

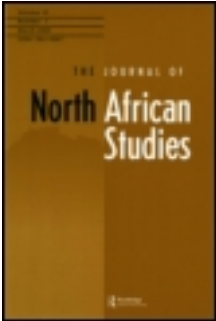
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Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

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## The Journal of North African Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fnas20>

### The Horn of Africa in the shadow of the cold war: understanding the partition of Sudan from a regional perspective

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Available online: 19 Oct 2011

To cite this article: Khalid Mustafa Medani (2011): The Horn of Africa in the shadow of the cold war: understanding the partition of Sudan from a regional perspective, The Journal of North African Studies, DOI:10.1080/13629387.2011.613188

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2011.613188>



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# The Horn of Africa in the shadow of the cold war: understanding the partition of Sudan from a regional perspective

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On 9 July 2011, following over four decades of intermittent civil conflict, Southern Sudan officially declared independence from the North. The historic secession of the Southern provinces was a culmination of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the ruling National Congress Party and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement in 2005. While conventional analysis has depicted the roots of the Sudanese conflict as a result of enduring conflicts over its national identity, and power and resource sharing, this article argues that the seemingly inevitable march towards the emergence of two new nation-states has been a result of a complex dynamic of external as well as local political developments in the greater Horn of Africa. More specifically, I argue that domestic-level factors having to do with regional conflicts in the Horn have greatly influenced the region's external relations in ways that are often obscured by international relations theories that privilege geo-strategic interests over the role of domestic politics. The article highlights the role of the cold war in influencing political developments in Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia in ways that shaped the relationship of the Middle East and the Horn region, and the trajectory of the civil conflict in Sudan in particular. I maintain that while security and strategic interests have provided the context for the relationship of the Horn and external actors, the role of domestic politics has played a crucial role in the shifting alliances between Middle Eastern states and the regimes and insurgent groups in the region. I conclude by highlighting the continuing importance of the role of local-level politics in these external relations following the end of the cold war by examining the advent of Islamism in the region in Sudan, arguing that the dynamic relationship between regional and domestic factors has played an important, albeit often neglected, role in the historic partition of the country.

**Keywords:** cold war; Horn of Africa; Sudan; civil conflict; secession

On 9 July 2011, following over four decades of intermittent civil conflict, Southern Sudan officially declared independence from the North. The historic secession was a culmination of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Naivasha, Kenya on 9 January,

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2005. The partition of Sudan into two countries may in retrospect seem inevitable to many observers of Sudanese politics. After all, prior to the cease-fire in 2002, the war between the north and the south represented Africa's longest civil war and its origins date back to the dawn of the country's independence in 1955. That conventional analysis of the conflict has depicted the roots of the Sudanese conflict in cultural and religious terms has also led many scholars and policy makers to contend that the only way to promote an enduring peace in the country is for the south to secede, and that this is a logical historical outcome of Sudan's enduring conflicts over its national identity, and power and resource sharing in what is Africa's largest country. While this line of argument represents a great measure of the truth, what is often obscured in the analysis is that the path that has led to the seemingly inevitable march towards the emergence of two new nation-states has been greatly influenced by a complex dynamic of external, as well as local, political developments in the greater Horn of Africa region.

An area comprising Sudan, as well as Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti, the Horn of Africa is a region of the world whose strategic location has long determined its relationship with the outside world.<sup>1</sup> Overlapping the Middle East and the Indian Ocean, it borders Saudi Arabia, controls the *Bab al Mandeb* Straits – which is one of Israel's important waterways – and overlooks where the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean converge. The region's geography alone has defined it as a major geo-political area for the world. As a consequence, the domestic political dynamics in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia as well as Sudan have been a cause of concern and the rationale behind interventions by the superpowers and the states of the Middle East in the decades during and after the cold war.

For the cold war superpowers the region's primary strategic importance is its geographic position along the Red Sea and the southern flank of its security and economic interests in the Middle East. When the Cold War ended, however, the Horn of Africa became of much less strategic value. By the end of 1989, for example, Moscow had reduced its support for the military regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia, Washington stopped its military assistance to the regime of Siad Barre, and following the assumption to power of General Omer Beshir in Sudan, ended its support to the Islamist-backed regime in Sudan. This has not been the case for the Middle East's interventions in the Horn of Africa. By the 1990s and up to the present, the support provided by Middle Eastern states to local actors in the Horn has continued. Moreover, it has proven more pivotal in the absence of aid from the cold war superpowers. Given the long-term strategic interests of Middle Eastern countries in the Horn of Africa, most particularly those of Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and, to a lesser extent, Israel, Middle East interventions continue unabated in the post-cold war era.

Nevertheless, while geo-strategic calculations have greatly influenced the Horn of Africa's relations with the Middle East, the central thesis of this article is that these alignments have also been determined by the civil wars and regional conflicts that have raged intermittently in the Horn in the decades following independence. The internationalisation of the southern civil war in Sudan, the Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict, and the wars over the disputed territory between Somalia and Ethiopia have played crucial roles in shaping the relationship between the Horn, the Middle East and the major superpowers during the Cold War. Moreover, while conventional understandings of international relations generally assume strategic and security interests drive inter-state alliances, in the case of the Horn, the role of domestic-level actors has played a key role in the shifting patterns of alliances, conflict and cooperation between the Arab states and the states of the Horn of Africa (Walt 1987).

This article highlights the important role of international as well as domestic politics in Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia in determining the relationship of the Middle East and the Horn

region and the trajectory of the civil conflict in Sudan in particular. I argue that domestic-level factors having to do with regional conflicts in the Horn have greatly influenced the region's external relations in ways that are often obscured by international relations theories that privilege geo-strategic interests over the role of domestic politics. I maintain throughout article that while security and strategic interests have provided the context for the relationship of the Horn and the Middle East, domestic politics have also played an important role in determining the shifting alliances between Middle East states and the regimes and insurgent groups in the Horn of Africa. I conclude by highlighting the continuing importance of the role of local-level politics in these external relations following the end of the cold war by examining the advent of Islamism in the region in Sudan and the ways in which the dynamic relationship between external and local political actors has played a crucial role in the historic emergence of two new nation-states in north and south Sudan.

### *In the shadow of the cold war: US policy, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa*

Throughout much of the cold war era, the United States' strategic vision in terms of the Horn was of a lesser priority in global terms. Following the end of the Vietnam war in 1975 the area of major concern for US policy makers in the Third World became the Israeli-Arab conflict and, to a lesser extent, Soviet and Cuban influence in central and southern Africa. In general, US policy makers considered the Horn of Africa as a separate region from the rest of Africa and more linked to the politics of the Middle East. With some variations, successive US administrations, and their allies, viewed events in the Horn in great part in terms of their broader implications and, specifically, in terms of the protracted conflict of the Middle East and in the context of their rivalry with the USSR. During the bulk of the cold war, the United States was content to exact its influence through its proxy Arab allies. In this respect, US strategic thinking was considerably affected by the position adopted towards the region by the conservative (moderate) Arab states (Farer 1979). Following the Oil crisis and the Arab-Israeli war of 1973, Washington developed a strong relationship with Saudi Arabia and Egypt. During both the Nixon and Carter administration this alliance was forged to avoid another Arab-Israel war as well as to secure a strategic position in the oil-rich Gulf. It is this general background, which has to be taken into account when considering the specific forms of US-Arab cooperation and conflict in the Horn. While Washington's interventions in the Horn for much of this period were not insignificant, the United States was generally content for its Arab allies to undertake the 'day-to-day' control of the anti-communist offensive towards the radical regimes and insurgent groups in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia (Lefebvre 1991).

