

Benedikt F. (2009). *Security Cooperation in Africa: A Reappraisal*. Boulder and London: Firstforumpress,. Pp.336. ISBN 978-1-935049-09-8.

Review by: Percyslage Chigora

It is not a deniable assumption that Africa as a continent is suffering from various insecurity situations which have proven to be surmountable challenge in terms of overcoming these continually looming threats. The solution to some of these challenges is not the task of the individual African state alone but requires cooperation between and among state at various levels, i.e. interstate, regional, continental and even at a global level. For Africa, *Security Cooperation in Africa* is welcomed contribution to illuminating security cooperation.

The introduction captures the main essence of the book, with the preceding part two, addressing the theoretical issues in comprehending African security, illuminating on their strength and limitations in understanding the African situation.

Part three traces the historical quest for continental security cooperation to which the author singled out Pan Africanism as the starting point and attempts to bring cooperation among African in Africa and with those in the Diaspora. The successes and challenges of these early efforts were examined and noting of the failure to have Africa with a central command. These ultimately had an overall effect of necessitating regionalism. This becomes the task of part four which dealt with issues of devolution on security cooperation to regional bodies. It analysed major regional blocks; Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Frontline States/ Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), and other smaller ones, espousing their experience with security cooperation and their continued role in ensuring security in their respective regions of Africa.

Part five zeroed in on the renewed efforts at the continental level to deal with security, highlighting on the institutional reforms that were put in place to deal with issues of security as well as various summits that were held regarding security issues. Efforts towards transforming the Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU) to African Union) AU were examined noting the key challenges and how they were tackled leading to the creation of the AU and its various institutions to deal with security matters.

Section six dealt with AU's experience in dealing with peace operations on the continent noting the key successes and challenges in these peace keeping missions. The author did note, "It is already evident that the AU's ability to intervene in intra-state conflicts has surpassed that of most other regional organization, in Asia, South America, and the Middle East" p132.

Part seven, eight, and nine examined the security institutions of the AU examining on how they are organized, their key activities and their achievements up to date. Major institutions analyzed were Stand by Force and Continental Early Warning Systems. On the Stand by Force, the author recommended that, "the AU and its international supporters need to ensure that the bridges built over the past five years are not torn down in a moment of crisis but are instead continually reinforced" p.177.

Part ten analyzed the characteristics of security cooperation in Africa; with key issues being that of Africanisation of security, changes in the security culture, the institutionalization of cooperation, and the consolidation of partnership with security communities.

The challenges that bedevil security cooperation were the objectives of the final section. These challenges center around the existence of too many regional organizations, with some of them having overlapping memberships and thereby leading to conflicting approaches to security, issues of uneven development, this also leading to conflicting perceptions and security policy priorities, issues of international support, lack of commitment, and the lack of institutional capacity.

In the final, for the author, the emerging issues and institutions in security cooperation “may well prove to be the onset of a real African renaissance” p.286.

*Security Cooperation in Africa* is an informative text on Africa's pursuit for development, placing issues of security and peace at the center for achievement of sustainable development in Africa. For anyone with an interest in the field, the book is a worthwhile piece, enriched by the author's consultation of relevant literature in the study area.

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