of the year 1988 for Africa, and it makes a significant contribution to rethinking the end of the Cold War in the continent. Möser also acknowledges this aspect of the book but at the same time asks a thought-provoking question on whether a neat endpoint for the Cold War in Africa is necessary, and whether it should be anchored to a specific year at all. I suppose this question can then be asked for the study of the end of the Cold War in Europe and the recognition of 1989 as a significant turning point, or for any historical process in general.

Möser is right in clarifying that 1988 must be seen as the starting point for the process that eventually led to the conclusion of the Cold War in the region, a process that "petered out over several years." This viewpoint indeed aligns with my own assertions in the book, where not only I explore lines of continuity and change throughout the pivotal year of 1988, but also frequently define this year as "the beginning" of the disappearance of the international Cold War dynamics from Africa, all the while extending my scrutiny to encompass developments until 1994. Likewise, Gerits appropriately observes that the period following 1988 still witnessed the increased engagement of African nations in global affairs, particularly when one considers the simultaneous impressive growth of several economies across the continent. In this instance as well, I do not necessarily see a contradiction to my argument concerning the year 1988. My argument is delimited to illustrating how this specific year marked the inception of a gradual detachment of Cold War logics and overarching structures from the regional and local dynamics of the continent. This led to a reduction in the reciprocal influence between these two aspects and somehow diminished the significance of the African continent in US foreign policy. It is not necessarily indicative of a broader retreat of African actors from the mainstream of global politics.

Regarding the sources used in my book: while acknowledging the robustness of the archival research and the diverse range of American archives I consulted, the reviewers uniformly highlight the somewhat limited inclusion of alternative sources, particularly those from Africa. This critique aligns with my initial expectations, which prompted me to proactively acknowledge and tackle this concern in the book's introduction. Since this criticism is of particular importance to me, I am glad to have the opportunity to address the issue anew. Simply put, my book is about US foreign policy. Consequently, it naturally focuses on US viewpoints and actions, drawing extensively on US sources. Despite the book's specific scope and objectives, I endeavored to acknowledge the roles played by other actors and countries that were involved in the events covered. Unfortunately, the well-recognized challenges and often insurmountable obstacles in accessing archival materials from these countries (especially in Africa) mean that it is difficult to adequately present the perspectives of these states while upholding the same high level of analytical rigor applied to US policy.[3] Nevertheless, the book incorporates materials from sources such as the South African Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria, as well as digitized documents from Soviet and Cuban archives that are available through the National Security Archive and the Woodrow Wilson Center's History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive. Additionally, insights gleaned from interviews with former Soviet and South African policymakers contributed to the book's content.

[3] On this point see: Marco Wyss, *Postcolonial Security: Britain, France, & West Africa's Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

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The discussion about the sources used in the book is closely linked to another issue in the reviews, namely the desire for the book to unpack and elaborate more on some of the issues discussed and the arguments presented. Cullen questions the basis of the starkly contrasting narratives provided by US and Soviet policymakers regarding their respective approaches to the Ethiopian dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam. She rightly wonders whether some further appreciation of Mengistu's own position would have helped to solve that discrepancy. Möser remarks on the need for some more discussion of the actual influence that Washington held over South Africa in the delicate phase between 1985 and 1988, and the role played by the UK in this sense. Similarly, Gerits calls for more attention on the economic dimension in US-African relations. This includes an exploration of the US development and modernization initiatives carried out in Africa, along with discussions about debt relief in the 1980s and early 1990s. Such insights, he suggests, would contribute to a more nuanced grasp of the dynamics that transcend the East-West paradigm.

I acknowledge that a more extensive and diversified access to the archives could have facilitated a deeper analysis of these issues. As Cullen notes, although the book presents the US perspective, there are instances where its understanding of American policy would benefit from a greater understanding of the African side. Moreover, I share the sentiment expressed by Gerits that the opening of new archives in the future might offer insights into some of the aforementioned questions and could be addressed in subsequent scholarly work. Therefore, I view these critiques as indicators that my book has sparked interest in the discussed topic and I am sincerely grateful to the reviewers for raising thought-provoking and demanding questions. Undoubtedly, these questions will help me in reflecting on my research, and they will provide me with fresh ideas and methodologies for my forthcoming work.

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