By contrast to the US policy in the cold war, the Middle East states' geo-political interests and interventions in the Horn were clearer and more direct. The Arab states in particular promoted their varied interests in the Horn of Africa in accordance with four general strategic and ideological concerns: anti-communist and anti-soviet interests, their relationship to the Arabised elite in Sudan, Red Sea security, and the roles of Arab Nationalism and Islamism in the region. For Egypt and Saudi Arabia in particular, the primary interest over the Horn during the Cold War was reflected in their preoccupation with undercutting the socialist and Marxist regimes in Ethiopia and Somalia. They controlled the radicalism of the Eritrean insurgents of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) as well as contained and undermined the radical regime in South Yemen. The foreign policy of Arab states towards the Horn has also focused on Sudan since it is via Sudan that the events in the Horn most immediately affect the Arab world. Both Egypt and Saudi Arabia have been greatly concerned with Sudan's stability

and in forestalling leftist and radical Islamist elements in Sudan so as to limit their influence in other Arab countries.

The geographical position of the Horn has also been a key consideration in the strategic thinking of the Middle Eastern states vis-à-vis the Horn. The Red Sea littoral in particular is viewed by both Arab states as well as Israel to be an area of potential dispute. The Arab states would like to prevent Israel from having an influence in the Red Sea and Israel is concerned about the security threats from that area. Finally, the ideological linkage between the Arab world and the Horn has played an important role in terms of both the rationale for intervention as well as cooperation. Indeed, the rhetoric of Arab Nationalism and, more recently, Islamism has been an important ideological linkage in political and identity terms. During the Cold War the rhetoric of Arab support for forces in the Horn was couched in nationalist and cultural terms. In the Arab press, the people of Somalia and Eritrea were routinely and erroneously labelled as 'Arabs' to highlight their 'natural' alliance with the Arab world. In the case of Saudi Arabia, considerable emphasis is placed on the 'Muslim' character of local actors in the Horn particularly following the oil price hikes of the mid-1970s. In this respect, the identity of Arab regimes has important consequences in the alignment of Arab states with the regimes and insurgent groups in the Horn. For example, the Saudis have aided Muslims against Christian elements in the Eritrean movement, supported Islamist forces in the Sudan, and provided substantial financial aid to Siad Barre of Somalia that was couched in distinctly 'Islamic' terms.

### *The Horn of Africa and Sudan in the context of the 'Arab Cold War'*

In the late 1950s and 1960s, the relationship and regional alignments between the Middle East and the Horn of Africa was greatly determined by the onset of what is usually termed the period of the 'Arab Cold War' and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. The former began with the short-lived creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) between Egypt and Syria in 1958. This union divided the Arab states into two rival camps: the radical Arab nationalist camp consisting of Egypt and Syria, and the pro-western Monarchies of Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The UAR dissolved in late 1961 with Syria's secession but the ideological division between the two camps continued to determine intra-Arab relations as well as the Arab state's relations to the Horn countries.

This period was characterised by Gamal Abdel Nasser's interventions in both Sudan and Ethiopia as part of his campaign to spread his political and ideological influence in the region. In strategic terms, Nasser also hoped to prevent any intervention on the part of his Arab rival (i.e. Saudi Arabia) and the United States along Egypt's southern borders. An important element of this policy was Egypt's relationship to Sudan. In this regard, Nasser's primary objective was to ensure that Cairo's vital interests over the Nile waters would be secured (Waterbury 1979, pp. 102–108). Consequently, Nasser managed to influence Sudan in orienting its foreign policy away from his primary rival the United States and to distance it from any association with the state of Israel. However, the Egypt-Sudan alliance in the early decades of the Cold War was made possible by political developments specific to Sudanese domestic politics in the 1950s and early 1960s. When General Ibrahim Abboud seized the reigns of power in Khartoum through a military coup in 1958, he alienated the largely non-Muslim population of southern Sudan by pursuing a forced Arabisation and Islamicisation policy in the south.<sup>2</sup> By 1961 full-fledged war broke out, with the southern Sudanese insurgents of the Anya Nya demanding the separation of the south as an independent state. Khartoum was determined to find a military

solution to the secessionist inclination of the southern insurgents and received arms and training from Nasser's Egypt at the time.

The Khartoum regime's alliance with the radical Arab camp, and specifically Nasser's Egypt, meant that Sudan found itself embroiled in the very difficult politics of the Middle East and the collective Arab stand against Israel. Sudan's support for the Egyptian and Arab opposition to Israel resulted in the latter supporting the Anya Nya guerrilla fighters in south Sudan. Israel supplied the southern insurgents with a significant amount of weapons and training out of Uganda and Ethiopia in an effort to sap the strength of an enemy 'Arab' country. But this assistance was vulnerable to restraints emanating from the international system. Although Israel gave southerners assistance, particularly in the last three years of the conflict, it consistently denied such aid and did not go so far as to endorse the southern right to self-determination.

While southern Sudanese found little assistance from their African neighbours in this period, Khartoum's identification with Arab nationalism cemented its alliance with the Arab states. In this respect, the ruling Arabised/Islamic elite in Khartoum were much more successful in eliciting support from the Arab world. As Khartoum moved closer to Egypt, Cairo aided the Sudanese air force and Nasser encouraged other Arab countries to provide Sudan with material and financial assistance to prosecute the war in the south. But despite the boast of Mohamed Ahmed Mahjoub (the prime minister of Sudan at the height of the civil war in the 1960s) that his government received 'arms, ammunition, and funds' from the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia, Arab intervention on the side of Khartoum did not play as important a role in the conflict at this time as it did after 1969 when a military coup took place in Khartoum headed by Colonel Ja'far Nimeiri (Mahgoub 1974, p. 213).

Khartoum's staunch support of the Arab cause vis-à-vis the Arab Israeli conflict also affected its position globally in the larger sphere of superpower politics during the first decades of the Cold War. Its severing of relations with the United States following the 1967 war, combined with its radical Arab nationalist orientation, distanced it from the West and qualified it for support from the Soviet Union from which it acquired military assistance.

In contrast to Sudan's alignment with Nasser's Arab Socialist camp, Ethiopia remained firmly in the pro-US and anti-communist camp for the first two decades of the Cold War. The United States was content at the time to cultivate close relations with neighbouring Ethiopia, which hosted US bases. Indeed, while Sudan moved towards the radical Arab orbit at this time, Ethiopia came to serve as the lynchpin of the United States' strategic policy in the Horn of Africa region. US-Ethiopian relations were consolidated by a strong military partnership. As early as May 1953, the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie granted the US access to a strategic communication facility (Kagnew Station) located outside Asmara in Eritrea. Consequently, while the Soviets were aiding the Khartoum regime against its southern insurgents, the United States was continually expanding its military bases in neighbouring Ethiopia. Moreover, in response to a failed coup attempt against Haile Selassie and to the fears in Addis Ababa from newly independent Somalia, US military aid was increased substantially in the 1960s. Once Somalia began to receive Soviet military aid, the importance of Ethiopia as anti-communist bastion was all the greater. Ethiopia's anti-communist position and Haile Selassie's opposition to Arab and Islamic intervention in his country proved to be an important asset for Washington's strategic interest in the Middle East and the Horn.

