

Prospects for Peace in Sudan

Briefing: April 2008

Overview

1. The NCP-SPLM partnership for the CPA stands at a critical juncture. The NCP sees the 2009 elections as its route to internal and international legitimacy and is hoping that problems with the census and elections can be pinned on others (the SPLM, the Darfurians). Both parties have failed to find a compromise to the Abyei situation.
2. The NCP strategy for the elections is to organize politically in the central regions of the North, expecting to use its money and organization to win on the basis of pre-election agreements with other Northern parties, and to utilize security methods to control elections in the peripheral areas including Darfur and the South, where necessary postponing the elections altogether. The Northern parties are distrustful of both NCP and SPLM. The SPLM faces the challenge of organizing its own electoral strategy for the North.
3. The economic crisis of the last nine months is a major headache for the NCP. Economic hardship undermines the NCP's popularity among its constituents and creates difficulties for its patronage-based mechanism for controlling the country. The NCP has moved to consolidate central control of state finances.
4. The SPLM Convention scheduled for May will be a pivotal event for the future of the movement. The majority of the organizing committee is members of the pro-unity bloc and it is possible that they will use the occasion to push for the SPLM to embrace unity, which would involve sidelining those leaders who support separation.
5. The Darfur conflict is currently intractable with the parties pursuing military options. The GoS sees Chad and JEM as its major military adversary and is mounting offensives in Darfur and supporting the Chadian rebels for another offensive against N'djamena. Idriss Deby is fighting for his political life and has no interest in negotiations except as a tactical measure to buy regional and international support. Darfur cannot credibly become part of the national democratization process. The international mediation has exhausted its options.
6. UNAMID is in an impossible situation. It is entrapped in the war on the ground in Darfur and Chad and the war of words between Khartoum and western capitals. While these two conflicts continue, UNAMID will remain a vulnerable hostage, draining international resources for very meagre benefit. A salvage plan for UNAMID would begin with making its existing ten battalions properly operational.

NCP-SPLM Relations

7. Following the September 2007 withdrawal of the SPLM from the GoNU, relations between the NCP and SPLM descended to an all-time low. The SPLM played its hand tough to the point of intimating that a new war was a possibility. The response of the NCP has been to seek to marginalize the SPLM in Northern politics while keeping its options open for cooperation or competition in the South.

8. Abyei was the flashpoint for the breakdown of the relationship. Both sides are playing for the maximum outcome in Abyei: the NCP wants the oil and the support of the Misiriya (the latter is not a foregone conclusion); while the SPLM wants the whole territory and was actively recruiting Arabs to its ranks, notably into the Debab forces. The confrontation brought the sides to reciprocal military mobilization which could have led to armed conflict.

9. Salva Kiir insists that dialogue is the only way ahead and has tacitly offering a similar joint interim administration to that which was tabled last year. But the two parties have been unable to avoid a confrontational posture. Edward Lino has taken the position as chief executive (governor) of Abyei, appointed SPLM ministers and has invited the NCP to appoint ministers. The NCP has rejected this as a violation of the CPA and has dispatched forces..

10. Trust has not been restored to the NCP-SPLM relationship. The two parties are planning in parallel for an election in which they do not expect to present a common platform. Each continues to acquire arms. The NCP maintains its security presence in key areas of the South such as the oilfields and uses its relatively small political presence as an effective base for political organization. The SPLM is importing major new weapons systems (such as 300 T72 tanks, which it will be a challenge to use effectively) and is seeking alliances with groups in Kordofan and Darfur.

The Electoral Calculus: The Centre

11. The NCP enjoys only minority support and would be reduced to one party among many in a free and fair election. But its preference is to contest and win elections and gain the legitimacy that will follow. Internationally, it will make the case that its elections are at minimum no less free and fair than those in countries such as Kenya and Nigeria. It is using its money, organizational capacity and control of the state to position itself at the centre of an exercise in limited democracy. Those running the election for the NCP do not believe in democracy for its own sake—they believe in elections as a route to legitimacy. And most of the Northern opposition recognize that there must be soft landing for the NCP—it must remain the major stakeholder in power—if there is to be any prospect for stability. The Iraq invasion has given incumbency a good name.

