

Scenarios for Darfur

May 2006

(revised)

Overview

1. This paper consists of a brief analysis of four possible scenarios over the coming months in Darfur, ranging from worst (1) to best (4). It seeks to identify the drivers of change.
2. The key variables are the following:
 - a. Whether Abdel Wahid Nur of SLM signs the DPA or not, and the cohesiveness of his core Fur constituency.
 - b. The cohesiveness of Minni Minawi's SLM.
 - c. The response of Darfur's Arab tribes.
 - d. The extent to which Chad, JEM and smaller factions succeed in playing a spoiler role, and the trajectory of the crisis in Chad.
 - e. The GoS response to all of the above (which is sadly predictable).
 - f. The rapidity and effectiveness of the AMIS/UN response, especially with regard to verification, monitoring and peace enforcement.

Scenario 1: Increased Confrontation

3. In this scenario, Abdel Wahid Nur refuses to sign the DPA and his core constituency of Fur IDPs and SLM sympathizers remains solid. Moreover he manages to win over some disaffected supporters of Minawi, and gets support from some Arab groups that see the DPA signed by GoS and Minawi as a sell-out to the Zaghawa. Abdel Wahid becomes symbolic of the un-met rights of Darfurians and a focal point for opposition to both DPA and CPA. Chad and JEM are able to play their spoiler role in this confusion. In turn, the GoS decides to play "divide and rule" among the different factions. On the pretext that the Movements are refusing to cooperate, the GoS refuses to take significant action against the Janjaweed and other Arab militia, using this as a mechanism for keeping the Arabs on-side. This in turn makes it much more difficult for AMIS to verify the locations of the Movements' forces, so that the implementation of the security arrangements is paralyzed. If the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation is held, it is just a façade for GoS-backed leaders.

4. If this scenario unfolds, the IDP camps become the site of a low-intensity "intifada". People refuse to go home and the IDPs remain facing a seemingly indefinite future of internal exile. Refugees in Chad become more militant, mobilized by their Chadian hosts, JEM and Chadian-backed breakaway SLM factions.

5. The already-limited command and control of the SLA further deteriorates with an upsurge in banditry. Tribal militia that have thus far been neutral or disengaged may become more active. This is further exacerbated by shifting alliances between Arab groups and the SLM, as some Janjaweed break away from GoS control and identify themselves as a Darfurian resistance group—resisting GoS plans to impose Zaghawa rule on them. The conflict spreads.
6. Many groups—SLM-AW, Arab tribes, Chad-backed spoilers—blame the AU for everything that has gone wrong. (They may be supported by oped writers and bloggers in the U.S.) This translates into such antipathy towards the DPA document that it becomes a political liability for those who have signed it, and—more seriously—it sparks hostility towards AMIS, so that the peacekeeping mission is itself rendered impotent or even endangered. This antipathy may also transfer to some international NGOs.
7. Generally speaking, the security situation existing today deteriorates. It is impossible to undertake the necessary steps to verify the military deployments of the Movements, let alone restrict them to areas of control. Demilitarized zones cannot be set up. No action is taken to control, let alone disarm, the Janjaweed.
8. In this scenario, Minawi’s position in government has little credibility, and he is unable to nominate credible individuals to the key positions. The institutions necessary for the implementation of the DPA do not get set up. The DPA is not implemented.
9. This is a bleak scenario which only allows for a continuation of emergency relief operations. The possibility of a regional conflict involving Chad and CAR cannot be ruled out.

Scenario 2: Fragmentation

10. Under this, slightly less pessimistic scenario, Abdel Wahid refuses to sign but is isolated, with many (perhaps most) of his commanders and political supporters abandoning him. Abdel Wahid becomes a symbol of resistance, getting plenty of airtime and vocal support from some activist quarters, but is unable to incite either armed struggle or intifada in the camps. However, none of his erstwhile supporters carries the same name-recognition among ordinary Darfurians, so none of them can legitimize the DPA in the same way. Many Fur and Arabs remain suspicious of the leading role of Minawi and the Zaghawa.
11. In this scenario, deterioration can be contained. The key to this is the success of the national and international strategy of confronting and isolating the spoilers (Abdel Wahid, JEM, other Chad-backed groups) through sanctioning them, and the extent to which it is possible to build confidence in the DPA through successful implementation on the ground. Quick-win measures for building confidence such as rapid compensation payments can make a difference. Another key determinant of stability is the ability of the GoS, Minawi and some other Darfurian leaders who support the DPA to reach out to independent groups and pull them in. The tribal chiefs and individuals such as Abdel

Rahman Musa (the first independent accessory to the DPA) can play a key role. In these circumstances, the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation becomes more important and more challenging: it would be well-worth making it a more elaborate and prolonged process, so as to build confidence and bring in other groups.

12. Intense security problems are confined to a handful of localities, including the Jebel Moon area and some nearby border areas (where JEM is), locations in Jebel Marra where Abdel Wahid's diehard commanders remain (albeit with dwindling supplies), refugee camps in Chad subject to JEM/Chadian influence, and some militants in the IDP camps. We can expect some resistance to assembly and disarmament by some SLA units, and some Janjaweed continue to cause insecurity for some time to come. The most severe Janjaweed problems can be expected in parts of Western Darfur where Arab groups of Chadian origin are active, and in Gereida. However, eastern Darfur and the far north should be calmer due to cooperation between the GoS and the SLM-Minawi.

