Ian S. Spears, Civil War in African States: The Search for Security, Firstforumpress, Boulder London, 2010. ISBN 978 1 935049-3. pp. 279

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The questions of civil wars contributing towards insecurity and subsequently affecting development have been at the centre of policy makers and academics. Ian S. Spears' *Civil War in African States: The Search for Security* is a welcome recent text that has an in-depth examination of civil war and security in Africa using case studies of the intra and subsequent interstate conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and civil war in Somalia and Angola.

The first part, which is the introduction to the book, examined the historical issues, nature, dimensions and actors in Africa's conflict situations. An assortment of survival strategies which African states have adopted in an attempt to ending conflict situations were espoused, particularly in relation to power sharing, domination, subjugation, separation and succession; noting key challenges and factors that contributed towards success. In essence, the author concluded by noting;

Success in Conflict management...is contingent on understanding the link between security strategy, and the mediator's solution...peace makers must understand and appreciate when a given solution is consonant with the disputants'' assessments of their security needs and when it is not.p.31

The second part analysed the case of Ethiopia and Eritrea explaining the historical origins and the factors that led to the conflict. A detailed explanation of the processes and activities that created the Eritrean state was given. This part also examines the sources of the Ethiopian-Eritrean war and the subsequent state of affairs that dominated the post war era, with the author concluding that,

Meaningful conflict resolution requires us to reconsider how the states in which these conflicts persist are organised so that co-operation rather than insecurity can be advanced.p.98.

Dwelling on Somalia, part three examined issues that characterise the Somali state to include societal make up, European colonialism, political situation in post-independence period, and how they have contributed towards unity and disunity. The international intervention by the UN was alluded to. In the final the author observed,

Given the way in which somalilanders have cultivated their history of oppression and woven it into their collective memory, the prospect of a return to a united Somalia is unlikely for the foreseeable future.p.163.

Part four explored the civil war in Angola examining the historical origins of the conflict which is linked to decolonisation process that brought two (MPLA and UNITA) of the three powerfully militarised movements in the battle to achieve independence and the subsequent disunity that came between the two at independence and thereafter.

The involvement of the external world to the conflict through, on one hand, taking part in the execution of the conflict, and on the other, in the resolution of the conflict was espoused. Key issues that characterised efforts and challenges to achieving peace, and the final factor that ended the conflict were examined.

The last part of the book is the conclusion which, by drawing insights from the case studies illuminated on issues that can ensure security in/of African states. Informing that

The solutions to the Africa's troubles are not merely a technical, and the problems will not be solved by technocrats in the west. For every African conflict reaching its end there is another one emerging.p.24

I found the texts valuable and more informing. Its excellent use of rich secondary and primary sources makes the text well detailed and more informative. For anyone who wished to comprehend the solving of conflicts in Africa, the text is a must read copy. However, the book could have become much more comprehensive if more case studies were included.

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