**Ethiopian Support to South Sudan from 1962 to 1983:**

**Local, Regional and Global Connections**

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**Abstract** *The Ethiopian support to the Southern Sudanese insurgents from the 1960s has been explained as a revenge of the Sudanese aid to the Eritrean rebels against the Ethiopian regime. This is an important aspect of the Ethiopian rationale, but does give the full picture of why Ethiopia supplied the southern Sudanese guerrillas with arms, training and political support throughout the Sudanese civil wars. This article, based on primary documents from the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence, provides an original analysis of how the Ethiopian policy towards South Sudan during the first Sudanese civil war also was strongly influenced by the local concern for state control in Ethiopia’s Western region of Gambella, by the regional interests of Middle Eastern powers in the Horn and by the global context of Cold War, reflecting a network of multilevel proxy wars.*

**Keywords:** Proxy war; Cold War; Horn of Africa; Ethiopia; Sudan; South Sudan

In the beginning of the 1950s, the Ethiopian and Sudanese states shared many of the same challenges of territorial control and state building.[[2]](#endnote-1) Both had large ethnically and religiously diverse populations. The elites at the centre tried by means of assimilation or suppression to incorporate the peripheries, but failed to control the fragile border areas. In order to improve control and prevent neighbouring states from disrupting their territories, the regimes struggled for regional hegemony in the Horn, by the help of alliances with external powers in the Middle East and globally. The Ethiopian Imperial regime of Haile Selassie (1931-1974) pursued an active policy towards neighbouring states all over the Horn. Sudan, together with Somalia, was seen as particularly challenging and troublesome neighbours, Somalia being described by Belete in this volume. While Haile Selassie early on felt threatened by Somalia’s irredentist agenda of mobilising a Greater Somalia state, he initially considered Ethiopia and Sudan as allies, sharing ‘both in principle and in fact’, opposition to ‘any kind of fragmentation of a national territory on the basis of religion or tribalism.’[[3]](#endnote-2) The Emperor was determined to cooperate with the Sudanese to contain rebel activities in their common border areas. But this gradually changed when it became apparent that Khartoum provided support to the Eritrean Liberation Front in Ethiopia’s northern periphery. Proxy warfare ensued where both countries supported a succession of rebels.

Ethiopian support to the predecessors of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in the 1960s and 70s was part of a wider web of interests, including local, regional and global power struggles. This article explores the Ethiopian support to the Southern Sudanese insurgents from the 1960s to early the 1980s through the perspective of a multilevel proxy model, including three levels of conflicts: *locally*, from tension arising from Ethiopia’s aspirations to penetrate and build the state in its Western peripheral areas bordering Sudan, *regionally*, resulting from the competition to control the larger Horn of Africa region by the surrounding Middle Eastern powers, and *globally*, stemming from the United States and the Soviet Union’s attempt to dominate the strategically important Horn. Critical to all the three levels of conflicts is the logic of proxy war: due to the high cost of direct confrontation between enemies, the actors at each level seek to give indirect support to intermediaries. This particular multilevel proxy model, which has been paid little attention to in the general proxy war literature, gives on the one hand special opportunities for the proxies, as it enables them to manoeuvre and pursue their own agenda. On the other hand, the contradictory interests of the patrons make it more difficult with direct negotiations to solve the conflicts, as the patrons’ interventions are incoherent and the alliances with the proxies shifting. This makes conflict patterns more complex and is ultimately likely to prolong and intensify wars.

The article is based on analyses of documents from the archive at the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence, Ethiopian government owned newspapers, documents from the British National Archive in London and secondary literature. The analysis covers the period from 1962 to 1983, from the first South Sudanese insurgency and the first Sudanese civil war and the start of the Sudanese support to Eritrea, until the SPLM/A was established. Compared to the second civil war (1983-2005), this period is less covered by academic studies.[[4]](#endnote-3) One reason for this gap in the literature is that the assistance to the Southern Sudanese insurgents was erratic and subtle, largely hidden by the suppliers, and the insurgents did not manage to organise into a powerful organisation. The Ethiopian support nevertheless provided essential aid to a guerrilla force in Southern Sudan, prolonging the North-South Sudanese civil wars, and ultimately contributing to the creation of an independent South Sudan. A better understanding of the rationale, scope and nature of this support deserves therefore more attention.

President Nimeri ascension to power in Sudan in May 1969 became a turning point in Sudan-Ethiopia relations. With a more offensive foreign policy than his predecessors, the relationship between Nimeri and the Ethiopian Emperor soured.[[5]](#endnote-4) A document from the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence from 1969, addressing the deteriorating relations between Ethiopia and Sudan, demonstrates that the Ethiopian regime had a rather sophisticated and complex reasoning behind the problems with Sudan. It went beyond the Eritrean issue and reflected various levels of conflict and roles of proxies in the Horn.[[6]](#endnote-5) The document mentions, among others, the policy pursued by the Sudan vis-à-vis Ethiopia; Ethiopia’s geographical position as a Christian state in a predominantly Muslim area; and ‘the Sudanese propaganda of Ethiopia as a proxy of Israel and the US.’ The document then outlines a list of counter strategies: to improve the relationship to Saudi Arabia (which was considered as a conservative state like Ethiopia) in order to convince Yemen, Egypt, Kuwait and Algeria to stop aiding the Eritreans, to strengthen its relationship to the US, and finally, to start systematic support of the Southern Sudanese insurgents. These strategies should be coupled with a PR strategy of strongly expressing its commitment to international norms of sovereignty and territorial integrity and to respond to the allegation of supporting the Southern Sudanese by maintaining that ‘Ethiopia had no interest in interfering in the internal affairs of other states.’[[7]](#endnote-6) This strategy paralleled the Ethiopian policy towards Somalia, which from Siad Barre’s coup in 1969 also included active support to dissident groups coupled with diplomatic push for the principle of non-intervention and respect for colonial boundaries (see Belete in this volume). An important difference between the Somali and Sudanese policy towards Ethiopia was however that Somalia, unlike Sudan, provided very limited support to the Ethiopian insurgents (i.e. the Eritrean secessionists).