12. The elections bill is mostly agreed but still awaits decisions on remaining issues, notably the proportion of seats in the National Assembly to be chosen on a constituency basis and the number on proportional representation. This question has been referred to

the Presidency for a final decision. The civilian opposition prefers a slant towards proportional representation and away from geographic constituencies on the basis that PR is less amenable to manipulation by an incumbent with resources.

13. In the central areas of the north we can expect an election contested relatively fairly. In the historic triangle between Port Sudan, el Obeid and Sennar, including the main cities of the north and east, the Gezira and Gedaref, and the Nile from Kosti to Wadi Halfa, the NCP will spend money on infrastructure and services, seek support from local powerbrokers, and allow a fair election to proceed. (A memo two years ago written by the former finance minister Abdel Rahim Hamdi revealed that the NCP considered these the essential parts of Sudan.) All Sudanese know the broad outlines of electoral outcomes in these areas and would not accept blatant rigging. Hence the NCP strategy is to deal with this area through civil politics.

14. The NCP is talking to each of its main rivals in the North. The aims are to diversify its political options in advance of the 2009 elections and to position itself as the champion of national unity. Even if a formal coalition is impossible then the NCP will seek common positions on key issues. Northern Sudanese politics is reverting to form. In the past it has always been coalition politics and it is becoming so again. No party can realistically expect to win a plurality of the votes. The opportunities for political bargaining are multiplied by the complexity of the election: voters will be selecting the President, the National Assembly, State governors, and members of state assemblies. (There are also locality elections due and in the South there are further levels: the President of South Sudan and the Southern Assembly.)

15. The Umma Party leader Sadiq al Mahdi has taken the principled position that he will not accept a position in any government that is not elected. He is strongly disavowing any deal-making with the NCP and has nothing to gain from joining the GoNU at this point. But he has stated that he and Bashir have agreed on eighty percent of the issues that divide them. He is calling for a national convention that will not roll back any of the gains made by the South in the CPA—that is, a form of intra-Northern dialogue.

16. The DUP and NCP share much of the same core constituency in the riverain areas of central north Sudan. The DUP has the potential to offer itself as a secular alternative to the NCP and a unifying force across northern Sudan. However it suffers from internal splits. The unifying factor is loyalty to the exiled leadership led by Mawlana Mohamed Osman al Mirghani. However, al Mirghani's leadership has lacked energy and he remains preoccupied with the question of compensation for his family property which was seized by the government after the 1989 coup. The DUP is unable to capitalize on the unpopularity of the NCP. Prominent DUP members who have maintained their opposition credentials throughout the last 19 years are beginning to waver and declare that they would consider dealing with the NCP.

17. The NCP is also talking to the PCP. The elections pose a sharp dilemma for the PCP leadership: should it boycott and face the prospect of being marginalized, or contest and then face the need to cut electoral deals? The PCP has suffered from defections to the

NCP and the option of a common front with the Umma Party against the NCP is ruled out because Sadiq is committed to contesting the elections. Hassan al Turabi may find himself isolated if he continues to pursue his existing line, as mercurial as ever. It is notable that Turabi and Khalil Ibrahim of JEM have been speaking in very similar terms about self-determination for the regions of the North.

18. The SPLM possesses a wide reservoir of popular support across Northern Sudan, chiefly on account of its credentials as the voice of opposition to successive governments. The extraordinary turnout for John Garang's return to Khartoum in July 2005 is testament to this. SPLM leaders in the North are confident that Sudanese will vote with their hearts, that it will gain the support of many in the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Darfur and that many northern Arabs will vote for the SPLM confident that it is the best chance for unity. Some SPLM leaders argue that the movement should put forward a Muslim Northerner as a presidential candidate. However the SPLM faces a challenge in creating an effective electoral organization in the North. The NCP calculation is that after the elections the SPLM will be one coalition partner among many in the North.

