

The Economics of Peace and Security Journal

© www.epsjournal.org.uk, ISSN 1749-852X

Book Review

Cottey, Andrew. 2007. Security in the New Europe. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Xiii + 258 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4039-8648-1 (hb), 978-1-4039-8649-8 (pb). Price: £19.99 (pb).

by Bjørn Møller (17 April 2008)

Andrew Cottey begins with a brief introduction to the concept of security, followed by an equally brief survey of some of the prominent concepts, *inter alia* that of “security communities.” This is relevant as one of the main arguments of the book is that Europe has developed into such a community, among the members of which war has become inconceivable, and which has been expanding since the end of the Cold War. This expansion is manifested in part by the growth of organizations, of which Europe has a particularly dense network. As a consequence most European states are engaged in mutually beneficial cooperation, and this is believed to foster peace. The Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is only mentioned in passing; most attention is paid to NATO and the EU, the concerns of Russia about the expansion of the (formerly) Western organizations is duly recorded.

A chapter is devoted to the European Union, rightly held to be the most important institution with regard to security, and in other respects, even as until recently it has avoided “stepping on the toes” of NATO or the United States by not developing any military identity. But the recent formation of such an identity and various (minor) peacekeeping and other missions deployed under these auspices are noted, as is the ambivalence of the United States about such initiatives.

Then follows a rather uncritical and very much mainstream account of the “new security agenda,” featuring terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and humanitarian interventions. As far as the latter is concerned, the author exaggerates the status achieved by the “responsibility to protect” norm which he claims has been “adopted” by the United Nations (p. 126). However, even though it was indeed included, in vague terms, in the U.N.’s 2005 anniversary summit declaration, this does not amount to international law which remains based on the principles of sovereignty and noninterference in internal affairs.

A chapter is devoted to what the author refers to as soft security issues such as economic development, global warming, and international migration, yet without presenting a convincing case as to why these should be labeled security issues.

The book is intended as a synthesis of, and introduction to, European security politics after the Cold War. As such it works well and would seem suitable for, at least undergraduate, courses in European security. But for the specialist it does not contain much that is new or surprising, and the reader is left wondering what the author’s own views may be on the issues. The book would have benefitted from a thorough and critical questioning of the assumptions underlying European security policies, e.g., whether terrorism or WMD proliferation really are major security threats, as well as from a clearer focus and a more explicit use of theory.

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