The Ethiopian Ministry of Defence document from 1969 is a time witness of the complex web of interests in the Horn at the end of the 1960s, expressing local, regional and global competition for domination in a strategically important region. The document also expresses the benefits of proxy wars at the time: Ethiopia could, by supporting the Southern Sudanese covertly, add pressure on Sudan but still maintain a high commitment to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, thereby justifying its criticism of the Sudanese support to the Eritreans. As an extension of the power struggles in the Middle East, Israel saw Ethiopia as a natural ally, while Arab countries saw Sudan, as a fellow Muslim country, as a friend. So Israel supported Ethiopia and the Southern Sudanese insurgents, while Arab states supported Sudan and Eritrean insurgents. On top of that came the Cold War dynamics, where the two super powers US and USSR had strong strategic interests in securing access to the Red Sea and controlling important allies of the Middle East powers in the Horn. During Haile Selassie and the first years of Nimeri, the US was an important ally of both Israel and Ethiopia, while the USSR supported Nimeri. After the Communist coup attempt against Nimeri in 1971, however, the Sudanese president unofficially turned to the US for help. Meanwhile, American support to Ethiopia continued until the Ethiopian revolutionary coup in 1974. A few years after the coup, the USSR officially switched side to support Ethiopia instead of Sudan. In this web of interests, constituting a multilevel proxy war, Southern insurgents were beneficiaries of aid not only from the Ethiopian government, but from Israel (both directly and indirectly through Uganda and Ethiopia), and from USSR (indirectly through Ethiopia after 1974). This facilitated an upscale of the war in the south and the maintenance of the conflict. South Sudan was thus in the middle of a conglomerate of interests and strategies, where they managed to gain from the situation to promote their own cause.

**The logic of proxy wars**

Mumford defined proxy war as ‘indirect engagement in a conflict by third parties wishing to influence its strategic outcome’, while E. Schmidt described it simply as a conflict ‘where internal actors were supported by external powers.’[[8]](#endnote-7) Thus Ethiopian involvement in Southern Sudan, as well as the Sudanese involvement in Eritrea, was proxy warfare. Neither Ethiopia nor Sudan had any initial interest in supporting secessionism in neighbouring countries. By contrast, both states struggled with keeping their countries together, and were thus promoting an official policy of national and territorial unity and integration instead of division. But the support to the secessionists was a means to destabilise the enemy in the competition for regional hegemony. An indirect confrontation had the distinct benefits over direct war by having lower risks - no combat deaths, thus reduced political backlash, and ‘plausible deniability’ - no direct intervention ensured no plain strategic defeat if the war was lost, but continued influence and enhanced interest if the war was won.[[9]](#endnote-8)

This logic was also apparent among the regional and global players in the conflicts on the Horn in this period. Proxy war, as ‘warfare on the cheap’, became particularly prevalent after 1945 when nuclear proliferation made it risky to engage in direct warfare, and states wanted to find alternative outlets for their strategic ambitions.[[10]](#endnote-9) Israel had experienced the high costs of direct confrontation with Arab neighbours during the reprisal operations in the 1950s and 60s, and developed a broader strategic plan of proxy war to support non-Arab states in the peripheries of the Middle East, ‘the peripheral doctrine’, as a counteroffensive to the Pan-Arab and Pan-Islamic expansion.[[11]](#endnote-10) Aid to Ethiopia was a part of this doctrine, and by 1966, the military presence of Israel in Ethiopia was the largest in size except for the American.[[12]](#endnote-11) As an extension of this, Israel developed a particular attentiveness to the events of Southern Sudan and started supporting the rebels there. As explained by Poggo, their intention was to maintain ‘a state of affairs serious enough to draw substantial part of Sudan’s army to the civil war in the South.’[[13]](#endnote-12)

Both superpowers in the Cold War had a strong interest in the Horn of Africa due to its access to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, its proximity to the oil resources in the Middle East, and with the Nile flowing through the region. After 1945, the US was convinced that the best bulwark against communism was the regional stability under Haile Selassie, and became thus Ethiopia’s main outside backer. After the Ethiopian Socialist revolution in 1974, however, Soviet support gradually replaced the American aid, and by 1979 Ethiopia became the largest beneficiary of Soviet foreign assistance since Moscow’s aid to China in the 1950s. In this way, the Soviet Union could ‘project its military power in a direct rivalry with the United States thousands of miles from its own shores’.[[14]](#endnote-13) Sudan became an important American client from 1976 until the end of the Cold War, and was during the Carter years the largest receiver of US aid in sub-Saharan Africa.[[15]](#endnote-14) Both superpowers also used surrogates to act towards the proxies in the Horn – the Soviet Union made use of Cuba and Eastern Bloc countries to train the Ethiopian army, while the US, at least indirectly by being the main provider of arms to Israel, enabled Israel to assist Ethiopia and Southern Sudan before 1974.

These indirect confrontations in the Horn also followed the ordinary recipe for how proxy wars are fought – through both material and political support.[[16]](#endnote-15) Benefactors conducted warfare through the provision of military and non-military aid to the proxies. A critical part of the military aid included military advisors giving technical assistance, intelligence material, operational planning, and organisation of troop transportation, and the supply of arms, ammunition and other military technology. The Soviet Union was a major provider of such aid to Ethiopia after 1974, while Ethiopia and Israel gave similar support to the Southern Sudanese rebels from 1969. If money is sent to a conflict area not for humanitarian or development reasons, but for broader strategic reasons of furthering a war aim, they should be seen as a form of proxy intervention.[[17]](#endnote-16) In the Horn, financial assistance was used for the purposes of allowing allies to train security forces that could then be utilised as proxies by the benefactor. Financial aid provided by both superpowers to their allies in the Horn could therefore be seen as a part of the proxy warfare. Of great importance was also the provision of non-military political assistance: the spreading of propaganda in the national and international media and the support for the causes of the African liberation groups in the Organisation for African Unity and the United Nations.

The complex web of proxy wars in the Horn illustrates well the advantages of proxy warfare. Indirect warfare is chosen because direct intervention is either unjustifiable, too costly, (politically, financially or materially), illegitimate or unfeasible. Given the possibility of denying intervention, there is an opportunity to mask the scope of involvement and avoid potential recrimination.[[18]](#endnote-17) The Organisation of African Unity (OAU)’s principle of respect for the territorial integrity of its member states made it difficult for Sudan and Ethiopia to give overt support to each other’s secessionists. This, together with the high costs of open war, made direct confrontation less of an option.

As pointed out by Mumford, the conduct of proxy war is an ‘inescapable acknowledgement of self-interest’, where the players seek minimal input and maximal gain. This points at an apparent challenge of proxy warfare. Although proxies depend on their benefactor, they are inherently ungovernable and unpredictable. Proxy leaders’ agendas may even oppose the strategic interests of the benefactor. This is clearly seen in the Ethiopian support to the Southern Sudanese insurgents. While the emergent liberation groups fought for an independent South Sudan, Ethiopia was determined to maintain and support the unity of Sudan. Due to the tit-for tat- pattern of conflict in the Horn, the benefactor may also be concerned with the danger of fragmentation of own national territory. The Ethiopian authorities were, for example, concerned by disturbances created by Southern Sudanese rebels in Gambella region bordering Sudan.