The Ethiopia-US partnership at the time also aided Addis Ababa in terms of its domestic and regional security concerns. In return for expanding its military bases, Washington backed the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia and helped the resolution to that effect to pass through the UN. At the behest of its ally Haile Selassie, the United States also continued to endorse

the territorial integrity of Ethiopia and refused to support any demand for Eritrean separation. More significantly, while Washington did call for a settlement of the Ethiopian-Eritrean dispute that began in the early 1960s, it did not protest Haile Selassie's forced annexation of Eritrea into Ethiopia in 1962 (Halliday 1977, p. 12).

Naturally, US support for Ethiopia engendered alarm on the part of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser and the radical Arab states who feared that US bases in Ethiopia would be used against 'Arab' interests.<sup>3</sup> In response, Nasser intervened in the domestic affairs of Ethiopia by calling openly for the independence of Eritrea. He also supported the Somalis in their irredentist claims over the disputed Ogaden territory along the border of Ethiopia and Somalia. Moreover, not only did Egypt begin to supply arms to Somalia after the latter's independence in 1960, but Nasser also provided arms and training for the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) when it began its war of secession against Addis Ababa, in 1961. Eventually, Nasser backed off his support for the ELF but the latter found support from Syria and Iraq. In June 1963, the Eritreans opened an office in Damascus and began to receive substantial military assistance from the Syrian Ba'th party that helped expand the size and military arsenal of the ELF throughout the 1960s (Erlich 1983, p. 21).

The geo-politics of the Middle Eastern states bordering the Red Sea littoral in the early decades of the Cold War was primarily based on pragmatic as well as ideological considerations. Egypt's support for the southern Sudanese insurgents and the Eritrean separatists was driven by concern of the Nile waters and the presence of the US military bases in Ethiopia. For its part, Israeli military support to the southern Sudanese was motivated by the desire to destabilise Nasser's Egypt along its southern flank. However, it is important to highlight the role of domestic politics in forging these tactical alignments. Sudan's Arab nationalist posture allowed Khartoum to receive significant assistance from other Arab states to help it pursue a military solution to the southern Sudanese insurgency, and Ethiopia's alliance with the United States was motivated by its concern over Eritrean cessation and Somalia's persistent irredentist claims over the Ethiopia province in the Ogaden.

### *The Arab-Israeli conflict and the Horn of Africa*

The June 1967 Arab-Israeli war transformed the aforementioned relationship between the Middle East and the Horn of Africa in important ways mainly by introducing Israel as an important regional actor in these linkages. While in previous decades Arab concern over events in Ethiopia was minimal, the Israeli victory in the Six Day War meant the closure of the Suez Canal and the increased importance of the Bab al-Mandab straits at the southern end of the Red Sea for the Arab states bordering the Red Sea. Consequently, for many Arab states Israel's increased military support for Ethiopia became an important security and political concern. While the role of Israel in the Horn in this period is often exaggerated, nevertheless, by 1970, Israeli arms sales to Addis Ababa were exceeded only by that of the United States (Bishku 1994). This turn of events resulted in a predictable pattern of realignments based on the principle of balancing both internal and external security threats on the part of most of the Arab states and Israel over the strategic Red Sea region.

In terms of domestic politics the aftermath of the 1967 War highlighted the importance of the insurgency in Eritrea in ways that internationalised the war in the Horn. By the end of the 1960s Tel Aviv maintained a close alliance with Ethiopia and even provided military assistance to Addis Ababa against its war with Somalia over the Ogaden in 1977–78 (Lefebvre 1991, pp. 161–164). Most significantly, the extension of the Arab-Israeli conflict to the Horn afforded



the ELF the opportunity to exploit pan-Islamic rhetoric and receive substantial assistance from the Arab states. Consequently, the war in Eritrea represented an opportunity for the Arab states to undermine Israel's position in Ethiopia and the Horn, while Israeli support for Addis Ababa was motivated by the desire to prevent any attacks on Israeli shipping in the Red Sea. Nevertheless, the strategic alliance between the Arab states and the Eritreans was short-lived. By the late 1970s, it was clear that, for the moderate Arab states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the threat from Libya, South Yemen and the USSR far outweighed the role of Israel in the Horn.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, once again, domestic political developments in the Horn in the 1970s would necessitate yet another series of realignments at both the global and regional levels.

### *Shifting regional and global alliances: regional conflict and domestic crises*

By the mid-1970s two events occurred in the Middle East and in the Horn of Africa region that dramatically altered global, regional and domestic realignments. First, the 1973 Arab-Israeli war split the Arab countries into rival ideological camps following Anwar Sadat's signing of the Camp David Accords with Israel. The other event was specific to the regional politics in the Horn itself. On 12 September 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by a Marxist-led military coup under the leadership of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. Taken together these events divided the countries in the Horn into those that supported the radical Arab and pro-Soviet states of Libya and South Yemen, versus those who supported the pro-Western Arab states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Sudan moved significantly towards an alliance with the United States and its conservative Arab allies in the region, while Ethiopia lost its former US patrons and sought (and received) substantial military assistance from the Soviet Union and Cuba. For its part, Somalia, which was a former ally of Moscow in the 1960s, quickly became a client of the United States and its regional ally, Saudi Arabia.

The most significant catalyst for these strategic realignments between the Middle East and the Horn of Africa resulted from the political upheaval in Ethiopia. Following the coup of 1974 that toppled Haile Selassie, Ethiopia's relations with the United States deteriorated considerably, especially after Mengistu Haile Mariam was able to consolidate his Marxist military regime in 1977. Ethiopia thus emerged as a serious threat to the United States' primary strategic interests in the Middle East – mainly with respect to Egypt, the Gulf and the Red Sea. For his part, Sudanese President Nimeiri's support for the Camp David Accords reinforced a new, cordial relationship between Sudan and the United States. Khartoum strengthened its military and political ties to the United States by allowing the United States to use Sudan as a base from which to contain Soviet and Libyan influences in the region. In stark contrast to the early decades of the cold war, by the early 1980s, Khartoum received the most military and economic aid in all of sub-Saharan Africa (Jacobs 1985, p. 231).<sup>5</sup>

Not surprisingly, Sudan's alliance with the United States engendered hostility from the Marxist regime in Ethiopia. The latter formed a tripartite alliance with Libya and Marxist South Yemen in 1981 that compounded Nimeiri's regional insecurity. Short of cash, Nimeiri cultivated relations with the oil-rich Arab nations and received almost \$3 billion from them by the early 1980s, and he acquired a large number of loans from bilateral and multilateral donors. But by the time Nimeiri was ousted by a popular uprising sparked by a severe International Monetary Fund austerity program, Sudan was crippled by a \$9 billion debt.

However, the most significant development in the Sudan came in 1983 when Nimeiri abrogated the north-south Addis Ababa Peace Agreement and instituted Islamic law. These measures triggered an armed rebellion in the south that quickly led to the resumption of the civil war. It

also sparked another round of interventions by Arab states and Ethiopia. Libya's Qaddafi – angered over Nimeiri's refusal to break with Egypt after Camp David – and Soviet-backed Ethiopia immediately supported the southern insurgents of the South SPLM, drawing the concern of the United States. This left the United States in a contradictory position with respect to its stated principles versus its strategic interests in the Horn. Although the United States criticised the Khartoum regime for its policy vis-à-vis the south on humanitarian grounds, it increased assistance to Nimeiri out of fear that his overthrow would lead to a government hostile to the US and Egyptian interests. This policy was integral to the United States 'encirclement' strategy towards Soviet client Ethiopia.

