

Large liberal interventions should end

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Résumé ou extrait : Western views of southern Somalia are dominated by perceived gaps in the overall liberal order. Classical Western liberalism emphasizes individualism, civil and political liberties, the rule of law, and state structures. Counter-insurgency warfare in former European colonial possessions since the 1960s has been a continuing challenge. Neither in Vietnam, nor in Afghanistan, nor in Iraq did Western armies "win" counter-insurgency wars in a way that left them stable, moderate, peaceful, states. They were left wartorn or under great oppression. Local elites did not share Western aims and did not unify to work together. Liberalism's aims of peace and progress were not achieved. Every time a large liberal expeditionary force has been dispatched to stabilize a developing state since 1990, the results have been mixed or poor, even after deployments sometimes measured in decades (for example, the United Nations in the Congo since 1999). A detailed examination of the civilian government, international and

indigenous military forces, and the police in southern Somalia shows that they are not capable of defeating the Al-Shabaab insurgents. Both the “Sunni Awakening” in Iraq in 2006 and the local clan offensives against Al-Shabaab from 2022 in Somalia offered the hope that a locally empowered approach, however, might make counter-insurgency success more attainable. However, from the situation in southern Somalia, it appears extremely unlikely that liberal counter-insurgency aims can be achieved through a locally empowered approach. Local elites do not share wider Western aims and are intensely divided. More generally, large, transformative, liberal-democratic expeditions into the developing world appear to have virtually no chance of success. First and foremost this is because local elites share neither their values nor aims. These elites are also, generally, bitterly divided and willing to fight for victory over each other’s factions into the indefinite future. The toll of climate destruction is growing, meaning Western resources will be increasingly needed closer to home. Between the very poor prospects of success, and the growing calls on limited deployable expeditionary resources, large, transformative Western liberal expeditions should end.

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