



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* by Douglas H. Johnson

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There are at least three serious problems with his approach to the four cases. In each case, Crawford dwells on the ideas and actions of the decision-makers involved, be they Prince Gorchakov, Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, or Mohammed Ayub Khan. Yet his argument is based on the assumption that individuals have no impact on the outcomes of crises, which are predetermined by the configuration of the international system. If the availability of “alignment options” was all that mattered, why should we care about what Bismarck thought in October 1876 or what the Turkish foreign minister told the American ambassador in February 1963? A second, related problem is the failure to acknowledge the connections between foreign and domestic policy. Crawford pays only lip service to this idea, even where domestic concerns were of central importance to the actions of all of the players, as in the July crisis. Oddly, he notes this weakness in his discussion of the United States, but not in his other case studies. Finally, his attempt to identify the single determinant of the success or failure of pivotal deterrence suggests a simplistic “if only” approach to the past, assuming that if only one or two things had been different, then major catastrophes—such as the outbreak of the First World War—would have been averted. In adopting this approach, Crawford implicitly dismisses the deep roots and tectonic forces, both domestic and international, that produced these catastrophes.

Crawford’s final chapter is an attempt to show the relevance of his theory of pivotal deterrence to contemporary American foreign policy. His chief example is tension over the Taiwan Strait, undoubtedly an important case, but where is the discussion of Korea or, more importantly, terrorism? In a book that makes the case for the contemporary relevance of deterrence theory, these are serious omissions. Crawford deserves credit for his thorough research and discussion of each case, but his tendentious approach and simplistic conclusions ultimately prove unsatisfying.

M. D. J. Morgan/Yale University

THE ROOT CAUSES OF SUDAN'S CIVIL WARS

Douglas H. Johnson

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003. xx, 234pp, US\$54.95 cloth (ISBN 0-253-34213-9), US\$24.95 paper (ISBN 0-253-21584-6)

Anyone familiar with Douglas Johnson’s earlier work will not be surprised

by the insightfulness of this remarkably concise yet comprehensive volume. An extended and updated version of a report circulated among relief personnel engaged in Sudan in the early 1990s, this book provides the reader with a historical analysis of Sudan's civil war or, as Johnson rightly points out, Sudan's civil wars.

As a historian Johnson, not surprisingly, traces the roots of Sudan's civil wars to the patterns of governance established before the end of the 19th century. What had emerged by then was an exploitative relationship between those who controlled the state (largely Muslims and Arabs) and consequently possessed a monopoly over access to economic activities, and those on the periphery, whose land and resources were pillaged and who were essentially treated as slaves. This divide was further strengthened during the colonial period by uneven levels of investment in the economy, infrastructure, and social services of the northern and southern parts of the country. And so when Britain granted independence to Sudan in 1956, the northern elite, which formed the basis of the nationalist movement, had failed to define a broadly based national identity, while the southerners were ill-prepared to defend their own interests.

Johnson goes on to describe the events leading up to the first civil war, including the rejection of the idea of federalism by the new government and the northern parties, the military government's policy of Arabization and Islamization in the south, and the active repression of educated southern Sudanese. He then sketches the broad outlines of the Addis Ababa agreement of 1972 and the forces that eventually led to its demise eleven years later. Johnson is quick to point out to those who might turn to this agreement and its provision for regional autonomy as a solution to the present conflict that its collapse was due not simply to a failure in implementation but to what was essentially a flawed agreement: many important underlying issues were left unresolved.

The main focus of the book is, however, on the second civil war and the various attempts to reach a solution. In his search for the root causes of Sudan's civil wars, Johnson emphasizes that no single factor can explain the deep divide that separates the main regions of Sudan, nor the level of the violence that pits one part of Sudanese society against another. One factor that played a small part in the first civil war but which has come to dominate the second is economics. Seen as an effort to control exploitable resources, the war has become more violent, civilians have been targeted as potential assets to accumulate, slavery has re-emerged, and fighting has

been extended into the north, particularly in those regions along the margins of the north-south fault line. It is in these so-called "disputed areas" of the Nuba Mountains, Abyei, the southern Blue Nile, the eastern Sudan, and Darfur that some of the most violent fighting has taken place. These local civil wars, each with its own set of internal grievances and tensions, have been exacerbated by the intervention of external interests from the north, and they in turn have intensified the fighting of the larger "north-south" war.

This interlocking of regional wars with the main north-south war has complicated the peace process. As Johnson points out, there are many more combatants now than there were in the first civil war and even in 1983 and their immediate objectives are often quite different. Given the complexity of Sudan's civil wars, it is not surprising that at least until now, all attempts to reach a permanent solution have failed. Under enormous pressure from the United States and the European Union the two main protagonists, the government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement, are now being pushed to reach an agreement and to bring their war to an end. In a rush to attain a quick settlement, however, there is a real danger that the outcome will ignore or pass over some of the fundamental causes of the wars and a risk that the resulting peace will only be a temporary one. Those who are engaged in the present peace negotiations would be well advised to read this important work.

To this excellent volume the author has added an excellent bibliographical essay, which demonstrates clearly that "Sudan is no less divided in its historiography than in its politics."

Robert O. Matthews/Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto

VLADIMIR PUTIN AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Looking East, Looking West?

J. L. Black

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004. xiv, 368pp, US\$85.00 cloth (ISBN 0-7425-2965-7), US\$36.95 paper (ISBN 0-7425-2966-5)

The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, leaving the Russian Federation to establish for itself an international role as the remnant of the former superpower. The temptation has been to regard the new state as an irrelevant player on the international field, an economic basket case incapable