As internal divisions between north and south Sudan became sharply polarised, both sides sought outside support in a race to acquire military advantage. For the Sudanese Liberation Army (SPLA), the military wing of the SPLM, Ethiopia was by far the most critical ally. Convinced that Nimeiri was supporting Eritrean secessionists and the anti-regime forces of the Tigray and Oromo peoples, Mengistu allowed the SPLA to use his country as its main political and military base and as a sanctuary for hundreds of southern Sudanese refugees. In addition to providing direct military and logistical support, Mengistu facilitated SPLA contacts with Libya, Cuba, and later Israel.

Ethiopia's hosting of SPLA bases and direct military support to the rebel forces helped the SPLA win unprecedented success in the battlefield and forced Khartoum to the negotiating table. Ethiopia, and to a lesser extent Egypt, facilitated meetings between the SPLM and northern politicians, most notably the Koka Dam Conference in March 1986 and the DUP-SPLM talks in November 1988 held in Addis Ababa. The latter conference appeared especially promising in that it called for, for the first time, the freezing of Islamic (Shari'a) law and an immediate cease-fire. But by this time the Islamists in Sudan had gained considerable political prominence, particularly in the armed forces, and it helped instigate the coup d'état of 30 June 1989. Once again, Sudan's domestic political dynamics were to alter its relations with the outside world, this time reflected by an increasingly divisive and conservative Islamist ideology supported by Saudi Arabia.

Indeed, by the mid-1970s Saudi Arabia began to play an increasingly important role in the Horn. In particular, the security situation in the Red Sea region was particularly threatening to Riyadh. It found itself encircled by radical elements in the Horn that included a Marxist regime in Ethiopia, a 'Scientific Socialist' state in Somalia headed by Siad Barre, and the radical leftist regime in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. As a consequence, Riyadh began to take an active role in the Horn and, motivated by the threat of Arab radicalism and Soviet influence, pursued 'petro-dollar' diplomacy to undercut the more radical elements in the region. Using its vast oil wealth, Saudi Arabia began to finance Sudanese and Somali arms purchases and it increased its support for the ELF fighting against Marxist Ethiopia.

For their part, the radical Arab regimes sought to counter Saudi influence in the region. Libya and South Yemen, in particular, turned against Siad Barre in Somalia, and formed a tactical alliance with Ethiopia's radical government (Lefebvre 1992). This had a great influence in the regional politics of the Horn. Utilising Saudi and Libyan/Yemeni support respectively, Somalia and Ethiopia engaged in a destructive proxy-war in which they supported each other's insurgents. Ethiopia supported the anti-Barre forces of the Somali National Movement while Somalia aided the EPLF throughout the decade of the 1980s (Compagnon 1990).

The end of the Cold War witnessed the end of the conflicts waged by Arab proxies in the Horn. The end of the ideological rivalries between the superpowers and the Arab states facilitated a rapprochement between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Libya and Ethiopia, and a cessation of

hostilities between Somalia and Ethiopia. But as the rivalry between pro-western and pro-soviet camps came to an end, a fissure of another sort took place between Islamist and non-Islamist regimes in which the Horn, and particular Sudan, came to play a central role.

### ***The Middle East and the Horn in the post-cold war era: Sudan and the rise of Islamist politics***

Following the end of the Cold War, the debate over the Middle East and the Horn has been whether or not the 'Red threat' has been replaced by a 'Green threat'. To be sure new divisions have emerged between Islamist and secularist-oriented regimes but here too domestic politics has underpinned Middle East strategic policy towards the Horn countries. In recent decades, the Sudan has figured prominently in these developments, particularly following the assumption of power of the Sudanese Islamist regime in 1989. In the 1990s regional opponents of Iran made the charge that Sudan was acting as the springboard for Iran to extend its influence into North and sub-Saharan Africa (Sidahmed 1993). As a result, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and even Israel have backed Eritrea in its regional dispute with Sudan as a way to counter Iran.

Khartoum's radical Islamist regime and its fateful decision to support Saddam Hussein during the 1991 Gulf War cemented its region and international isolation. In the early 1990s, this pushed the regime even more dramatically towards the Islamic Republic of Iran for political, economic and military salvation. The alliance between Iran and Sudan, closely nurtured in the period following former president Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani's visit to Khartoum in December 1992, sent shudders throughout the Arab world and beyond and it sparked concern that Iran might attempt to use Sudan as a springboard to promote political Islam in Egypt and the Horn of Africa.

In reality, the Khartoum-Tehran venture was induced more by pragmatism than by ideological or religious affinity. Denied financial assistance from their older benefactors in the Gulf and repeatedly spurned by the IMF on requests for fresh loans, Sudanese Islamists hoped to consolidate their rule and further their agenda by acquiring commercial and military support from Iran. Iran, however, wanted to use Sudan not so much to encourage Islamic governments in the Horn but to pursue its well-known regional ambitions and politically outmanoeuvre its key adversaries in the region, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the fact that Rafsanjani's visit to Sudan was preceded by a major conference in October 1991 in which the participants agreed to promote the Islamic revolution and to undermine the US sponsored Middle East Peace indicated that, far from sharing a natural religious affinity with Sudan, Iran has been concerned primarily with its search for greater influence in the Middle East. Here, interest played a far greater role than Islamist ideology.

Egypt, the most influential of Sudan's neighbours, became increasingly alarmed by the Islamist regime's alliance with Iran and charged Khartoum with supplying arms to and training Islamic militants within its borders; Algeria and Tunisia made similar charges. Egypt's deteriorating relations with Sudan, compounded by its internal concerns over Islamic militants, rekindled a dispute over Halaib, a remote triangular area bordering the Red Sea, which was last contested in 1958. A series of talks to resolve the dispute held in 1993 failed to resolve the conflict. In fact, tensions between the two neighbours continued to mount. In early 1994, Sudan took over a joint Egyptian-Sudanese university in Khartoum and a few months later occupied some 30 houses belonging to members of an Egyptian irrigation project, reportedly in retaliation for Egypt's alleged media campaign against Sudan and its 'lack of seriousness' about settling bilateral disputes (Mideast Mirror 1994).

Sudan's relations with its financial benefactors in the Gulf (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait) also cooled considerably following Sudan's support of Saddam Hussein and radical Islamist groups, and although Sudan, out of economic desperation, sought to improve relations, its efforts met with no response. In fact, not only did Saudi Arabia cut off official assistance to Khartoum following the latter's demonstrated antipathy towards the royal family during the Persian Gulf crisis, it also began a campaign to persuade wealthy Saudis who gave millions of dollars to Islamic causes and numerous Islamic financial institutions throughout the 1980s not to fund Sudanese Islamists (Ibrahim 1992). As a consequence, in the 1990s, Sudan turned once again to the more radical Arab/Muslim camp for support, as it did 30 years before. Khartoum drew closer to Iran, Iraq, Libya and eventually Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda to the alarm of Cairo and Washington.

Furthermore, Sudan's image on the international scene worsened gravely. While Sudanese Islamists effectively admitted they need Western capital and investment to develop, led by Washington Western countries responded by passing a slew of condemning resolutions against the regime including economic sanctions. No longer concerned with cold war politics as such, the United States (previously Sudan's biggest donor) retained its interest in the strategic value of the Middle East and the problem of international terrorism particularly following the bombing of the American Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in the mid-1990s. Even prior to the events of 9/11, the United States expressed grave concern that Sudan might emerge as a new Lebanon from which militant groups can launch terrorist operations. As early as 1993, it went a step further by adding Sudan to its list of states that sponsor terrorism and played an influential role in prodding the IMF to consider suspending Sudan's membership in its programs.

