Taylor & Francis
Online

Review of African Political Economy ›
Volume 32, 2005 - Issue 106

1,035 Views | 30 CrossRef citations to date | 0 Altmetric

Original Articles

New Barbarians at the Gate: Losing the liberal peace in Africa

Susan Willett

Pages 569-594 | Published online: 20 Aug 2006

Cite this article https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240500467062

Sample our Area Studies Journals
>> Sign in here to start your access to the latest two volumes for 14 days

Full Article | Figures & data | References | Citations | Metrics
Reprints & Permissions | Read this article | Share

Abstract

Within contemporary liberal peace discourse, poverty and underdevelopment are being constructed as ‘new threats’ that feed conflict and terrorism. This perception has encouraged a growing convergence between the security and development policies of the major donors. However, in Africa, where the need to simultaneously tackle conflict and underdevelopment is most pressing, the global institutions have failed to acknowledge that the neo-liberal policies that they pursue have been instrumental in structuring the domestic political and economic tensions that have contributed to violent conflict. Moreover, the current preoccupation with the war on terror has encouraged the co-option of development resources for security functions resulting in the incremental securitisation of development policies. Regardless of its expanding base and the process of mission creep, the liberal peace complex has failed to secure sustainable peace in Africa. Into the vacuum created by failure, the ‘new barbarian’

agenda that underpins the ‘war on terror’ has surreptitiously moved, expanding its reach and its wake of pillage and destruction.

Previous article View issue table of contents Next article

Notes

1. The British militarily has engaged in peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone but on an independent basis and not as Blue Helmets.

2. James Wolfensohn, keynote address at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre in March 2002.

Additional information

Notes on contributors

Susan Willett
Susan Willett, formerly Director of the Cost of Disarmament Programme at the United Nations Institute of Disarmament Research is currently an independent development and security analyst; e-mail: swillett@easynet.co.uk.

Related Research Data

The international community and state reconstruction in war-torn societies
Source: Conflict Security and Development
Africa's Global Impact[1]
Source: IDS Bulletin
Economic Development, Inequality, War, and State Violence
Source: World Development
Warlord Politics and African States
Source: Unknown Repository
Globalisation and InsecurityThe Direct and Indirect Effects of Small Arms Availability

Source: IDS Bulletin

Globalisation and its Discontents

Source: Irish Journal of Sociology

Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy

Source: Unknown Repository

The strategic significance of global inequality

Related research

People also read | Recommended articles | Cited by 30

Information for

Authors
R&D professionals
Editors
Librarians
Societies

Opportunities

Reprints and e-prints
Advertising solutions
Accelerated publication
Corporate access solutions

Open access

Overview
Open journals
Open Select
Dove Medical Press
F1000Research

Help and information

Help and contact
Newsroom
All journals
Books

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email

Sign me up

Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited Privacy policy

Cookies Terms & conditions Accessibility

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG

Taylor & Francis by informa