A factor which the general proxy war literature has paid less attention to is how the particular multilevel nature of proxy conflicts creates additional challenges and opportunities for the actors involved. By involving local, regional and global interests in the Horn, the tension was not only between the proxy and the benefactor, but also between the different sponsors at the various levels. The same sponsor had even contradictory interests at the same levels, as seen in Ethiopia’s conflicting concerns locally and regionally. On the one hand, this created a larger space of action for the proxy, as it could manoeuvre between the contradictory interests, while at the same time unpredictability, as the alliances and sympathies from the benefactor were shifting, all according to the diverse interests at all the three levels included. This comes in addition to the general problem for proxies in such warfare; how armed support from the benefactor breeds external dependence and provides little incentive for establishing a strong local organisation to rely on for support and resources. When external support ends, the proxy may suffer as a consequence of a weak domestic constituency and no local base. The flow of resources from outside is also likely to prolong and intensify violence because a weak warring faction is boosted to the point of creating stalemate. The external dependence of the Southern Sudanese rebels seem to have created exactly these outcomes: the support from Ethiopia and Israel and others enabled a weak and fragmented organisation to gradually monopolise opposition to Khartoum, but made a strong local civilian organisation abundant. When the Ethiopian support to SPLM/A ended in 1991, influenced by changes at the global level by the fall of the USSR, this caused a serious blow to the movement, contributing to the split in the organisation, which still has detrimental consequences for the possibilities of creating a viable independent Southern Sudanese state today.

**Local tension in the Ethiopian borderlands of Gambella**

Ethiopia and Southern Sudan border each other in the regions of Gambella on the Ethiopian side and Upper Nile/Jonglei and Equatoria on the Sudanese side. Throughout the history Ethiopian and Sudanese state building, the two state authorities have had a weak presence on each side of the border, and cross-border flows of people and goods have been linked to a complex set of conflicts in both countries. As pointed out by many observers, the porosity of the Gambella frontier has been of key importance to the North-South civil war in Sudan, as it provided training grounds and base areas for the Southern rebels both during the first and the second civil war and was a key area for refugees running away from the wars, leading to tension and conflict between refugees and local inhabitants.[[19]](#endnote-18) Located in the periphery of the Imperial state, Haile Selassie’s government had an ambivalent relationship to the region. The Emperor wanted to incorporate the territory safely under Imperial control for taxing and strategic purposes, but saw the ‘primitive’ people of Gambella as second class citizens and had initially little interest in including the inhabitants into the wider Ethiopian nation. As Dereje Feyissa explains, the leaders of the two largest ethnic groups, the Nuer and Anuak, were also hostile to any government in the area. They worked closely with the Southern Sudanese rebels, the Anya-Nya, from early days, because they saw their fight against both the Sudanese and Ethiopian governments as a struggle of the ‘black’ against the ‘red’ - the ‘black’ being the local Nilotic population on each side of the border, and the ‘red’ the government and their representatives from the north of Sudan and the highlands of Ethiopia, respectively. Dereje refers to the plan for the creation of a new state - ‘Jenubi’- that would include all black people of Sudan and Ethiopia against the ‘red’ Sudanese Muslims and Ethiopian Christians.[[20]](#endnote-19) This perception of ‘us against the governments’ on both sides of the border was fed by the fact that during the 1950s, the two governments actually cooperated in the containment of the Anya-Nya – by controlling the border and preventing the insurgents from settling and operating from Ethiopian territory.[[21]](#endnote-20) According to Belete’s analysis of documents from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ethiopia did even allow Sudanese government troops to penetrate Ethiopian territory in search of rebels and provided an aircraft to transport troops to the south.[[22]](#endnote-21) These documents show that the Ethiopian authorities saw the Anya-Nya activities as a security threat in its border areas, describing them as *shifta* and as a part of the first wave of opposition against the Imperial rule (together with the rebellions in Eritrea, the Ogaden, Bale and Tigray).

The Ethiopian state had thus two different roles to fill in Gambella region. Firstly, it was going establish an efficient state administration and control the population. Secondly, it had to deal with its powerful neighbour in the west, Sudan, through the frontier traversing the region. In a situation of animosity and peace between the two neighbours, anti-Sudan rebel activities were undesirable. In a situation of hostility between the neighbours, by contrast, the rebels were important allies and constituted a strategic military asset. But in the relationship with the rebels, the government would still have to consider of the need for state building and control. This implied a paradox: rebellion, independent of target, was in itself a contradiction to control and stability. This paradox appears to be one of the fundamental challenges for the Ethiopian regimes in Gambella region from the 1960s onwards. This is seen in the numerous memorandums and agreements made with the Sudanese government in 1965, 1971, 1973, 1977 and 1982,[[23]](#endnote-22) where the two regimes agreed to contain rebel activities and stabilise Gambella. Ironically, these deals were all signed in a period where the Ethiopians actually aided the rebels themselves.

The concern for containing the Anya-Nya became a second priority when the Ethiopians were aware of Sudanese support to the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) from its establishment in 1961.[[24]](#endnote-23) A year after the Sudan African Closed District National Union, later SANU, was established in Dar es Salaam in 1962, the organisation gained unofficial support from a number of neighbouring countries, including Congo, Uganda and Ethiopia.[[25]](#endnote-24) An Ethiopian plan from 1963 considered for the first time the option of using South Sudan as a proxy to pressure the Sudanese regime not to support the Eritrean insurgents.[[26]](#endnote-25) In this period, the rhetoric and handling of the issue of refugees became an important tool in the diplomatic war between the Sudanese and the Ethiopians. Initially, the Ethiopian regime had rejected help from UNHCR in 1963 with respect to Southern Sudanese refugees in Gambella – in order to avoid meddling with the internal problems of Sudan. This changed in 1964, when the Imperial regime refused to extradite Southern Sudanese refugees to Sudan. A year later, it categorically denied that there were Southern Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia and denied accordingly to deport any back to Sudan.[[27]](#endnote-26) After the Sudanese 1969 coup, when the Sudan and Nimeri was pronounced as the major enemy of Ethiopia, the Ethiopians opened up for the establishment of a UN camp in Gambella and a provisional secretariat for South Sudan refugees.

The Nimeri coup also marked a shift in the Ethiopian approach to the Anya-Nya, from erratic and unsystematic to a comprehensive and organised support. A document from the Ministry of Defence outlines plans including a wide range of proxy war methods, comprising both material and political support.[[28]](#endnote-27) The material support included money for purchasing equipment, vehicles and food, and allowing purchase and transfer of weapons through Ethiopian territories. The plan called for allocation of rear bases for Anya-Nya fighters and for the Imperial Embassy in Nairobi to approach Southern political leaders living in Congo, Uganda, and Kenya such as Steven Law, David Goak, Philip Pedak and Jermiah Reth and others. The embassy was to give them financial and moral support. The plan also included systematically registration of Sudanese refugees settled in Gambella for the purpose of obtaining assistance from international agencies. The political aid involved ‘giving publicity to the Southern Sudan cause in Ethiopia’, but also building closer ties with regimes hostile to the Sudanese regime. Chad and Uganda are mentioned, as ‘we have common problem against Sudan’ and ‘together with Chad we can fuel the problem in Sudan’, and ‘we should strengthen our ties with Uganda’ since ‘the latter is sympathetic to the Southern [Sudanese] cause.’

