

Oyebade, Adebayo. Alao, Abiodun editors *Africa After the Cold War: The Changing Perspective on Security* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 1998, pp. 228)

Africa After the Cold War is a collection of essays by eminent African scholars edited by Adebayo and Abiodun Alao. The book is well researched and informative. The thesis is that since the demise of the Cold War, new problems have emerged on the continent, such as ethnic rivalries, religious clashes and most important, the continent has sunk into deep economic abyss. In addition, environment degradation is becoming a major problem. Significantly, some states in search of democratic governance have turned into violence, which in turn has resulted into authoritarian rule.

The basis of this book is to address Africa's security which has been neglected. This lack of intellectual discourse of Africa's security becomes the legwork of this book. The book proper discusses the problems of Africa's security and implications.

This work is unique in that it deviates from the traditional approach which usually focuses on military aggression. The authors approach Africa's security by zeroing on complex problems of ethno-religious nationalism, economic stagnation, catastrophic wars, environmental degradation, prospects for democratic structures in considering Africa's issues after the Cold War. In addition, the work critically looks at the emergence of a new world order where Western powers are increasingly removing themselves from the affairs of Africa and its implications to the continent.

To lend credence to this view point, Le Monde commented:

...our priorities are elsewhere in Europe. At a time when our brothers on the other side of the iron curtain... desperately need us, why continue favoring Africa regions, ... why not spend elsewhere the fund we spend there in vain. p. 197

Le Monde's viewpoint echoes the feeling of the West in the post-Cold War era. Consequently the West has limited its role on the continent in post-Cold War era. Since the emergence of the so called world order, America's assistance to Africa is in its all time low. Also, France which used to prop up the local currencies of its former colonies has signalled its intention to cease assistance. Britain has also followed suit by cutting aid to the continent.

The authors maintain that the end of the cold war has not midwived into a reduction of conflict. On the contrary, it has helped to fan it.

Examples par excellence are: Angola and Sierra Leone. In discussing ethnic conflict, the book analyzes the root causes of ethno-nationalism and the legacies the end of the Cold War bequeathed. Another irritating problem facing the continent in the post-Cold War is that the continent has become a dumping ground for industrial wastes which will have an enormous implications in the future if African countries do not take stance on this issue. Added to this, is the environmental damage caused by the military in the name of

providing security for their citizens. The countries that have suffered most are Angola, and Mozambique. The impact would be felt for decades to come...

The best part of the book is the chapter that deals with the end of the cold war in Africa written by Professor Oyebade. The author takes the reader through the contours of conflicts in Africa, with special attention to Rwanda, Angola, Southern Africa, Mozambique, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In each conflict, the author offers the crux of the conflict. The chapter concludes that the end of the cold war brings Africa an ill wind in which conflict becomes the continent's political reality. Professor Oyebade remarks that Africa will continue to manage its crisis in the post-Cold War era. "But in doing this, given the apparent lack of logistics and other capabilities by Africa's regional organizations especially the OAU, there is bound to be calls for Western support, particularly in terms of personnel, training, equipment, and finance" p. 176.

Africa After the Cold War is a well thought out work. It is well researched which demonstrates that the authors spent many grilling hours to produce an innovative book. Importantly, the book underscores most of the problems facing the continent and their implications. The authors introduce a non-traditional approach of looking at security which deviates from the primacy of military aggression. This makes the book original. What sets the book apart is that it puts Africa's security discourse on the front burner.

The book is highly recommended for scholars of international relations, comparative politics, Africanists, and for casual readers who are interested in the problems besetting Africa, and how Africa should manage its crises in the post-Cold War. The book would make an excellent addition for classroom discussions.

The problem with the book is that some of its facts are becoming outdated because of changing events in Africa. For example, Nigeria has emerged as a democratic country after years of experiencing military rule. It has shed its authoritarian posture. In spite of this short coming, the book is a crown jewel for African scholars.

Reviewed by Kofi Johnson, Ph. D.
North Carolina Central University.