The Electoral Calculus: The South

19. The NCP's strategy for the peripheries is based on security management. In the South, Darfur, many parts of Kordofan and some parts of the east, the NCP neither expects nor is likely to permit free and fair elections. Its expectation is that the census and voters roll will be inaccurate, both for technical and political reasons, and that voting will follow local patterns of coercion and bribery. It would be content with no elections in many peripheral constituencies and could readily engineer the pretext for elections to be postponed. (Though it would much prefer for the SPLM to be the one that asks for a postponement.) All previous Sudanese national elections have been incomplete. In the past, Southern constituencies affected by war have simply not returned members to parliament. In 2009 it is more likely that representatives for any voided electoral seats would be appointed by the NCP and SPLM on the basis of CPA-based calculations.

20. The SPLM has tended to take its electoral support for granted and counts on established loyalties. It is possible that conditions will not be conducive for free and fair elections in the South. Salva Kiir has convened a forum for Southern leadership that includes non-SPLM figures which is an important step.

21. The technical demands for conducting an election in the South and the three areas are immense and as the timetable for the census has slipped, the realistic prospects of compiling the electoral roll and defining constituencies in time for elections before the rainy season of 2009 are dimming. (In the central areas of the North, the existing civil register can be used as the basis for voting and constituencies.) There is controversy over the census forms. The SPLM accuses the NCP of omitting some of the questions demanded by the SPLM, such as religious affiliation. The NCP points out that SPLM participated in the census committee and did not object to the decision.

22. Southerners displaced to the North are entitled to vote if they return to the South. It is inconceivable that the economic conditions necessary for several million Southerners to return South will be in place before the census. The likely outcome is that these people will be disenfranchised. For the NCP, this means that the largest potential bloc of SPLM voters in the North, especially the cities, will be removed from the voters' roll, reducing the size of the opposition vote. For the South, it means that a large constituency of Southerners who residing in the North, and thus may be susceptible to interference from the NCP, will not be able to vote in the referendum.

23. The true size of the Southern population could become a contentious issue. The CPA arbitrarily defined one third of Sudan as the South. The SPLM argued that Southerners were under-counted in the previous censuses of 1983 and 1993. This is correct. But twenty years of war took a huge demographic toll. One 1998 calculation (by Millard Burr and Robert Collins for the US Committee for Refugees) estimated that there were 1.9 million people missing, attributable to excess mortality and reduced fertility. If an accurate census were to reduce the figure for Southerners, this would automatically reduce their representation in a post-2009 National Assembly and central government. The NCP is unworried by this and sees it as a change for political arm-twisting. However, this could rebound. The Southerners may accept a reduced presence in the National Assembly, trading allegations that the count was rigged, and use this as an additional rationale for separatism. The federal system provides safeguards that minimize the significance of the demographic size of each state. Also, the referendum law is due to be passed by the current National Assembly, so that the Southerners' priority issue will already have been dealt with before the election.

The Electoral Calculus: Darfur

24. Darfur is a headache for all the major parties. All would be ready to proceed with national elections irrespective of Darfurian participation, but none wants to be the one who suggests suspending the elections there. Most expect that Darfur will become a liability for the national elections, especially fearing that violence or disputed outcomes will damage the credibility of the national elections. The mainstream Northern parties are tempted to treat Darfur in the same way that Northern Ireland was treated by the mainstream British political parties for decades—as an irritant that should not become a partisan electoral issue (thereby disenfranchising the electors in the province). But at present there is no way of insulating Darfur's problems from the national electoral process.

25. Among Darfurians, the majority view appears to be that participation in either the census or the election would be a mistake. IDPs fear that they will be either disenfranchised or lose the right to return home, and that recent west African immigrants will be enfranchised in their place. Some Darfurian leaders in the NCP have expressed opposition to the election. The opportunity of presenting the elections as a mechanism for liberation through democracy has been missed. It is now too late to alter Darfurian popular opinion on this issue, which means that any elections in Darfur will be severely compromised. Failed elections in Darfur and the consequent missed deadline for the 2010

referendum on the status of Darfur will have severe implications for the remaining credibility of the DPA.