The Islamists behind the regime of Omer Beshir in Khartoum, pledged to 'spread the Islamic revival throughout the Arab and African worlds', but this movement is no more than a reflection of the extremist policies implemented internally; the disastrous effects of these policies on the peace, unity and stability of the country far outweigh any regional or international threat. In recent years, Khartoum's domestic policies have exacerbated sharp cleavages and have led to the worsening of the humanitarian crisis. In recent years, Chinese oil interests in Sudan have translated into military assistance that the Beshir regime has used with devastating impact against the insurgents in the western province of Darfur.

Although regional factors have played an important role in Khartoum's military campaigns over the past two decades, internal dynamics have been more consequential. In the 1990s, the SPLA's loss of its strategic bases in Ethiopia following Mengistu's ouster and the split within the SPLA ranks enabled Khartoum to impose punishing blows on the southern population in 1992 and 1994 and a self-proclaimed holy war (Jihad) against the south. The SPLA did manage to gain access to Kenya and Uganda in its effort to establish reliable conduits for military supplies; however, internal divisions precluded it from attaining a modicum of the military power it enjoyed in the late 1980s. As a consequence, both Khartoum and the SPLM were essentially compelled to eventually sign a peace agreement in 2005 under the auspices of the international community and their neighbours.

Nevertheless, increasing internal opposition to the regime has caused it to veer ever more sharply in the Islamist direction. This has raised the alarm of its Horn neighbours and the conservative Arab states as well as Israel. President Assayas Afwerki of Eritrea harshly criticised the Islamist-backed regime for attempting to use Eritrean refugees in Sudan to promote its agenda of Islamic fundamentalism in Eritrea. Ethiopia followed suit, charging Khartoum with backing extremist groups to undermine the regime in Addis Ababa. The rise of Islamist ideology in the post-cold war period continues to influence the strategic and ideological realignments

between the Horn and the Middle Eastern states. In this respect, while it is correct to highlight the importance of geo-strategic calculations underpinning inter-regional relations, in recent years the role of ideology and the dynamics of domestic politics have been of equal importance in the Middle East's policy towards the Horn. There is little question that regional power rivalries have been crucial among the states of the Middle East, but it is no less true that the role of domestic politics has determined the character and evolution of those linkages.

### *Islamist politics and the emergence of two Sudans*

By the late 1980s another new pattern of Islamist politics emerged in Sudan that sharpened the cultural and religious conflict between the northern and southern regions in ways that eventually led to the emergence of two new states. Historically, in Sudan Islam was promoted by Sufi orders reflecting a more tolerant and accommodating version of the religion distinguished by the extent to which it incorporated pre-Islamic rituals and traditional African religious beliefs with Muslim rituals. In contrast, the rise of Islamist fundamentalism (i.e. Islamism) sharpened conflicting identities in the country and set the stage for a stronger call for self-determination and secession on the part of southern Sudanese. Political Islam emerged as a strong force in Sudanese civil society as early as the 1970s, but in recent decades its chief legacy in terms of Sudan's civil conflict has been in obstructing the forces of democracy in ways that have undermined national unity. This is clearly evidenced if one examines the origins of the Islamist-backed military coup of 1989 that overturned Sudan's last democratic experiment. Indeed, contrary to recent scholarship arguing that democracy does not promote internal peace because electoral competition in poor countries are rarely able to produce accountable and legitimate government, the short-lived experience of democratisation in Sudan points to its 'peace-promoting' possibilities (Collier 2010, p. 19).

To be sure, the record of democratic consolidation has a poor record in Sudan. No multi-party election has produced an enduring democratic transition and elected governments in Sudan have been overthrown three times by military coups. As in many Africa countries successive multi-party elections in Sudan have faced the shortcomings of leadership, a divisive legacy of colonial rule, and the ethnic, sectarian and regional politics. Moreover, a range of corrupt practices ranging from ballot stuffing, intimidation, and the use of government resources and state-controlled media has long characterised Sudan's three failed experiments in parliamentary democracy (1956–58, 1964–69, and 1985–89) (Willis *et al.* 2009). What is noteworthy, however, is that in terms of resolving the north-south conflict, democratic contestation has had the potential of brokering peace within a national unity framework. That is, forging peace with unity rather than peace with cessation. When Nimeiri was overthrown by a popular uprising in 1985 ushering in another round of multi-party elections a year later, the major political parties which included the more traditional Umma and Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) along with the Islamist National Islamic Front (NIF),<sup>6</sup> were forced to move towards brokering a permanent peace with the southern SPLM forces. This was a consequence of increasing pressure from Sudanese civil society.

While Sudan's third, and last, multi-party period (1985–89) did not represent the wide spectrum of Sudanese (the southern parties, for example, boycotted the elections due the war in the south), multi-party competition opened avenues for a resurgent civil society that placed pressure on the civilian government to resolve the civil war. In December 1988, widespread strikes and demonstrations erupted in Khartoum, led by a newly revitalised coalition of workers, farmers, professional syndicates, civil servants, and artisans (Ibrahim 1990). These were the same civil

society groups which in the 1950s and the 1960s were largely responsible for the downfall of the military regimes of Ibrahim 'Abboud (1958–64) and Ja'far Nimeiri (1969–85) (Niblock 1987, p. 226). Once again these social groups took to the streets, calling themselves the 'Modern Forces' (*al-quwat al-haditha*) in contrast to the traditional sectarian parties (i.e. the Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party), which have dominated Sudanese civilian politics since independence.

Their actions stemmed from the frustration caused by the squabbling among the traditional Umma and Democratic Unionist parties, and the alliance of the Islamist NIF with the Umma Party to form a majority in parliament (Bechtold 1990). The declining legitimacy of the parliamentary regime, increasing criticism of corruption on the part of elected state officials, and the lack of accountability to the electorate placed pressure on the democratic regime to meet the demands of Sudanese civil society, foremost of which was the call for peace. Indeed, the primary demands of civil society were a peaceful solution to the civil war between the government and the southern rebel movement, the SPLA, and the repeal of the *Shari'a*-based laws of September 1983 (Ibrahim 1990). Two months later, in February 1989, a group of high-ranking military officers joined the Modern Forces' cause. They submitted a memorandum to the civilian government demanding that it seek an immediate solution to the war and stating their own refusal to pursue a military solution.

These events culminated in a *National Memorandum for Peace*, subsequently signed by all major parties except the Islamist NIF, which opted to leave the government and form an opposition front. This compelled the prime minister and Umma Party leader, Sadiq al-Mahdi, to form a new coalition incorporating members of the professional, trade, and workers' unions into the government. This coalition recommended peace talks be based on an agreement signed in Addis Ababa in November 1988 by SPLA leader John Garang and Mohammed Osman Mirghani, head of the DUP and spiritual leader of the Khatmiyya Sufi order (*tariqa*). The agreement called for repeal of the 1983 September Laws and the repeal of *Shari'a* law which was the primary demand of southerners until a truly representative constitutional conference (*mu'tamar dusturi*) could be convened following a cease fire (Ibrahim 1990).