The document also emphasises the need to strengthen and build up the Ethiopian state in the Gambella, underlining the challenge of combining state building with support to rebels in this periphery. This contradiction was to be overcome by stationing more troops across the western frontiers and constructing roads to transport troops and equipment. The document illustrates a change in the approach to the Gambella people, from indifference to an active policy of assimilation and incorporation, a reflection not only of the specific needs in Gambella region, but also of new national ‘modernisation’ policies to engage more actively with the people in the peripheries.[[29]](#endnote-28) To this effect educated officials should be appointed in provinces across the frontier and the Ethiopian Orthodox church and other Christian churches were to be engaged in preaching and educating people and socially developing areas in the periphery.

Several Ministry of Defence documents from the early 1970s emphasise the need for keeping aid to the Anya-Nya covert and avoid a direct confrontation with the Sudanese regime. The normative influence and limitations imposed by the OAU Charter is reflected in official statements where both the Sudanese and Ethiopian leaders called for restraint and for respecting the countries’ territorial integrity. This approach reached its peak in 1972, when Haile Selassie negotiated the Addis Ababa Agreement between the Sudanese government and the Anya-Nya. In the negotiations for the agreement, a united Sudan was the one precondition, and an independent South Sudan was never discussed as an option. [[30]](#endnote-29) The Addis Ababa Agreement led to a repatriation of Sudanese refugees from Gambella and the handover of schools and community development centres run by UNHCR to Ethiopian authorities.[[31]](#endnote-30)

After the coup in Ethiopia in 1974, the Sudanese were at loss as to where real power resided within the new regime.[[32]](#endnote-31) In conversation October 30, 1974 with a representative of the British Embassy in Khartoum, Sudanese Minister of Culture and Information, El Hag Musa speculated about the possibility of Mengistu being of South Sudanese origin: ‘It was widely rumoured that his mother was a Southern Sudanese Nilotic. He was not therefore a “pukka” Ethiopian and this might diminish his chances of emerging or remaining at the head of affairs.’ While this speculation is clearly based on incorrect information on Mengistu’s origin, Khartoum’s linkage between the new Ethiopian leader and South Sudan is an indication of a strong concern within the Sudanese regime of the consequences of the Ethiopian change of power and the impact on Ethiopian - South Sudanese relations.[[33]](#endnote-32) The coup opened nevertheless new avenues for Sudanese proxy warfare in Ethiopia, because of the emergence of new anti-Derg fronts. From 1975, Sudan supported the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), a Tigrayan based movement led by the feudal leader Ras Mengesha Seyum[[34]](#endnote-33) and was instrumental in establishing a local Anuak based political organisation in 1976, the Gambella Liberation Front (GLF).[[35]](#endnote-34) During 1975/6, several documents in the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence talks about the damaging activities of the Southern Sudanese refugees in Gambella, and Sudanese army killing Ethiopians in the border areas. This is followed by official statements from the Ethiopian government directed towards the Eritrean case, stating that ’The Sudanese government should deny residence to Ethiopians who were masquerading under the label of refugees but were in fact abusing the generous hospitality accorded them by the Sudan to engage in subversive activities against Ethiopia’[[36]](#endnote-35)

The Derg started to politically organise Sudanese refugees in Addis Ababa from February 1975,[[37]](#endnote-36) dubbed as project 07 by the Ministry of Defence. The support continued in the same fashion as under Haile Selassie - covertly, while they were officially raising the flag of non-intervention. Mengistu, when addressing the nation, argued that Ethiopia ‘neither desires to transgress on the interests and rights of its neighbours nor allow an iota of its own to be violated.’[[38]](#endnote-37) One change from the Haile Selassie regime was however apparent: the emergence of an official rhetoric in support of the Southern Sudanese insurgency. In the government owned newspaper Ethiopian Herald, several op-ed’s were criticising the outcome of the Addis Ababa-agreement and labelled the current Southern leaders as ‘political prostitutes’, ‘CIA agents’ and ‘Quislings’,[[39]](#endnote-38) bringing out clear threats against the Sudanese regime: ‘Nimeri’s open support for secessionist elements in Eritrea is a suicidal mission that will soon backfire and knock at his own door in the not-too-distant future. At that time he will only have [sic] to blame himself.’[[40]](#endnote-39) Even after a series of OAU initiated negotiations in the period from 1977 to 1979, held in Freetown and Dar Es Salaam, Mengistu was indirectly threatening Sudan with reference to the situation in the south.[[41]](#endnote-40)

The Derg, like the Imperial government, was nevertheless obliged to take care of its state building functions in Gambella region, and to prevent the rebels from disrupting the Ethiopian administration of the area. The Ethiopian and Sudanese governments met in Khartoum in 1980 in a Joint Ministerial Consultative Meeting and agreed that officials on each side of the border (Gambella and Kassala furher north in Sudan) should meet to combat illegal activities along the common border and to re-establish the Sudanese consulate in Gambella. The year after, they set up a joint technical committee to look at the re-demarcation of the borders.[[42]](#endnote-41) In June 1982, a joint Sudanese-Ethiopian expert committee recommended that Ethiopia and Sudan should ‘agree to particularly close down all facilities used by the secessionists and dissidents or destabilising elements operating against either state’ and ‘expel all groups or individuals who in any way work to the detriment of other neighbouring country.’[[43]](#endnote-42) The Ethiopian government was however hesitating to act, arguing to the Sudanese that that the Ethiopian topography was not suitable for rebel control: ‘It is not like your country. It is rugged area and dense.’[[44]](#endnote-43) In this way, the Derg was giving itself an excuse for the double dealing it was conducting - that of asking the Sudanese to restraint itself in Eritrea while actively supporting the South Sudanese rebels with bases in Gambella.

The Derg’s support to the Southern Sudanese rebels reached a new phase in 1983, when the Ethiopian regime chose to support the creation of the SPLA. In 1984, the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs did for the first time officially acknowledge the right of the southern insurgents, but with its own twist – stressing that the movement worked for the unity of Sudan, and not for an independent South Sudan like the first Anya-Nya fighters had done: ‘what is happening in South Sudan at present is a movement for peace, equality, justice and progress and not to secede the south from the Sudan.’[[45]](#endnote-44) This reflected the Derg’s desire to create a movement in its own image, a Socialist organisation working for national unity. In this way, the Ethiopian regime would be in a better position to make sure that its proxy would act in its interests. It was thus anticipated that the SPLA would be what the Anya-Nya had not been – a responsible and reliable surrogate aiding the dual role of the Ethiopian government in Gambella – taking care of both local stability and containment of the neighbouring regime’ offences at the frontier. Whether they succeeded in this is however an issue of its own, beyond the scope of this article.

