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Reviews

A Dialogue of the Deaf: essays on Africa and the United Nations
edited by ADEKEYE ADEBAJO and HELEN SCANLON
Johannesburg: Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd., 2006. Pp. 298, R120 (pb).
doi:10.1017/S0022278X08003686

In this engaging volume the editors and authors attempt to provide the reader with an African perspective on African problems. The book is written in part as a response to the report of the United Nations High Level Panel on *Threats, Challenges and Change*, but is also intended to demonstrate the ways in which Africa and the particular problems the continent faces have been consistently ignored by those with enough influence to make a difference. Compiling essays from authors renowned within the field and experts from non-academic backgrounds, the editors are bringing a new perspective to ongoing debates.

Organised into four sections, the book covers many of the key issues facing Africa today, with the emphasis on maintaining an African perspective on these problems and the provision of African solutions for them. All of the issues raised are relevant to contemporary debates and essential to Africa's continued development and participation in the international system.

The first section focuses predominantly on UN reform and the issues highlighted in the High Level Panel Report. In his chapter, Adekeye Adebajo outlines the need for the creation of a Pan-African response to Security Council reform to ensure that Africa's voice is heard. This need for an African voice is emphasised by James Jonah, who focuses on the continued lack of African control over the debate on the reform process. Moving on from UN reform, the following two sections examine new ideas and old problems which are having a marked impact on Africa today. These include the development of the concept of Sovereignty as Responsibility and its implications for countries within Africa. Francis Deng uses his contribution to examine the challenges posed by failed states, and the particular threats these present to Africa as a continent coupled with the development and human security problems which have been a continuous barrier to African progress. The final section goes on to look at how African actors should respond to these problems, and some alternative solutions. One key area for examination in this section is the potential positive impact that the UN peacebuilding commission could have in Africa, and how best this should be managed. The section also examines the relationship between the UN and the AU, and Tim Murithi provides suggestions on how African countries should work together to ensure that this relationship benefits them in the most appropriate ways.

Overall this compilation of essays provides an excellent combination of historical and current examples of the ways in which Africa has been marginalised by the international community. It provides a detailed examination of many of the seemingly intransigent problems facing the continent, and presents them from an African perspective. However, rather than focusing on the negatives, the

authors outline potential solutions which could bring Africa back from the brink and give it a more competitive role in the future.

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Multi-Choice Policing in Africa by BRUCE BAKER
Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2008. Pp. 227, Euro 31 (pb).
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This unique book on policing in sub-Saharan Africa explores the plurality of state and non-state providers and authorisers of policing that in complex ways coexist, overlap and compete on the continent. Using a broad definition of policing – 'any organised activity, whether by the state or civil groups, that seeks to ensure the maintenance of communal order, security and peace' (p. 22) – Chapter 2 correctly argues that any attempt to understand how security is provided and governed must go beyond the state police and the formal, and involve empirical analyses of who citizens actually turn to for protection. Baker applies the concept of 'multi-choice policing' to argue that Africans 'shop' between different policing agencies, depending on the nature of problems they face and the types of redress available (e.g. local headmen, priests, the state police, community policing forums, commercial security guards, vigilantes, spontaneous mobs, etc.). Fundamentally, the argument goes, there is no single institution exercising a monopoly of regulation and enforcement of order. Various community and commercial groups, formal as well as informal, authorise policing, besides the state (e.g. economic interest groups, residential/cultural communities, individuals, traditional authorities, etc.). This situation is not unique to sub-Saharan Africa, but challenges to state police monopoly are more extreme than in Western Europe and the US.

Chapters 3 and 4 outline the social, political and historical conditions specific to shaping multi-choice policing in Africa. The most significant explanation is the condition of state fragility in Africa, including weak capacity, indeed unwillingness at times, to provide security and justice to the majority of the population, as well as contested legitimacy brought about by corruption, predatory rulers and police violence. This is partly shaped by continuities of colonial paramilitary 'regime policing', with state policing being primarily concerned with political control and protection of the economic interests of rulers, rather than with crime control and civilian protection. Despite attempts by many post-colonial governments to establish a monopoly of state policing, colonial forms of indirect rule also continue in informal ways. Other contemporary factors explaining the plurality of policing include poverty, social inequalities, widespread armed conflicts, and crime associated with youth marginalisation and political transitions.

Chapter 5 provides a generalised overview and typology of the many different policing groups that exist in contemporary Africa. It describes modes of organisation, forms of punishment, range of operations, basis of legitimacy, and so forth. In particular, Baker focuses on how different policing groups relate to the law and the state. The core of his argument is that state police failure has re-invigorated self-policing, but that this has not created a simple dichotomy between state and non-state policing. Often there is 'considerable interpenetration and overlap between the two', both formally and informally (p. 77). Unfortunately,