The possibility of democracy resulting in a peace dividend in Sudan seemed likely. In mid-June 1989, Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi's government announced that a cabinet meeting on July 1 would formally repeal the September Laws, contingent upon the review of a legal committee comprising representatives from all political parties. On July 4, a government delegation and the SPLA were to meet to propose a permanent resolution to the civil war (Ibrahim 1990). Twenty-four hours before the July 1 meeting, a group of mid-ranking officers took over the Republican Palace, the parliament, and the national broadcasting station, rounded up top party and civil society leaders throughout the north and announced the Revolutionary Command Council under the leadership of Lt. General 'Omer Hassan Beshir. It quickly became evident that the Islamists had mounted the June 30 coup.<sup>7</sup>

The Islamists, led by Omar Beshir, had been marginalised by widespread popular support for a swift resolution to the country's economic problems by way of ending the civil. Their twofold aim was to pre-empt any peace agreement that would repeal the imposition of Islamic law, and to reverse the influence of pro-democracy forces many of which were incorporated into the government following growing protests. Beshir and the leaders of the NIF immediately cancelled the north-south ceasefire, imposed a stricter 'Islamic' legal system and outlawed all political parties and other 'non-religious institutions'.<sup>8</sup> As a consequence, the war in the south took an abrupt turn for the worse. The national Army bombed camps of southern war refugees and paramilitary militia expelled southerners from displaced camps around the capital. In the mid-1990s the

Beshir regime called for Jihad and armed proxy militias in the Nuba Mountains and southern Kordofan to execute scorched earth tactics which included attacking refugee camps near as far afield as the Sudanese-Ugandan border.

By the time of the cease-fire brokered in 2003 upwards of 2 million southerners, most of them civilians had been killed. The sheer magnitude of human suffering led to stronger calls for self-determination in the South and increasing support for an orderly 'separation' of the two regions by the international community – two factors that have historically determined whether secessionist attempts fail or succeed (Islam 1985). It was as a result of the war and instability in the south, that Chevron and later the Canadian Talisman sold their interests in the oilfields to Khartoum (Idahosa 2002). However, while by the late 1990s Canada and the United States barred their oil companies from doing business with Khartoum due to the Islamist-baked regime's war against southern rebels, this left the door open for China, Malaysia and India to expand their oil operations in the country. They now dominate the oil sector in Sudan with the Sudan government owning only 5% of the oil consortium, the Greater Nile Petroleum Company.<sup>9</sup> Beijing presently derives 5% of its oil from Sudan and Chinese officials have countered accusations that their policies towards Sudan have undermined security and fuelled civil conflict in Darfur by arguing that they those are concerns internal to Sudanese affairs and Beijing is 'not in a position to impose upon them'.<sup>10</sup>

### *The role of external actors in negotiating Sudan's partition*

By the late 1990s, the two warring sides were at a military stalemate, both believing victory was at hand and neither willing to concede the other's demands. Talks led by the East African initiative the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development achieved agreements in principle that collapses as the prospect of implementation loomed. The Beshir regime, by this point, had divested itself from the National Islamic Front's radical ideologues as a result of increasing in-fighting between Islamist leader Hassan Turabi and the more politically pragmatic-minded Beshir. At this juncture external actors played an important role in brokering the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Bush Administration's Sudan envoy, former Senator John Danforth, in particular played a key role. One of the reasons for the initial success of the peace talks is that the United States did not insist that hostilities cease before mediating talks between the two combatants. Danforth, for instance, brokered a key confidence-building step by brokering an agreement on the protection of civilians that did not explicitly require Khartoum to cease its military campaign in the south. But the key US contribution to the negotiations, which the SPLM leader, John Garang, eventually accepted was that the self-determination, would be limited to the south and would not extend to other marginalised regions including Darfur. In so doing, Khartoum was able to block any moves towards genuine democratisation by Sudanese civil society while simultaneously pursue a separate 'peace' with the south. After the extended stalemate, external actors composed of the United States, Britain, and Norway stepped in to broker a peace agreement focused on resolving the issues of the separation of state and religion and self-determination for the South. The door was now open for the signing of the CPA.

As with post-conflict peace accords in Africa, the Sudanese CPA represents what Donald Rothchild has termed a 'minimalist route to implementation' between two formerly warring parties neither of whom has been able to achieve a military victory against its rival (Rothchild 1999, p. 328). It is, in other words, a negotiated agreement among ethnic and military elites, brokered by external parties, who accept a minimal form of elite participation designed to achieve political stability while avoiding opposition from other forces in society. While these elite-power

sharing systems are not as participatory as democratic regimes of the type addressed in the contributions to this volume, they do share a resemblance to democracies in that they are characterised by an ongoing process of bargaining among elites with the objective of achieving a transition to stable social relations (Rothchild 1999, p. 328). In Sudan, this is what the CPA was designed to accomplish. It consists of a series of protocols on power sharing, wealth sharing, border territories, the status of Khartoum, self-determination, state and religion, and security arrangements.<sup>11</sup> Notably, in addition to recreating an autonomous region of South Sudan, the CPA brought southerners into the central government in coalition with the Beshir regime. John Garang was made president of South Sudan and first vice president of Sudan and, perhaps more importantly, oil revenues were to be divided evenly between the central and southern governments. There was among many Sudanese an atmosphere of hope that the CPA could usher in a new era for a united Sudan, whose political factions would no longer exploit ethnic and religious differences in accordance with zero-sum games power calculations. This optimism, however, was dependent on two aspirations that have not been realised. The first was that the CPA would eventually extend to incorporate the legitimate grievances of other outlying regions, including Darfur and the East, and that the international community would implement one of the CPA's most important stipulations, the convening of free and fair elections prior to the holding of the referendum.

The first harbinger of Sudanese pessimism with regard to the unity option was, of course, the Darfur conflict that erupted in 2003. The conflict itself was sparked by the ongoing peace talks between the north and south. When forces of Darfur's Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) took up arms against Khartoum it was in the hope of acquiring similar concessions along the lines of the resource and power-sharing formula granted to the South. Instead, Khartoum ordered the brutal bombing of Darfur and utilised the now notorious paramilitary forces of the janjaweed, against the rebels. Five years later, the International Criminal Court in The Hague indicted Beshir for 'crimes against humanity and war crimes' in Darfur, the first time in history that a sitting president has been so charged.

The conflict in Darfur has highlighted the deep-seated structural, flaws of the CPA in a number of respects. First, it signalled the problem associated with viewing the crisis in Sudan as one between the north and south irrespective of the fact that long-term peace in the country requires a more comprehensive solution that tackles the problem of an authoritarian regime at the centre and disaffected populations in other outlying regions beyond the south. Second, by assuming that a north-south peace is the primary component to resolve the civil conflict, the CPA discounts the fact that neither northern nor southern Sudan is homogenous in population. There are millions of African southerners residing in the north and scores of Arabs in the southern regions. This was made apparent by the riots that broke out in the Sudanese capital and in the southern capital of Juba in 2005, when Garang was killed in a helicopter crash. Millions of southerners were angered by the state's 'lack of respect' accorded to their leader. The ensuing riots took on an ethnic dimension, as the shops of Arabs were attacked while those of 'Africans' were spared. In Juba, more than 250 Arab-owned businesses were torched. Rioters from the Khartoum's internally displaced camps directed their rage against police stations, government offices and other symbols of the state. The displaced camps around Khartoum are inhabited by millions of internally displaced people from the Nuba Mountains, Darfur, as well as the south, and the discontent there is rooted in the state's failure to integrate the displaced into the local economy as well as the state's counter-insurgency campaigns against their ethnic kin in other parts of the country. On 10 October 2010, less than three months prior to the scheduled referendum vote of 9 January 2011, supporters of the two sides clashed violently in the



capital of Khartoum. Several thousand demonstrating in favour of unity turned on around 40 southern Sudanese who arrived at the rally calling for southern secession. The state police then joined in, beating southerners who fled the scene (BBC News 2010).<sup>12</sup>