13. This scenario gives the GoS many opportunities to play its accustomed game of divide and rule, slowing down progress and keeping a veneer of conformity with the process. It will have every excuse for failing to implement its obligations, blaming the weakness, fragmentation and dithering of the Movements. It will go slow on its security commitments including controlling the Janjaweed. It will find it easy to discredit those who have joined the DPA as well as those who remain outside, and thereby keep real power for itself at all levels. Most Darfurians will see this and the processes of return and rehabilitation will be slow and uneven.

14. With bad faith on one side and incapacity on the other, the onus for stabilizing Darfur will fall increasingly on AMIS or its UN successor.

15. The best chance for progress in this scenario is if the GoS and Movements are able to find Darfurian leaders of integrity, trusted by all sides, who can take the key positions in the political, administrative and security system. The identification, placing and mentoring of these individuals should begin at once.

Scenario 3: Inclusive but Half-Hearted DPA

16. Under this moderately positive scenario, Abdel Wahid signs the DPA, or he is deposed and other credible SLM leaders join the peace process, albeit slightly late. (It is still just possible he may do so by the 31 May deadline.) However, the structural weaknesses of the SLM (both factions) mean that it is unable to participate effectively in the national government, the governance of Darfur, and the various security and economic institutions set up under the DPA. Personal rivalries between the SLM leaders, inability to make decisions, the appointment of incapable officials to decision-making positions, and other weaknesses mean that the SLMs fail to function effectively. The NCP and other central parties (Umma Party, Popular Congress Party) compete for allegiances and votes in Darfur, buying off individuals and factions of the SLM. We can expect some of the more hardworking and idealistic SLM members to become burned out and resign their posts, reducing the quality of the Darfur administration.

17. However, the spoilers are contained by the legitimization of the DPA by the two SLM signatures and by robust international actions such as individual sanctions under UNSCR 1591. Pretexts for GoS foot-dragging on implementation of the security arrangements are reduced because the SLMs retain sufficient discipline to adhere to the ceasefire. Arab and Fur fears of Zaghawa domination are laid to rest by a balance in the handing out of political positions. This also means that the freelance insurgents can be brought into the fold through negotiations and the DDDC.

18. Implementation of the security measures DPA lags, with slow verification and redeployment, half-hearted and slow measures against the Janjaweed, delayed DDDC, and foot-dragging on setting up the key institutions. There may be some localized resistance to assembly and disarmament by SLA units, but nothing that cannot be contained.

19. Under this scenario, the return of IDPs and refugees only begins in earnest towards the end of this calendar year, in time for the 2007 season. I.e. relief requirements are needed for the current in-need population until the 2007 harvest is gathered in at the end of 2007.

20. This scenario could be called “security with grievance” because a basic level of security is restored in Darfur, but the fundamental grievances of the Darfurian people are not addressed—chiefly because the Movements are too weak to represent the Darfurian interest in either the national political scene or in Darfur itself.

Scenario 4: DPA is Implemented

21. This is the most optimistic scenario. Currently it looks improbable though it is not impossible. Abdel Wahid signs up to the DPA and returns as a hero (claiming to have got a better deal by holding out the few weeks) and there is good cooperation between him and Minni, and good cooperation between the National Congress Party and the SLM based on an electoral pact between SLM-AW and a security/commercial deal with SLM-MM. Having returned to participate in the DPA, the SLM leadership puts its energies into forming a civilian political party and the DDDC, and it harnesses the support of independent Darfurians and community leaders in the IDP camps to enable people to return home, basic services to be restored, etc. The DDDC brings in all other stakeholders. The legitimacy provided to the DPA by full SLM participation means that the essential provisions of security, wealth sharing and power sharing are implemented with only small delays.

22. Some quick wins will help make this work. These include:

- a. Rapid start up of compensation payments. From the point of view of USAID this is best done through a parallel mechanism to the Compensation Fund, so as to minimize problems of working with a new institution and to avoid legal difficulties that may be associated

- with this. (The World Bank is developing a concept paper on how this could be done.) This will be symbolically very important.
- b. Building up “community police” in IDP camps and returnee communities.

23. The key challenges are filling in the gaps in the DPA.

- a. Most important of these is the slender provisions for community arms control: no plan is provided for. In the next 3-4 months it will be necessary for the SLM and GoS to work out a long-term plan for arms control, using tribal authorities as a major mechanism.
- b. A second challenge is the mapping and demarcation of nomadic routes in order to minimize clashes as pastoralists move their animals. A particular issue here is Arabs of Chadian origin and the nomadic routes they have opened up in the last 15 years.
- c. Related to this is the need for robust security measures to give returning IDPs and refugees the confidence to go back to their villages. Some elaboration of the DPA will be required. In this context, issues of land ownership, especially where farmland has been resettled by incomers in the last 3 years, will be contentious.
- d. Mechanisms for securing better representation for the various groups not represented in Abuja will be required. The only mechanism that can provide for this under the DPA is the Peace and Reconciliation Council.
- e. Inequities in rehabilitation assistance and compensation may be another source of difficulty.

24. The most difficult pockets in this scenario are likely to be some of the flashpoints close to the Chad border, areas contested between the SLAs on the eastern side of Jebel Marra (Korma and Tawilla), the Muhajiriya-Sheria-Labado area, and Gereida.

25. Tensions are likely to rise in advance of the 2009 elections and the 2010 referendum on the status of Darfur.

Final Thoughts

26. These scenarios are a preliminary exploration of what could occur. They are best used as a tool for examining assumptions and identifying the relationships between actors and contexts. Comments on the assumptions, the projected paths, and the suggested determinants are very welcome. The scenarios can be revised in accordance with this feedback. In particular, thoughts on actions to prevent or mitigate the worst outcomes and promote the best, are welcomed.

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