Oyebade, A. & Alao, A. (1998). *Africa after the Cold War: The Changing Perspectives on Security.* **Trenton: Africa World Press Inc.**

Reviewed by Jephias Mapuva

Although it has been widely recognized that Africa's security problems are acute, it is not a subject that has received much debate, nor has it been made a subject of much intellectual inquiry. The edition is a concerted effort by several African scholars as they present the security challenges facing the post-colonial African continent on the aftermath of the Cold War. In their various contributions, the authors concur that despite the end of the Cold War, Africa is faced with other problems of monumental proportions ranging from the emergence of despotic regimes and ethno-religious nationalism to environmental degradation, most of which have underscored Africa's intra-geo political landscape. Additionally, the contributors have bemoaned the fact that the continent has sunk more than ever before into a deep abyss of economic stagnation and political deprivation of citizens, gross human rights violations, catastrophic civil wars, which have raged for far too long and, in some states, the search for democratic system have degenerated into violence, which have posed a threat to the very foundation of national sovereignty. It is the contributors' conviction that the cited fundamental problems have collectively posed a security threat to the continent as a whole. It is the primary purpose of this book to fill the void created by other literary works on post-colonial Africa and the myriad of challenges that the continent is facing.

The approach to the question of security displayed in this edition differs markedly from traditional approach that gives primacy to the threat of military aggression as the sole factor in the state security. Instead, the contributors place primacy on the complex problems of ethno-religious nationalism, economic stagnation, degeneration of political systems into authoritarianism, catastrophic and perennial civil wars, as well as the prospects for the creation of democratic structures, in considering Africa's security issues on the aftermath of the Cold War.

While the general theme revolve around security concerns on the African continent, various contributors have addressed specific issues connected with security. The background for the various analyses by different contributors is the end of the Cold War and its implications for global politics and security. Divided into 8 sections, the book grapples with the issue of security from different viewpoints. Adebayo Oyebade and Abiodun Alao present a redefinition of security from an African point of view. They maintain that, unlike on other continents, the determinants of security concerns in Africa have changed from time to time, adjusting to economic and political exigencies. In their deliberation on Africa's economic situation, the contributors cite low income levels, unprecedented population growth, low level of industrialization, external burden, economic mismanagement, political instability, and high defense expenditure as fermenting Africa's problems as the continent finds itself in a quagmire on the way forward. On the same note, Amadu Sesay and Abiodun Alao address the issue

of democracy and security by pointing out that that democracy and security have a symbiotic relationship, especially given that:

"...a stable democratic polity promotes development, ensures freedom of speech, encourages political pluralism, brings about political tolerance, and, in the economic realm, creates healthy competition" factors which are constitute a precursor to a secure state (Oyebade & Alao, 1998:44).

The authors further note that civil society, notably labor and student movements, by virtue of their numerical strength and being perceived as a source of ideas, sometimes force governments to give way to the wishes of the people. Consequently, the authors present these sections of civil society as holding the propensity to indulge in active participation in security decisions on the continent, even against the wishes of governments.

The issue of the environment has also been presented as being connected to security. The authors take issue with environment considerations, such as those pertaining to pollution, the greenhouse effect, acid rain, depletion of the ozone layer as issues of global concern, and, subsequently, security issues. These environmental considerations have also manifested themselves as having connections between security and environment, especially in technologically advanced countries where the inseparable link between security and the environment have been considered as "… the passive victim of man's desire to acquire and use technology in the conduct of conflict" (Oyebade & Alao, 1998:63). On the same breath, the use of nuclear weapons has also been identified as having been a post-Cold War manifestation on the African continent more than before. Of note in the book has been the prevalence of ethnicity as an ingredient for many conflicts on the continent, mostly in the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural society, where communication breakdown, cultural differences, and age old mistrust have fermented into civil conflicts.

The book concludes with Adebayo Oyebade providing a roadmap for conflict management and resolution in Africa's conflict hot spots. The author predicts that re-engagement with the west, as some western nations can provide direct assistance to Africa's conflict resolution, overtures through increasing financial and technical assistance, rather than direct military intervention.

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