

O'Ballance, Edgar. *Sudan, Civil War and Terrorism, 1956-1999*. London: Macmillan and New York: St. Martin's, 2000.

This is the author's second book about Sudan. The first, *The Secret War in the Sudan: 1955-1972* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), not only provided a useful narrative account about the first Sudanese war but also about the events that led to the Addis Ababa Accords (1972) which led to an 11 year hiatus in the fighting. This volume, which is now out of print, is a useful companion to O'Ballance's *Sudan, Civil War and Terrorism, 1956-1999* which covers both Sudanese civil wars (1956-72 and 1983-present).

Unlike its predecessor, *Sudan, Civil War and Terrorism, 1956-1999* is more akin to a one volume chronological encyclopedia of the significant events of this 43-year period. By my count, the book contains 237 entries that cover an array of diverse subjects, including attempted coups, the Jonglei Canal Project, the Haliab Triangle and the Koka Dam Declarations. In most cases, the author provides a thorough narrative discussion of the subject which is frequently complimented by useful names, dates and statistics.

As is typical of books of this nature, O'Ballance inevitably neglected to include entries on important subjects, such as Sudan's growing oil industry, the Libyan-Egyptian Peace Initiative, human rights violations committed by the government, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and other rebel groups and militias. Other significant topics, like Operation Lifeline Sudan, the Nairobi-based organization that orchestrates humanitarian relief activities in southern Sudan, receive only scant mention. On the whole, however, the author has provided the reader with a good representation of the issues and problems facing Sudan.

The author concludes *Sudan, Civil War and Terrorism, 1956-1999* with an examination of Sudan's future prospects. In his view, the country has three options; namely unity, southern autonomy or southern independence. Perhaps, but given Sudan's troubled post-independence history, a more likely scenario is a continuation of the war in southern Sudan.

Several factors make this grim option a likelihood. Neither the government's Sudanese People's Armed Forces (SPAF) nor the SPLA, or any other rebel group for that matter, have the capabilities to score a decisive military victory. Moreover, none of the combatants are willing to make the compromises necessary to secure a peace agreement. Efforts by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Libyan-Egyptian Peace Initiative to start a realistic peace process have been a dismal failure.

*Sudan, Civil War and Terrorism, 1956-1999* has three major failings. The chronology is erratic and incomplete. For example, the author lists the 1929 Nile Waters Agreement but fails to acknowledge the Nile Waters Agreement (8 November 1959). Both are significant milestones in the modern history of the Nile River. Each entry in the chronology contains the month and year but the chronology would have been more valuable had it listed the precise date of each event. The skimpy 13-item bibliography is

the author's most egregious oversight, especially in view of the proliferation of books, scholarly articles and reports about Sudan and its many problems. At the very least, the reader could have been referred to the excellent annual Africa bibliography published by Edinburgh University Press. The absence of footnotes also significantly reduces the book's value to scholars, researchers and generalists, many of whom undoubtedly would have liked to consult at least some of the sources used by the author.

Despite these shortcomings, *Sudan, Civil War and Terrorism, 1956-1999* should be on the bookshelf of anyone who follows the sad events in this ill-fated country.

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