**Middle East rivalries in the Horn and its effect on Ethiopian-Sudanese relations**

Both Ethiopia and the South Sudanese insurgents can be described as proxies in Israel’s attempt to contain Arab influence in the Horn of Africa. Israeli interests in Africa were concentrated in the East, and in the Horn of Africa in particular, due to the proximity to the Red Sea. Fearful that an independent Eritrean state may undermine Israel’s interests, the Israeli began to assist Ethiopia militarily in the war against Eritrean secessionists by training Ethiopian military in Israel, establishing communication networks in Eritrea for the Ethiopian troops, and building two Israeli naval bases in the Red Sea. By 1966, the military presence of Israel in Ethiopia was surpassed only by the American. Israel’s alliance with Ethiopia was strengthened by a historical relationship to the Ethiopian Emperor, and the fact that both were non-Muslim states enclosed by Muslim neighbours.[[46]](#endnote-45) In South Sudan, however, the Israeli showed no interest in the Southern Sudanese cause’s “moral or ideological grounds,” but supported the Anya-Nya simply to establish a second front against the Sudanese Arabs. As explained by Poggo, the Israeli support might allow the southerners to tie down a sizeable number of Sudanese troops and to “neutralize effectively the possibility of Sudanese military involvement in the Middle East Zone”. Based on documents from the National Archives of the UK, Rolandsen describes how the British Foreign Office and the US Embassy and the Sudanese government suspected Israeli support already from 1963.[[47]](#endnote-46) Poggo describes how SANU leaders made contact with Israeli embassies in Kinshasa, Kampala and Nairobi in 1967, negotiating military and financial assistance. One of the leaders, Joseph Lagu, was flown into Israel in late 1969 where he received intensive military training. He organised for Israeli arms to be dropped by plane, flying in over Ethiopian territory. Haile Selassie allowed the Israelis to establish a training depot in Ethiopia, where Lagu sent South Sudanese fighters to be trained as officers. Israeli experts also operated into Southern Sudan, being sent from the Kampala embassy for five to six weeks at the time. But from 1969, when Nimeri came to power, Obote had less goodwill for the Israeli operations from Uganda. In 1972, Amin fell out with the Israelis, and they were expelled from Uganda. This has a dramatic impact on the Anya-Nya, and made the Ethiopian base even more important than before. South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia continued to be sent to Israel for special military training – and were then sent back to the camps in Gambella and deployed to South Sudan from there. [[48]](#endnote-47)

From its establishment in 1945, Israel aimed to become one of the new non-aligned states, independent of the two superpowers in the Cold War. Due to its policy towards the Palestine, it was however excluded from the First All Afro-Asian conference in Bandung in 1956. It then started courting African leaders before independence, quickly recognising new states after decolonisation. This was followed by the initiation of aid programmes and technical assistance and training in the new states. In the 1960s, Israel had cooperation agreements with twenty two African states.[[49]](#endnote-48) Military assistance was an important part of this, either through direct military training of African personnel in the army, air force and navy, or the establishment of paramilitary and youth organisations after Israeli models. The rationale was that if Israel did not provide such assistance, its Arab enemies would, particularly Egypt. Training of influential African leaders in Israel was therefore seen as an important way of securing Israeli geo-strategic interests in Africa.[[50]](#endnote-49) In this manner, Israel operated with a number of proxies in Africa, all serving the purpose of acting as bulwarks against Muslim and Arab influence. Ethiopia, and by extension, the Southern Sudanese insurgents, became the most important of these.

But Ethiopia was not a completely reliable and obedient proxy for Israel. The Ethiopian Empire had its own strategic interests, which were not always in line with the Israeli. Imperial Ethiopia was for instance nurturing its relationship with Saudi Arabia, a fellow conservative and pro-Western state who shared the fear of Egypt in the larger Horn and the Middle East, simultaneously with receiving aid from the Saudi enemy, Israel. The Imperial regime wanted therefore to hide the fact that it received aid from Israel, and chose not to open an Ethiopian embassy in Jerusalem.[[51]](#endnote-50) After 1967, however, the Saudi exerted influence on Ethiopia to get rid of the alliance with Israel. Ethiopian Ministry of Defence documents from 1969 identify Ethiopian cooperation with Israel as one of the reasons for the deteriorating relations between Ethiopia and Sudan and the wider Arab world, and plan to respond to the criticism of being a proxy of Israel by pointing out that Ethiopia was ‘a sovereign country’. Still, Ethiopia continued to recognise the importance of Israeli support by stating that ‘we should exploit the willingness and opportunity of Israel’s interests to support us.’[[52]](#endnote-51)

The Yom Kippur war in 1973 (between Israel and Egypt/Syria) led to a crack in the relationships between Israel and many African states. The 1973 OAU Head of Mission in Europe made a statement ‘expressing concern at the role played by Israel in assisting secessionist movements in Africa’ and Ethiopia was put under heavy pressure to renounce its relationship with Israel.[[53]](#endnote-52) There was an understanding that if Ethiopia did that, Arab states would halt support to the ELF. So the Imperial regime finally gave in and broke officially with Israel in November 1973. Still, Ethiopia was interested in maintaining military cooperation with Israel, due to the challenge in Eritrea. The Derg, although officially hostile to Israel, turned to Israel again for help in 1975. The Israeli provided the Derg with training of a 400 men strong elite unit, which later became Mengistu’s special guard, and the 5th division fighting in Eritrea, and provided pilots to help airlift supplies to Ethiopian forces in Eritrea.[[54]](#endnote-53)

The Israeli support to Ethiopia ended in 1978, when the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs officially admitted that aid to Ethiopia was given, something which embarrassed and infuriated the USSR-allied Derg. All Israeli advisors were told to leave in short time.[[55]](#endnote-54) This also made an abrupt end to the Israeli support to the Anya-Nya 2 in Southern Sudan.

In the diplomatic war between Ethiopia and Sudan during the 1970s, the alliances between Sudan and the Arab world and Ethiopia and Israel, respectively, was actively used to undermine the credibility of the enemy. In the process leading up to a joint communique between Ethiopia and Sudan in 1971, the Sudan ‘urged the Ethiopian to align themselves less obviously with the Israelis’ while ‘the Ethiopians for their part complained that the Sudanese were too closely involved with extremist Arab elements (presumably Libya and Syria).’[[56]](#endnote-55) Official Derg statements attacked the military, political and economic alliance between Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Sudan ‘to counter the revolutionary class struggles in Ethiopia and South Yemen.’[[57]](#endnote-56) It accused Sudan, together with Arab friends of airlifting arms and mercenaries to secessionist movements and counter-revolutionaries operating against the territorial integrity of Socialist Ethiopia, motivated by the political objectives of ‘pan-Arabism’ and ‘making the Red Sea an ‘Arab lake.’[[58]](#endnote-57) In 1979, a year after the Ethiopians had ended its alliance with Israel, Mengistu was personally blaming Nimeri, who was at that point chairman of OAU, of summoning and invoking ‘the unholy alliance of the Arab League against Africa’ which ‘raises profound doubts as to his [Nimeri’s] loyalty to the cause of Africa and poses serious questions on his ability to continue speaking on behalf of our continent.’[[59]](#endnote-58)