The Economy

26. Sudan's economic performance is the GoS's Achilles' heel. The diversified management of national finances was merely a management problem when the economy was growing, because the central financiers could satisfy the major claimants within the government, NCP and security simply by delaying paying the non-priority demands until sufficient funds were available—which was usually quite soon. Since the economy hit a downturn in the middle of 2007, economic and financial management has turned into political crisis. Claims on the central funds include security's requirements for its operations in Darfur, Chad and the wider region, and the NCP's demands for its election campaign. The government put a freeze on recruitment and promotion and stopped salary increases. (Inflation is officially 15%.) The Minister of Finance, Zubeir Ahmed Hassan, was a technocrat who did not have the power to rein in the spending of the various claimants on his funds. He offended the NCP bosses by asking for them to account for the money he provided to them. His ability to increase revenue from income tax and corporation tax was very limited (most of those who should pay these taxes find ways not to do so) and he had no control over oil funds. Zubeir tried to raise VAT from 12% to 16% but was faced with a revolt by the National Assembly. The budget was eventually passed. Nonetheless a substantial budget deficit is forecast for this year and the government has been forced to borrow. Deficit financing is likely to fuel inflation.

27. In response, President Bashir switched Awad al Jaz from the Ministry of Energy to the Ministry of Finance (while Zubeir Ahmed Hassan moved in the opposite direction). Some SPLM members' immediate reaction was joy that a man they feared had been removed from control over oil. However, the petroleum finances moved with Awad al Jaz. For the first time, a true political heavyweight is now Minister of Finance. Not only is there a new minister, but many of the senior staff at the ministry such as the permanent secretary have changed. Instead of the technocratic administration that existed until now the ministry more resembles a security office. Al Jaz made a quick move to court popularity by reducing the price of wheat bread, the urban staple. (No similar move was made for sorghum, the staple of rural areas and the poor.)

28. The immediate outcome of al Jaz's move is that the GoS can prioritise its spending more effectively than before, ensuring that the NCP's campaign chest and the security services have the resources they need. This also gives President Bashir the opportunity to centralize government finances to an unprecedented degree and inject some discipline into what has been a financial free-for-all. Two questions arise. The first is, will al Jaz have authority over the companies controlled by the security agencies, which control a large part of the market in consumer commodities (some estimates are 40% of the market)? If Bashir and al Jaz are able to centralize this financial control, a second question arises: to what end will this discipline be utilized? It seems very likely that the immediate outcome will be using funds to swing the election. After the election, will the

possibilities for coherent financial and economic policymaking be utilized for national benefit?

29. Sanctions and divestment are biting, with the attempted shift from trading in US dollars to Euros less than successful. The oil industry is sorely in need of technical upgrading that will allow it to refine the low quality oil that is being pumped. The government's recent solvency has also meant that creditors who would otherwise have written off Sudan's debts are showing greater interest.

The SPLM

30. Two months away from its landmark National Convention, the SPLM is searching for its national political strategy. Its official position and default position is holding fast to the strict implementation of the CPA as its manifesto. This is a safe approach that wins it international support and allows it to remain a partner in the GoNU while criticizing the NCP. However the SPLM is poised for a major debate on its approach to the fundamental national issues and for what to do should it win an election.

31. The fundamental question of national unity or secession is still open for debate. Salva Kiir faces the need to make decisions on this in the coming months, which also entails a decision on the balance between Southern and national politics. The organizing committee for the National Convention is in the hands of the unionists within the SPLM. Their critics allege that their handling of the preparation for the meeting has lacked transparency, arousing suspicions that the different tendencies within the movement will not be able to resolve their differences in an amicable manner.

32. The SPLM leadership still needs to build its capacity to handle its twin roles of leading the South and playing a national role. The GoSS faces many problems of corruption and failure to deliver services.

The Darfur War

33. The NCP's overall framework for Darfur is the following. It holds that it would have won the war militarily and imposed a political solution, had it not been for international interference and the role of Chad in supporting the rebels, in concert with Libya and Eritrea. It sees Chad as a direct sovereign threat and also as the staging post for European/NATO aggression. It is unworried by the SLA but concerned by JEM because of its political links in Khartoum.

