

## **A Comprehensive Peace for Sudan (and Darfur)**

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### **Introduction**

The opposite of peace is war. War is a broad word; let us use it broadly then to speak about planned and frequent murder and assassination, insurgency, coup d'états, coordinated mayhem, and organized violence generally. This talk is about the transition from civil war to civil peace in Sudan.

In this talk I would like to make six points about why a comprehensive peace in Sudan and Darfur has very low probability. Yes, I am a pessimist. Let me talk about each of these six points in turn.

### **1. Sudan is not really at peace after Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)**

Sudan is not in peace despite the CPA because of the conflict in Darfur. What is this fighting in Darfur about and where is it going? Four armed groups are active in Darfur. On one side are rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) now led by Minni Minawi who

seems to have recently won a power struggle with his erstwhile co-leader Abdel Wahid Mohamed Nour and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) led by Khalil Ibrahim. The SLA is thought to be fairly close to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), now led by Salva Kiir since the death of John Garang in a helicopter crash or shooting in July 2005. The SPLA has been the main fighting force in southern Sudan since 1983, battling especially the military regime led by Omar Hassan al-Bashir who took power in Khartoum in 1989. The much-smaller and perhaps irrelevant JEM was thought at one point to be aligned with Hassan al-Turabi, an ideologue and former government minister who took power with the military in 1989, but who fell out of favor in 1999. Al-Turabi has been kept under arrest for much of the last five years. Lately there have been reports suggesting that the JEM is less connected to al-Turabi than it appeared, and more likely a Libyan proxy for making trouble in both Sudan and Chad. The SLA and JEM have been presenting a joint though fractious negotiating position at the intermittent peace talks for Darfur held in Abuja, the Nigerian capital.

On the other side are the Sudanese Armed Forces of the military regime in Khartoum, who suffered a humiliating blow in April 2003 when SLA rebels took over the airport of the regional capital of El Fasher, capturing munitions, an air force general, and destroying military aircraft. Aligned with the armed forces is the unofficial militia known as the janjawid, consisting of fighters from various ethnic or tribal groups in Darfur, with a variety of leaders, one of whom, Musa Hilal, has

received much attention. This janjawid, according to reliable accounts, was organized by the Khartoum regime in early 2003, and soon launched a campaign to raze villages and terrorize civilians. The goal, presumably, was to deny the rebel groups any support in the countryside. The Khartoum regime had used similar groups in fighting the war in southern Sudan. The ferocity of that war- with massacres, summary executions, rape, enslavement of women and children- was certainly familiar to all sides of the present conflict Darfur. The many civilizing rules of war have been ignored.

## **2. Even if Sudan were at peace, civil wars have high statistical probability of recurring**

Research on civil wars generally suggests that the likelihood of reversion to war is about 50%, while the likelihood of transition from war to peace is very low in any given year. The distribution of civil wars seems to be somewhat bimodal, with very short wars where one side defeats the other, and then long, protracted wars with military stalemates or see-saws.

The likelihood of reversion to war depends on resolving the security dilemma inherent in power-sharing. Now that the two of us have stopped fighting, we are going to sit at the table and govern together. But, once we are there, how do I know you won't shoot me? How do I know you won't shoot down my helicopter when I let down my guard? The CPA offers little hope that the dilemma has been resolved in any way between National Congress Party and SPLA. One approach, the

hopeful but I think naïve approach, is to think that the security dilemma has been resolved because the National Congress Party has basically given up the South, and will let it be independent. But research by Nicholas Sambanis suggests that partition is not more likely to lead to peace.

**3. Actually, the provision for secession is a time-bomb**

The CPA provision for a vote on secession, without providing for agreement on division of oil revenues and ownership after secession, provides an irresistible inducement to threats of violence by both sides as bargaining chips in subsequent negotiations. Those of you who know game theory, and it is used a lot in political science these days to think about strategic interaction, you know about backward induction. So now ask yourselves to backward induct this-- yes, I actually think I saw that on a bumper sticker in San Jose—in six years, if the SPLA does nothing, they get to have a revenue stream of \$6 billion per year. And the National Congress Party gets some rent for their pipeline (the SPLA can always buy off the Kenyans to build a pipeline through to Mombassa, so their rent is tempered by contestability). Now, if you were the National Congress Party, what would you do? How can you convince the SPLA that they will be better off by sharing their revenues with the north? Only by threats that are near-violence and perhaps not credible once secession is achieved, so the violence and threats must take place before the secession, but that means the secession itself will be marred by violence, and so to ensure the possibility of secession the SPLA must respond

forcefully to violence, and perhaps engage in pre-emptive violence.

#### **4. Civil war in north remains possible**

The CPA contains no provision for justice and reconciliation, and the National Congress Party will continue to operate with impunity and corruption, provoking continued threat of armed conflict from opposition northern groups.