In an alarming statement, in September 2010, Beshir's Minister of Information, Kamal Obeid, announced that southern Sudanese would not be granted rights of citizenship in the north 'if they vote to secede'. Moreover, he threatened to expel southern residents stating that they will not enjoy the right to employment or treated in hospitals in the north. On 3 October 2010, Presidential advisor Mustafa Osman Ismail went further calling on the country's youth and students to prepare for war to defend the country against the challenges it would face in the event of south Sudan's secession (Sudan Tribune 4 October 2010). While Beshir later criticised these statements claiming that they did not reflect official government policy, it is clear that influential members of the NCP support the expulsion of southerners in the north and even war if southern vote to for an independent country (Sudan Tribune 3 October 2010). The fact that there is no indication that southern secession will produce two ethnically homogenous states of the type that would engender a sustainable peace following the referendum suggests the possibility of ethnic conflict in both the south and the north is likely. The southerners settled in the north are estimated to be more than 1.5 million and it is unclear whether they will be afforded the right to work, reside and move freely between the two countries after separation.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, while the SPLA currently holds the greatest political influence in the south, the organisation continues to be dominated by the Dinka tribe. Less known is the fact that the Equatorial ethnic groups of the far south have long experienced economic and political oppression and land dispossession at the hands of the SPLA.<sup>14</sup>

The fact that Sudan's last experiment with electoral democracy (1986–89) placed pressure on the country's political parties to bridge the divide between the north and south within the framework of unity placed the hopes of many supporters of a united Sudan on the CPA's stipulation that elections be held by prior to southern plebiscite for independence in early 2011. However, the combined effects of international pressure over Darfur, the indictment of Beshir by the ICC for 'war crimes', and increasing domestic unrest not only in Darfur but also in the Eastern provinces along the borders with Eritrea, convinced many previously hopeful Sudanese supporting unity that the vision of a pluralistic new Sudan was a chimera (Young 2006).

Ultimately, however, the lack of credibility associated with the elections of April 20 undermined any hopes of a peaceful, democratic transition that would not only usher in the possibility of greater political participation in the north, but also help to make, in the words of the CPA, 'unity more attractive' to southern Sudanese prior to the plebiscite for self-determination. The ruling NCP's manipulation of the elections and vote rigging were clear from the start. In 2008, the SPLM leadership rejected the census figures reported by the central government, which was to determine the number of eligible registered voters in the run-up to the elections of April 2010. The Beshir regime announced that their figures showed that there are 8.26 million people in the southern provinces, or 22% of the total population. SPLM leaders claim that the south has a third of Sudan's population, and they viewed the census figures as an attempt to backtrack on the 50-50-oil revenue sharing agreement brokered by the CPA. Ultimately, the NCP and SPLM forged a strategic alliance to ensure that both parties remained in power, albeit for different objectives. The NCP wanted to ensure that the status quo in the north remains and that other political parties remain excluded from decision-making at the centre. For its part the SPLM's primary objective, especially following the death of the pro-unity visionary John Garang, is to preside over a successful referendum that culminated in independence for the south. As a consequence, the elections of April 2010 were not only

unrepresentative of Sudanese society, their ultimate purpose was to pave the way for the referendum the following year. This is not to say that dissent from the regime does not remain endemic. This was clearly in evidence in the 2010 April elections, when all the major opposition parties (including SPLM candidates running in the north) boycotted the national elections, amidst widespread allegations of fraud. Nevertheless, both parties achieved their primary political objectives: the SPLM one re-election to office in the autonomous south with 93% of the vote, while the NCP running in a largely uncontested field in northern Sudan held on to power by 'winning' 68% of the vote. The results were not unremarkable given the fact that the main opposition parties boycotted the elections. Far more significant, however, was the fact that the SPLM northern candidate, Yasser Arman, who withdrew his candidacy just prior to the vote generated 22% of the vote. This signalled a 'protest' vote on the part of many in Sudanese civil society. Specifically, the fact that Yasser Arman, an influential northerner who serves as the Deputy Secretary of the SPLM in the north, received such a large margin of votes reflected the deep-seated desire for democratic reform and unity between the north and south among a large segment of Sudanese civil society.<sup>15</sup>

In retrospect the flaws associated with the US-led compromise agreement between essentially two elite factions in northern and southern Sudan played an important role in preventing the reorganisation of a unified Sudanese state. These flaws also set the stage for the current obstacles towards a peaceful secessionist process. Indeed, it is a historical irony that the negotiated settlement of the CPA was essentially the brainchild of an internally negotiated framework agreed upon by the full range of Sudanese democratic forces and civil society in 1995 under the umbrella of the National Democratic Alliance. The 'brittleness' of the elite pact that was created with the help of external actors (i.e. the United States, Britain, and Norway) is thus primarily a result of the motivation on the part of two non-representative factions who benefited from the promotion of a minimal form of elite participation.

The record of peace agreements in Africa has shown that externally induced pacts have proven far less durable and effective in forging sustainable peace than those that have been internally negotiated power-sharing agreements. In this regard, it is hardly surprising that the CPA has suffered from three important weaknesses: the reluctance of the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A to incorporate new political parties and regional opposition movements into negotiations, the concentration of power in the hands of two belligerents to the exclusion of the political aspirations and human rights concerns of other groups, and the prioritisation of narrowly defined security concerns rather than a commitment to national reconciliation and democratic transformation in Sudan. Taken together these flaws, associated with the nature and implementation of the CPA, have not only not alleviated the dilemma of ethnic security in the disputed north-south border regions, they have also stood in the way of resolving the biggest threat to peace and stability in Sudan: the conflict in Darfur. Indeed, it is now widely acknowledged that the SLA, which initiated the insurgency in Darfur, timed its insurrection in response to their exclusion from the power and sharing agreements brokered at the Naivasha peace talks. In other words, the potential for resolution to the conflict in Darfur, as well as other marginalised regions in the east and far north, continues to be dependent on their inclusion in the peace process. The continued absence of wider participation of other forces in negotiations on power and wealth sharing in particular has undermined democratisation and the resolution of the Darfur conflict. Doubtless, it will also prove to be the biggest challenge to a sustained peace between Khartoum and the South over an extended period of time following the southern vote for self-determination and the secession of the South.

As Francis Deng has noted, Sudan is a microcosm of the people of Africa and a bridge between the Arab world and sub-Saharan African (Deng 1995). As a consequence, stability of North and South Sudan has important consequences for both regions. The spill over effect of renewed large-scale conflict would threaten peace and security for the rest of the Horn of Africa, Kenya, Uganda and the Eastern DRC. These neighbouring countries risk being affected by forced migration, displacement and humanitarian crises, and cross-border armed groups and militias.<sup>16</sup> In addition, a recurrence of conflict in Sudan would undermine international agreements on the use of the Nile waters (two-thirds of which are within Sudan's borders) and, in so doing, embroil Egypt and Ethiopia into protracted involvement in any potential conflict between Khartoum and the newly independent South Sudan. Moreover, the failure to resolve the conflict in Darfur peacefully would continue to impact the domestic stability of Chad and the Central African Republic.