Again, the Ethiopian and Sudanese leaders used the norms of African sovereignty and non-interference to attack the enemy for its reliance on external benefactors and meddling in neighbouring states’ affairs. It was nonetheless apparent to everyone, including the two regimes themselves, that they were guilty of exactly the same as they accused the adversary of. This demonstrates the absurdity of proxy warfare – how the benefactors at one level can maintain its moral credibility, while on another level can covertly wage war. The particularity of proxy war in the Horn was however its multi-level nature. States were in one context benefactors supporting their own proxies, like Ethiopia and Sudan supported insurgents in each other’s countries, while in another context they were proxies themselves, serving the interest of a benefactor at a level above, here Israel and the Arab states. Another level was added in a Cold War context, as both Israel and the Arab states, and Sudan and Ethiopia, could be considered as proxies of the global superpowers. The South Sudanese rebels were at the bottom of this hierarchy of proxies. This made Southern insurgents’ position flexible, as they received aid from several sources, but also more vulnerable, as supplies relied on the relationship between the different benefactors. When Israel fell out with the Ethiopians, for instance, no aid was provided from the Israeli to the South Sudanese anymore. As we will see below, the same happened at the end of the Cold War - when USSR’s aid to Ethiopia halted, Ethiopia was no longer able to give SPLA the life giving aid the rebels had relied on since the start of the Southern Sudanese insurgency.

**The Cold War battle for the Horn**

The Cold war dynamics worked behind both the local and regional conflicts in the Horn, as the two superpowers pulled the strings of the Israeli and Arabs as well as the Ethiopian and Sudanese regimes. Similar to the Middle Eastern players, the US and the Soviet Union had a particular interest in the Horn due to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean access, the proximity to oil resources in the Middle East and the Nile flowing through the region. The super power alliances at the Horn were however fluid and complex. In the early 1970’s, the US supported Haile Selassie while the USSR was an ally of Ethiopia’s arch enemies, Somalia and Sudan. The US was also behind Israel and its policies of proxy war in the Third World. As the largest benefactor of military aid to Israel over a period of 30 years, the US was indirectly guaranteeing Israeli security and the aid was cementing mutual interests of the two nations. The Socialist revolution in Ethiopia in 1974 made the USSR and Ethiopia reconsider their relationship, and the Soviet Union ended up switching side in 1978 Ogaden war between Somalia and Ethiopia. From then on, USSR became the main supplier of external arms to Ethiopia, and Ethiopia acted as a proxy against the US supported Somalia and Sudan. But also in a Cold War context, the benefactors could not rely on the proxies as always predictable and obedient. The fact that the US-allied Israel continued support to Ethiopia and to the Anya-Nya after Ethiopia became an ally of the Soviet Union in 1974 show that proxies act not only on behalf of the benefactors, but have their own specific interests and agenda, rooted in the specific conflict context at the time.

It is also apparent that the proxies themselves were instrumental agents in initiating the change in superpower alliance in the Horn during the Cold War. The change of benefactor in Ethiopia from the US to the USSR from the middle of the 1970s was for instance not only a result of the superpowers changing their minds, but was equally an outcome of Ethiopian leaders’ own deliberations. The US had specific strategic interests in Ethiopia from the 1950s, through the Kagnew communication station in Asmara and the naval facilities in Massawa, both in Eritrea. In return, Ethiopia received military aid worth $ 280 million between 1953 and 1977, which was used in Eritrea and against Somalia and Sudan.[[60]](#endnote-59) Despite the Socialist orientation of the new regime after 1974, the US was determined to continue support to Ethiopia in order to undermine Soviet backed Somalia and maintain influence on Ethiopia. Documents from the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence from 1976, two years after the Socialist revolution, testify for instance the signature of new agreements with the Americans to purchase F-5E plane jets to air force at the cost of $72,000,000.[[61]](#endnote-60) According to calculations made by Schmidt, the Americans were actually increasing military aid to Ethiopia between 1974 and 1977 (weapons, tanks and fighter aircrafts worth of 180 million $).[[62]](#endnote-61) But the Derg was anxious, particularly under President Carter, that the US concerns for human rights violations in Ethiopia would lead to reductions in American military aid. A document of the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence, entitled ‘Armament and military equipment source inspection’ confirms the Ethiopian worry about the implications of a possible loss of American aid, and recommends diversification of sources and the reliance on continued Israeli support. A letter from the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence is thereafter addressed to the Government of USSR with the following message: ‘We demand military equipment to defend our revolution from internal and external threats’.[[63]](#endnote-62) A secret arms deal between Ethiopia and Soviet was signed in December 1976 (weapons, tanks and MiG fighter planes), followed by 200 Cuban trainers arriving in March 1977. By 1979, Ethiopia was the largest beneficiary of Soviet foreign assistance programme globally, including 7000 technicians from Cuba, Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc coming to the country.[[64]](#endnote-63) After a year of simultaneous aid from both superpowers, the American military aid to Ethiopia ended in 1977, when the Derg expelled American personnel and closed down Kagnew. Sudan became an important American client from 1976 until the end of the Cold War. During the Carter years, Sudan was the largest receiver of US aid in sub-Saharan Africa, and Reagan saw US aid to Sudan as an instrument against Gadaffi in Libya and Soviet backed Ethiopia.[[65]](#endnote-64) In return, Nimeri allowed the Americans to use Sudan as a base for covert actions against Libya and forces to operate from Sudan to defend American interests in the Persian Gulf.

In a study of the Global Cold War, Westad argues that ‘For the Soviet Union, the alliance with Ethiopia became by far its most important intervention in Africa.’ But he also documents that the USSR was originally hesitant to help Ethiopia, due to the previous Ethiopian alliance with the US and distrust in the new regime’s ideological commitment.[[66]](#endnote-65) This demonstrates that not only strategic considerations, but also ideology mattered in the choice of proxies in the Cold War, an argument also supported by Mumford, who put forward that Soviet foreign and security policy during the Cold War years ‘reveals an ideologically informed rationale that was used as a precursor to proxy interventions’. Mengistu’s emergence as the sole leader of the Derg after the Red Terror campaigns from 1976 to 1978 reinforced Soviet confidence in the regime, and Soviet arms and supervisors poured into Ethiopia. In this way, it can be argued that ‘aid, arms and ammunition from the USSR were only delivered in return for ideological subservience.’[[67]](#endnote-66) Foreign experts were placed in all the ministries and departments, to oversee and influence the direction of the Ethiopian revolution, and Ethiopians went to Soviet/Eastern Europe for training. The main effort of the experts in government was to assist the establishment of a Worker’s Party, which was finally founded in 1987.[[68]](#endnote-67)