A lot of people think that organized violence in the north not likely. While at present there are no organized forces who are serious contenders to the existing regime, it is useful to look back a little bit in northern Sudan's history. Consider the Ramadan massacre of April 1990, less than a year after the regime took power. A few high ranking officers attempted to rectify the brutal and NIF-dominated regime that took power in 1989. They were complicit in that coup, but began to regret their acquiescence to a coup leadership that turned out to be quite hardline, and not at all like the earlier coup leaders who had overthrown the regime of general Nimeiri in 1985. The attempted coup was almost successful, but the leaders made a fatal miscalculation in listening to appeals to not shed blood during the holy month of Ramadan. They hesitated, and they were summarily executed when they gave up their momentum. Brigadier-General Khalid Elzain and 27 other army officers and an unknown number, perhaps in the hundreds, of NCOs were killed over a weekend.

The coup leaders didn't learn a lesson from 20 years earlier, when a different military regime, that of

General Nimieri, had taken power in Khartoum. That regime was also an alliance, including principally the Sudanese Communist Party. But two years or so into the regime, the partners were plotting against each other. Much blood was spilled. Three leading Communists were summarily executed: Abdel-Khaleq Mahjoub, secretary-general of the Communist Party; Al-Shafie Ahmed Al-Sheikh, deputy president of the World Federation of Trade Unions; and Joseph Garang, a leading Communist figure in the South.

They, in turn, had not learned the lesson of a year earlier. Imam Al Hadi al Mahdi, grandson of the Mahdi, posed a serious threat to the new military regime, and taken refuge with loyalists in the Aba Island stronghold (up the Nile from Khartoum). Nimieri launched an air assault on Aba Island, and about 3,000 people died during the battle. The imam was killed while trying to escape to Ethiopia.

So the north has seen plenty of organized and large-scale political violence.

## **5. Insurgencies will arise against GOSS**

Consider the story of Kerubino Bol, one of the founders of the SPLA, and leaders of the disastrous 1991 split that led to south-on-south civil war. "In 1998 Kerubino again fell out with Garang and tried to realign himself with the pro-government forces. He took shelter with Paulino Matiep, the Bentiu-area warlord to whom he was related by marriage ... in September 1999... a disaffected commander, Peter Gadiet, had tried to defect to the main SPLA with 150 men after an "unsuccessful" attempt to

depose Matiep. Kerubino had intervened and been wounded and captured along with five SSUA officers in Mankien, 900km SW of Khartoum. The officers were executed by Gadiet in Mankien; Kerubino died of his injuries. On 21 October, Gadiet, having sided with the SPLA, was reported to be bombarding Bentiu.”

Kerubino is dead, but Paulino Matiep and Peter Gadiet are still very much alive, and commanding forces. Riek Machar, who led the 1991 attempted coup in the SPLA against John Garang, is now the Vice President of the GOSS. Are these battle-hardened men to be expected to turn into democrats?

## **6. Economic development in south is unlikely to be successful**

Over the past year and a half, a group of people from the United Nations, the World Bank, the Government of Sudan and the SPLA have written a blueprint for economic development in Sudan. This group goes by the name of the Joint Assessment Mission for Sudan (JAM). The blueprint is called, “Framework for Sustained Peace, Development and Poverty Eradication,” and was released in March 2005 by the JAM in time for the Oslo Donor’s Conference in April. The donor’s conference largely approved and funded the blueprint.

So this is an important document. I would like to spend a few minutes both praising and critiquing the document. Let me say a little bit of praise about the process, because it seems to have been especially open and consultative. All of the documents related to the process are available through the JAM website, and they

constitute an indispensable and incredible archive for any student of the post-war reconstruction. It really is very impressive. The plan is drawn from the “Make Poverty History” and Millennium Development Goals menu. It is a cookie-cutter plan, no doubt about it. Nothing original at all, no flair, no vision, just an abundance of common sense. When you find a little restaurant in Kordofan that serves *aseeda* and *mulaah*, you don’t criticize it. You are hungry, and you enjoy the plain food. So honestly, I do admire the JAM team, who probably had a lot of resisting to do, from those who wanted to add things to the menu, like a sugar plantation larger than Kenana, or the world’s largest sawmill, or an laying an advanced fiber optic cable in the whole country, and other nonsense.

Before I start a critique of the JAM plan, let me say a bit about the magnitude of the plan. What the plan does is specify spending of just under \$8 billion in two and a half years, from July 2005 through 2007. Donors and both governments (of southern Sudan and the so-called national unity government) are committed to the spending priorities and are committed to delivering their share. The share of government comes, of course, from the oil revenues, expected to be roughly \$2 billion plus per year for the medium term.

\$8 billion is a lot of money to spend over 2.5 years, coming to around \$3.2 billion per year. If you think about the population of Sudan at around 32 million, then this is about \$100 per person per year. If you think of the funds as being largely directed towards the poorest and most marginalized in Sudan, say about 20 million persons, then you have spending of about \$160 per

person. What is this money going to be spent on? The biggest shares go to public education, public health, and road infrastructure. Building schools and roads is the biggest percent of the budget. As usual with public expenditures; the builders and contractors are the first to win.