In this regard, the emergence of 'two Sudans' in what was Africa's largest country raises new challenges for the continent and the wider global community of states. As part of the Middle East, Sudan's future is a matter of concern for Arab states and emerging regional powers such as India and China that have invested substantially in the country's oil sector. Moreover, connections of the Beshir regime with global Islamist movements also make the country an important player for the United States and global powers. After four decades of civil war in Sudan, the probability of southern secession is now highly likely. What remains to be examined, and what is of important significance worldwide, is how post-secession arrangements will be managed with the help of external actors outside to Horn to promote stability rather than exacerbate north and south Sudan's multiple conflicts which have resulted in the death and displacement of millions. Peaceful agreements lead to peaceful secessions. In the aftermath of Sudan's partition, this will depend on how deals are negotiated on wealth transfers (oil revenues, debts, Nile Water management), and on power and sovereignty transfers (citizenship, border security, and more inclusive and transparent Southern governing institutions). The international and regional implications of South Sudan's secession, therefore, is of paramount significance for both the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and the international community.

## **Conclusion**

In this article I have attempted to explain how the Horn of Africa's location and its internal configuration have determined its relations and strategic alignments with both the Middle East and the superpowers during and after the Cold War and the ways in which this led to the emergence of two Sudans. Specifically, I have argued that this has been influenced by regional as well as domestic-level politics in the greater Horn. As many analysts have noted, Middle Eastern states have allied themselves with local actors in the Horn out of pragmatic considerations and in order to balance internal and external threats throughout the cold war era. However, ideological rivalries and changes in the domestic politics within the states of the Horn have also played an important role in the changing dynamics and nature of alliance formation between the Middle East and the Horn and this has led to the eventual partition of the nation of Sudan.

Sudan, and more generally the Horn of Africa's, geographic location will continue to determine its relationship with the Middle East. It is unlikely that the security and strategic interests of the Western and Arab states with respect to the region will change dramatically in the coming decade. However, it is worth noting that this is not necessarily the case in the African sphere. What is certain is that the mood of the times has changed in the context of the role of African states in the Horn. Although most African leaders continue to cling to the general

principle of territorial sanctity and disavow insurgent movements on the continent, intervention is no longer a dirty word in Africa. In contrast to the League of Arab States, the African Union now acknowledges the principle of intervention in the context of extreme forms of human rights violations by member states. The recent African Union intervention in the Darfur conflict is the first example of this new orientation. For their part, Arab states continue to stringently oppose any form of intervention by external actors and most have opposed Sudan's partition. That is, while in the post-cold war era, African states have veered towards supporting the doctrine of the 'responsibility to protect', for much of the Middle East region the idea of territorial integrity remains sacrosanct. For the Horn countries, which have experienced the longest running civil conflicts in all of Africa and the Middle East, this is a significant and potentially consequential policy divide. While it is certain that security considerations will continue to determine Middle East-Horn of Africa relations, in the post-cold war era there is now an opportunity for analysis that takes seriously interventions and alliances motivated by humanitarian rather than purely strategic concerns wherein the idea of partition may become an increasingly important and new option with respect to the objective of resolving African civil wars.

## Notes

1. The 'Horn of Africa' refers to a political rather than a purely geographic entity. It is usually thought to consist of Ethiopia (Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, and Sudan).
2. In 1962 General Ibrahim Abboud adopted the Foreign Missionaries Act, which restricted the operation of Christian churches and missionary schools. In 1964 he expelled them entirely.
3. By the early 1970s Ethiopia became of less strategic value to the United States. This was because the United States decided to construct a major new base on the Indian Ocean island of Deigo Garcia, 1000 miles south of India. Consequently, the Kagnew Base's importance was reduced and US interest in Ethiopia did not revive until 1977 following the consolidation of the Marxist regime in Addis Ababa under Mengistu Haile Mariam.
4. By the early 1980s, the Eritrean insurgency was dominated by the Christian and more radical Eritrean People's Liberation Front, which had split from the Eritrean Liberation Front in 1970. As a consequence, both Saudi Arabia and Egypt curtailed their support for the Eritreans.
5. By 1985 the United States was supporting Sudan with \$250 million and \$40 million in economic and military aid, respectively.
6. Following the 1986 elections the Umma Party won the majority of seats at 100 with 1,531,216 of the vote and the Democratic Unionist Party came in second at 63 seats with 1,166,434 of the votes. Most notable, however, was the success of the Islamist party, the National Islamic Front. The Islamists enjoyed the greatest electoral success at the time winning 28 seats by garnering 733,034 of the votes thus ensuring their role as the most important political 'spoiler' in any parliamentary coalition (Willis *et al.* 2009, p. 27).
7. When interviewed in November 1989 in Khartoum, Sudan, President Omar Beshir insisted to me that he considered his assumption to power a revolution (*thawra*) and not a coup (*inqilab*).
8. Personal interview with former Sudanese Minister of the Interior, Mubarak al-Faddl, 2–3 September, Khartoum, 2008.
9. Out of 15 oil companies in Sudan, the three largest ones are the China National Petroleum Cooperation, Petronas of Malaysia and India's ONGC Videsh. Together they own 95% of the Greater Nile Petroleum Company (which accounts for 88% of the total oil production in the country), the remaining 5% being owned by the Sudapet, the Sudanese national oil company (Helly 2009, p. 44).
10. In 2004, China's Deputy Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong explained China's Sudan policy succinctly when he said: 'Business is business. We try to separate politics from business' (Zweg and Jianha 2005).
11. The power-sharing arrangements give the South a large measure of autonomy, with its own legislative and judicial branches, while also participating on 'equitable' bases in the Government of National Unity, with the President of the South holding the office of First Vice President of the Republic. Wealth-sharing arrangements give the North 50% of revenues from oil produced in the South and 50% of national non-oil revenues generated in the South as well as revenue from taxation collected by the Government of the South Sudan. The Comprehensive

- Peace Agreement (CPA) also makes special arrangements for the Nuba Mountains, Southern Blue Nile, and Abyei, with the latter afforded the right to vote to join either the North or the South following the 2011 referendum on self-determination. Security arrangements give the South the right to keep its own army (SPLA) along side the Sudan Armed Forces, and provides for Joint Integrated Units that would make up a nucleus for the future national army, should the South for unity.
12. Following the clashes between pro-unity northerners and pro-secession southern Sudanese in Khartoum, President Omar Beshir stated that failure to resolve disputes involving water, debt, wealth-sharing, citizenship and the north-south border before the plebiscite, scheduled for January 9, could trigger a 'much more serious' conflict than the 21-year civil war that ended in 2005 (Voice of America 2010).
  13. According to the CPA, southerners born after independence (1956) can vote only in the referendum, but those born before have the right to register and vote in the south.
  14. There is little indication that the non-Dinka and non-Nilotic tribes of equatorial southern Sudan will be integrated into the political and economic system monopolised by the SPLA following secession. The SPLA has driven thousands of Equatorians from their homes and has generally refused to return their property to them (Branch and Mampilly 2004). See also, (Leonardi 2007).
  15. Yasser Arman's withdrawal from the elections is the primary reason that other opposition parties, most notably the Umma Party headed by Sadiq al-Mahdi, boycotted the elections. The reason for Arman's withdrawal is by now well known. It resulted from the fact that polls were showing him potentially garnering enough votes to force run-off elections against Beshir. In response, the National Congress Party applied pressure on the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) to withdraw Arman's candidacy under the threat of delaying the referendum. Personal Interview with SPLM Deputy Secretary for the North, Yasser Arman, Khartoum, Sudan, July 2010.
  16. For an analysis of the cross-border arms flows in Sudan and potential regional conflicts, see Lewis 2009.

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