Neither primary sources (Ethiopian Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs[[69]](#endnote-68) documents) nor secondary literature provide substantial information about any direct link between the assistance provided by the USSR to Ethiopia and the aid given the Southern Sudanese insurgency. But the large scale Soviet support to Ethiopia after 1977 gave Ethiopia a solid military base, making it easier for the Derg to provide a steady flow of arms to the Southern Sudanese insurgents and the moral boost to wage a diplomatic war against the Sudanese regime. The Ethiopian swap of superpower benefactor had an immediate effect on the diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and Sudan. The Ethiopian rhetoric towards Sudan became remarkably harsher in 1977: Mengistu was repeatedly accusing Nimeri of being a CIA agent and a ‘Trojan horse of imperialism,’ referring to the USSR as condemning ‘the Red Sea Policy of Imperialist Arab states’. In connection with mediation processes between the two countries, however, the Ethiopian regime was again waving the flag of sovereignty and non-intervention. When Mengistu was on state visit to Khartoum in May 1980, he was promising ‘not to allow the use of their soil for the mounting of any Russian aggression across their borders’, and when Nimeri visited Addis Ababa in November 1980 stated that ‘both countries agreed to prevent subversive activities directed against each other’ and ‘to maintain peace and security along their common border.’[[70]](#endnote-69)

The alliance with the Soviet Union is likely to have created more pressure on the Derg to be ideologically guided in the approach to proxies in neighbouring states. We can assume that it therefore became more difficult for the Ethiopians to justify support to a separatist, non-Socialist insurgency in Southern Sudan, and consequently, resulted in a more direct involvement in the internal matters of the Southern Sudanese rebellion to modify this. Material from the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence from June 1983 documents that the SPLM was responding to this by confirming their desire to build a Socialist Sudan - and was requesting a whole list of military assistance and educational inputs on how to transform the Southern Sudan movement into a Socialist Revolutionary organisation.[[71]](#endnote-70) In August 1983, the Ethiopian Ministry reported on ‘the rising division between the three high ranking officials within the SPLM, and some individuals are identified as ‘obstacles to the unity of the organisation’ and were recommended to be taken to Addis Ababa for further training and ideological education.[[72]](#endnote-71) Secondary literature on the development of the SPLM during the 1980s has also documented how instrumental the Derg was in the development of SPLM’s policies and rhetoric – in terms of revolutionary aims and the stress on unity instead of secession.[[73]](#endnote-72) To determine whether this led to a genuine and deep rooted ideological change among the Southern Sudanese insurgents is beyond the scope of this article.

**Conclusions**

The web of conflicts emerging in the Horn of Africa from the 1960s is an illustration of proxy wars as ‘inescapable acknowledgement of self-interest’, where the players seek minimal input and maximal gain.[[74]](#endnote-73) The major actors in the multi-layered proxy wars in the Horn were first of all driven by the concern for enhancing their position in the most strategically important region in Eastern Africa. The Ethiopian and Sudanese involvement with secessionist movements in Eritrea and Southern Sudan shows that the two regimes put strategic interest over ideologically driven motivations, as they both were regimes that officially promoted a policy of unity and territorial integrity of states. Still, the covert nature of proxy warfare allowed the Sudanese and Ethiopian leaders to maintain a high profile internationally and to play prominent roles in the Organisation for African Unity, which central normative pillar was the respect for African sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention. The Cold War dynamics added nevertheless an ideological flavour into the proxy war webs in the Horn. Ethiopia, by being a main receiver of Soviet military aid in Africa by the end of the 1970s, adapted its own revolutionary rhetoric to that of the Soviet Union, leading to a more direct revolutionary guidance of the proxies it supported, among them the Southern Sudanese rebels.

The web of proxy wars at the Horn also demonstrates that the conflicts involved are not wholly created, orchestrated and controlled by the state sponsoring the proxy. In both Gambella and inside Southern Sudan, the conflicts predate the support given, and have emerged and developed partly independently of the conflicts on the regional and global stages. Therefore, proxies should not be considered as puppets, but as active agents engaged in their own struggles and responding to their own priorities.[[75]](#endnote-74) Consequently, sponsors of proxies in the Horn - the two superpowers and various Middle Eastern states - did not fully control the proxies, and proxy wars became risky and unpredictable, as proxies could change allegiance. As this study has shown, Ethiopia was for instance not a wholly loyal and predictable proxy of Israel, essentially because of the country’s own interests in maintaining a good relationship with another major player in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, and due to the fact that it wanted to continue playing a major role in the OAU, an organisation turning more hostile to Israel in the 1970s.

This multi-layered proxy situation has contributed to destabilisation and militarisation of local and bilateral relations that is still ingrained in today’s conflict in the Horn.[[76]](#endnote-75) Due to the covert and multi-layered nature of these interventions, it has been difficult and often futile to make the parties meet face-to-face in direct negotiations. In Sudan, this facilitated escalation and continuation of the war in the south. The South Sudanese rebels, in the middle of entangled interests and strategies, initially benefitted from this situation when pursuing their own cause. But the proxy warfare created legacies of external dependence, factionalism and the lack of a civilian base, which appear to have a long-term effect on the capacity of the SPLM as a liberation movement, and ultimately as a state bearing party in the independent South Sudan.