To me, it is always worth thinking about simply giving that money away. In other words, subtracting the delivery costs, you could probably give each poor person in Sudan an annual payment of \$150 for the next several years. When you think about family income, two adults and two children could get \$600 per year. Most people in rural areas earn far less than this in a year, and probably if given a choice they would rather have the funds delivered as an income supplement than as a bundle of services, however well intentioned the service providers. So I always think it is an interesting question, why do we think that a joint government of national unity of the GOS and SPLA can spend that kind of money in a wiser way than a poor person in Bahr al-Ghazal, or Nuba Mountains, or Sinja?

It is not that puzzling to note that none of the documents suggest that the revenues accruing to the government- of aid and oil- should be handed over to citizens in the form of an income guarantee. Now there is no need to think deeply about why this is overlooked. The consultants would all be out of future jobs if they said that individual recipients could do a better job. There is a bias among development thinkers to suppose that government spending is more effective than private spending. There is the sad likelihood that many of these

consultants probably think that people would waste their windfall. This mentality is very, very common. Even among a distinguished and enlightened audience such as yourselves, you probably believe that. Your first thought, I might venture, was of a poor person getting a \$150 check and going out and buying beer. In southern Sudan, of course. In northern Sudan they might buy *tombac*, I suppose. The women would buy *toob*. Younger people would buy cell phones. But think about it for a second. Is that really what poor people would do with an income windfall? Do we not think that parents would send their children to a high-quality school? Do we not think that a farmer might buy a younger, stronger donkey? Do we not think that a woman tea-seller might invest in another set of tea glasses? I think we would see a lot of that kind of small-scale private investment, much more than you might imagine.

You know, an economist at UC Berkeley (Ted Miguel) has done a study of how the incidence of witch-killing varies in rural Tanzania with rainfall and income. When times are tough, the young tough guys take out their frustration on elderly, powerless widows. They call them witches and kill them. An income supplement not only enables the very real poverty of these widows to be alleviated, but also might keep them alive.

So the important thing I want to say about the plan is that I was disappointed that no consideration seems to have been given to an income support scheme. I would have been happy to see it targeted to the elderly, and especially to elderly women.

My comments on the plan are about to be published in the next issue of Forced Migration Review, a special issue devoted to Sudan, and the authors of the plan issued a short response rebuttal, that I personally find very revealing of their attitude. “Handing out cash, while leaving the rules of the game unchanged, does not equal empowerment or promote sustainable poverty reduction.” They imply that their massive expenditure on infrastructure and good governance “training” is going indeed to change the rules of the game. “The JAM vision rests on the notion of the importance of an efficient, accountable public sector. Mr Kevane may not like it but this is now recognised by development practitioners and such major agencies as the World Bank as critical to sustainable development. It is not misplaced thinking but based on lessons learned from decades of experience of failed development. The role of the state in providing public goods is arguably even more critical in a post-conflict setting – in which needs are many, social capital is eroded and the risk of a return to conflict is high.” Notice they don’t say “more critical than...” than what? I guess I just don’t understand how a dozen high-priced consultants from BearingPoint and other firms involved in Iraq, and massive road-building projects, generate good governance. In fact, I tend to think the opposite.

But still, I find myself returning to the core of the plan, education and roads. I keep asking myself whether the private sector cannot manage education just fine, especially in the south where Christian missionaries are more than willing to subsidize schooling. And I keep reflecting on my experience in Burkina, where people are

very much more interested in getting bicycles than in having roads built. Sure, they would like a road. But they know that the benefits of roads go disproportionately to rich people, while the benefits of bicycles go straight to themselves. Incidentally, I did a search for bicycles in the JAM documents, and found no mention at all!

### **No justice no peace**

To bring home my point, let me turn to a document that goes a much longer way there, Abel Alier's *Southern Sudan: To Many Agreements Dishonored*. Here is what Alier writes in his introductory comments where he traces his own career before becoming Vice-president.

I received a blow in Bor in 1967 when I went there to defend a great and fine man, Paramount Chief Ajang Duot Bior with 14 other chiefs. They were detained by the army garrison in Bor... I was immediately confronted by a young officer who was dangling his revolver in front of me and said, without mincing his words: "I hear you are an advocate who has come to defend the chiefs. Well, this is our law..." pointing to the revolver...I returned to Juba to seek transfer orders... the Paramount Chief and others were taken from detention and escorted to their homes where they were shot. The young officer in Bor was earnest in his threats. (p. 7)

Alier goes on to talk about some other wanton and unjustified killing, and then he summarizes very wisely, in my opinion. He writes of the violence and the killing:

“The whole thing can be endless, self-sustained by its own momentum. ... Much could be salvaged if wisdom, statesmanship and justice are exercised. But how often in the dynamics of violence these qualities have been ridiculed.” (pp. 8-9). Wisdom and statesmanship, I think, the people of southern Sudan are getting, recently. But justice? Justice is an essential element of peace, and the comprehensive peace agreement contains no justice (not even a truth and reconciliation commission of the most watered down kind).