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**Notes**

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2. Voll and Voll, *The Sudan.* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
3. Belete Belachew, ‘Ethiopia’s Role,’ 36. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
4. Important exceptions are Rolandsen, ‘The Making of the Anya-Nya Insurgency,’ Poggo, *The First Sudanese Civil War* and Belete,‘Ethiopia’s Role’*.* The latter contribution presents the Ethiopian perspective, but lacks substantial references to the regional and global dynamics around the conflict. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
5. Wai, ‘The Sudan’. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
6. Ethiopian Ministry of Defence Archive, Addis Ababa (hereafter MOD), ‘Minutes of a meeting to discuss the deteriorating relations between Sudan and Ethiopia, 1969,’ document no. 1042. The MOD documents have been collected at the Ministry’s Research and Publication Centre at the Ministry’s premises in Addis Ababa. The access to the archive was facilitated by an endorsement letter from the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Addis Ababa University, with which the author was affiliated. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
7. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
8. Mumford, *Proxy Warfare;* Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa.* [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
9. Mumford, *Proxy Warfare.* [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
10. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
11. Peters, *Israel and Africa.* [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
12. Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa.* [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
13. Poggo, *The First Sudanese Civil War.* [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
14. Westad, *The Global Cold War.* [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
15. Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa.* [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
16. Mumford, *Proxy Warfare.* [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
17. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
18. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
19. Borchgrevink, ‘State strength on the Ethiopian border’; Regassa, *War and Peace*;Dereje Feyissa ‘Power and its Discontents’. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
20. Dereje Feyissa, *Playing Different Games.* [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
21. Belete Belachew, ‘Ethiopia’s Role’. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
22. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
23. ‘Joint Ethio-Sudanese Declaration,’ MOD, ዘመ (Campaign 077); ‘Joint communique on the establishment of ad hoc committees to investigate suspected rebel activities around Kassala and Gambella and to convene a joint boundary commission’, *Ethiopian Herald*, 26 March 1971; United Kingdom National Archives [hereafter UKNA] FCO 93/2531,‘Joint communique, Ethio-Sudan Joint Ministerial Consultative Meeting’, Ethiopian ambassador to Sudan in conversation with British Embassy staff, 8 February 1980; ‘Joint communique, OAU ad hoc mediation committee to immediate cessation of hostile acts and the reestablishment of air links between the two countries, negotiations held in Freetown, 12-15 Dec 1977,’ *Ethiopian Herald*, 20 February 1978; MOD, ‘Agreement from the Meeting of Ethiopian and Sudan Military Committee,’ 18 Sept 1982. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
24. ‘Minutes of a meeting to discuss the deteriorating relations between Sudan and Ethiopia, 1969,’ MOD, 1042. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
25. Rolandsen ‘The making of the Anya-Nya’ [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
26. Belete, ‘Ethiopia’s role.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
27. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
28. ‘Minutes of a meeting to discuss the deteriorating relations between Sudan and Ethipopia, 1969,’ MOD 1042. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
29. Bahru Zewde, *Modern History of Ethiopia;* Dereje Feyissa‘Power and its Discontents.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
30. Stevens, ‘The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement’; Johnson, *Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars.* [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
31. ‘Repatriation of Sudanese in Ethiopia complete,’ *Ethiopian Herald*, 24 May 1974. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
32. UKNA, FCO 93/466 ‘Memo from J.F.S. Philips, re, Ethiopia and Sudan’, 30 October 1974. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
33. Mengistu Haile Mariam was of mixed Southern Ethiopian (Wolayta) and Amhara origin, see Clapham *Transformation and Continuity,* 24. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
34. British documents describe how the EDU leader Ras Mengesha was travelling on a Sudanese stateless person’s travel document and how the Sudanese government allowed EDU to move back and forth across its borders, but doubted whether it supplied them with weapons. UKNA, FCO 93/722 ‘Letter from M.K. Ewans, East Africa department, Khartoum’, 7 May 1975, and UKNA FCO 93/722 ‘Letter from E.W. Callaway, re. UNHCR Ethiopia,’ 21 March 1975. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
35. Dereje Feyissa, *Playing Different Games.* In the 1980s, the GLF, together with Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (ELF) became important tools for Sudanese government in the fight against SPLA and the Derg: Young, ‘Along Ethiopia’s Western Frontier’. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
36. ‘Ethiopia wants peaceful co-existence with Sudan,’ *Ethiopian Herald*, 16 March 1976. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
37. Belete, ‘Ethiopia’s role’. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
38. ‘PMAC Chairman addresses nation: Sudanese regime commits aggression. Territorial integrity, unity of Ethiopia violated by Invading Force,’ *Ethiopian Herald*, 13 April 1977. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
39. The newspaper op-ed mentions the names of individual Southern leaders such as Abel Alier, Bona Malwal, Hilary Logali, Luigi Adwok and Clement Mboro, *Ethiopian Herald*, 17 & 18 May 1977. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
40. ‘Nimeri’s Suicidal Adventure’ op.ed., P. Otong, *Ethiopian Herald*, 25 May 1977. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
41. ‘Mengistu’s attitude had been menacing and had left the Sudanese a strong impression of threats across the border, particularly to the stability of the Southern region’: UKNA FCO 93/2131 ‘Teleg 60 – Freetown Summit’, 27 February 1979. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
42. ‘Ethiopia and Sudan have reached an agreement on the establishment of a Joint Technical Committee,’ *Ethiopian Herald*, 19 February 1981. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
43. ‘Ethiopia, Sudan agree to close down facilities used by secessionists,’ *Ethiopian Herald*, 1 June 1982. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
44. MOD, ‘Meeting of Ethiopian and Sudan Military Committee,’ 18 Sept 1982. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
45. ‘Ethiopia Refutes Allegations by Sudan,’ *Ethiopian Herald*, 17 August 1984. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
46. Erlich, *Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia.* [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
47. Rolandsen, ‘A false start’. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
48. Poggo, *The First Sudanese Civil War.* [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
49. Levey, ‘Israel’s strategy in Africa’; Nadelmann, ‘Israel and Black Africa’. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
50. Peters*, Israel and Africa*. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
51. Erlich, *Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia.* [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
52. MOD, ‘Minutes of meeting to discuss deteriorating relations between Sudan & Ethiopia, 1969,’ doc. 1042. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
53. Levey, ‘Israel’s strategy in Africa.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
54. Peters, *Israel and Africa.* [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
55. According to Levey, diplomatic relations between the two countries resumed in November 1989 – together with rumours that military cooperation also was resumed. For the Ethiopians, the resumption of relations with Ethiopia was a tool for improving its ties with and image in the US: Levey, ‘Israel’s strategy in Africa’. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
56. ‘Joint communique on the establishment of ad hoc committees to investigate suspected rebel activities around Kassala and Gambella and to convene a joint boundary commission,’ *Ethiopian Herald,* 26 March 1971. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
57. Op.ed., by Tiglu Yashenfal, *Ethiopian Herald*, 1 March 1977. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
58. ‘Ministry comments on proposed talks by Nimeiry on Red Sea,’ *Ethiopian Herald*, 15 March 1977. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
59. ‘Chairman describes freetown talks as failure’, *Ethiopian Herald*, 2 March 1979. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
60. Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa.* [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
61. MOD, ‘Letter from the Ministry of Finance To His Excellency Brigadier General Teferi Banti, Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia, Chairman’, 13 January 1976. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
62. Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa.* [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
63. MOD አስተዳደር 3005,Top Secret, no date. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
64. Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa;* Westad, *The Global Cold War.* [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
65. Westad, *The Global Cold War.* [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
66. Westad, *The Global Cold War*, 269, referring to documents in Soviet government archives. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
67. Mumford, *Proxy Warfare.* [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
68. Westad, *The Global Cold War.* [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
69. Belete, ‘Ethiopia’s role’. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
70. ‘Ethiopia, Sudan resolve to speed up development of bilateral relations,’ *Ethiopian Herald*, 26 Nov 1980. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
71. MOD, ‘Report on Working Visit in Gambella Province,’ 29 June 1983. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
72. MOD, ‘Reporting summary according to the request to build temporary and permanent houses for “Project 007”, 18 August 1983. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
73. Nyaba *The Politics of Liberation.* [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
74. Mumford, *Proxy Warfare.* [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
75. Borkgrevinck ‘State strength on the Ethiopian border’; Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa.* [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
76. Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa*; Small Arms Survey, ‘The militarization of Sudan.’

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