34. The NCP strategy for the regional forces is to remove the government in N'djamena and neutralize or contain the threats posed by Libya and Eritrea. For the SPLM, it wants to neutralize what it sees as an attempt to bring Darfurian armed movements into a grant military alliance of the Sudanese peripheries against the centre.

35. Regarding the SLA, the NCP approach is to buy the splinters off one by one, as cheaply as possible. Concerning JEM, the calculation is that Khalil Ibrahim can only

survive with the support of two of his three current patrons, namely the Islamists, Chad and Libya. If the NCP succeeds in neutralizing the Khartoum Islamists through its talks with the PCP and overthrowing Idriss Deby, then JEM will not be a threat.

36. The last few months have seen a sharp uptick in violence in the northern part of West Darfur, as the GoS has waged a counteroffensive with combined air support and militia against JEM. This has both clear military objectives and significant civilian casualties. Even if it were at full strength, UNAMID would be unable to do more than watch.

37. The Arab militia headed by Mohamed Hamdan Hemeti, which mutinied in October last year, is back in the GoS fold. Hemeti double-crossed the GoS after receiving a vast shipment of armaments and took his militia to Jebel Marra where he signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the SLA-Abdel Wahid. He fought against the GoS and his brother was killed in the fighting. But having jumped out of the GoS orbit, he found nowhere to land—Abdel Wahid was unreliable and there was no opening from the international community. Hemeti continued to talk to the GoS and at the end of February signed an agreement with Khartoum, in which the GoS gave him (on paper) most of what he wanted—positions in the army, payments for his men, posts in local government. However, the relationship is now very different as neither side trusts the other. Hemeti says he expects the GoS to deliver on less than half of its promises. The GoS no longer expects Hemeti to act as its loyal proxy.

38. Anwar Khatir, a Mahamid Arab leader who had never served as a GoS proxy, is another who recently signed a deal with Khartoum. He also found the rebels so disorganized that they were unable to provide a sensible alliance partner. Within the government orbit he is seeking to chart an independent line.

Chad

39. The wars in Darfur and Chad are one and the same to the protagonists. The GoS and the Chadian government fight on both sides of the border. So too do the Darfur rebels and (to a lesser extent) the Chad rebels. Only the international community respects the border. There can be no peace or stability in Chad without the same in Darfur and vice versa. The very fact that the international peacemaking and peacemaking efforts have been divided up in the way that they have, at the insistence of the two governments, is an indication that they do not want peace yet—or at least they do not want peace on international terms. Much fighting remains to be done, sadly.

40. The GoS intent to remove the government in Chad has been clear since 2005. The timing of the February assault was determined in part by the imminent deployment of EUFOR. The rebels' failure to capture the city was due in part to their lack of internal coordination and trust, and in part to the failure of the GoS to provide them with anti-tank and anti-helicopter weapons. One may assume that the reason for Khartoum's apparent oversight is the tendency of weaponry to change hands and end up being used against its original supplier. France and Chad have revived the allegation that Khartoum has an agenda of Arabizing Chad. This is not convincing. The struggle is solely for power.

41. Deby's defence of N'djamena was conducted by an unlikely assortment of forces, including Sara and Hadjerai militia, JEM and SLA-Unity fighters, and French special forces, which played a greater role than Paris officially admits. Nonetheless, France's position is well short of unconditional support for Deby. France offered to evacuate Deby, who refused, saying he would prefer to die fighting in N'djamena to following the path of his predecessor Hissene Habre. France and Deby played a game of brinkmanship which Deby won. Once Deby had called France's bluff, France had no other policy than to support him.

42. Deby has succeeded in tactically outmanoeuvring his allies and adversaries. By politically eliminating the civilian opposition he has left the international community (i.e. France) the choice between him and the Khartoum-backed rebels. Knowing that supporting GoS proxies is a political impossibility, Deby was a sure winner. But once EUFOR is fully operational, French calculations may change.

43. The Dakar agreement was signed by the governments of Sudan and Chad in the full knowledge that it is wholly ineffective and both of them will violate it at the first opportunity. It was signed out of deference to Senegal and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. This is another indication that mediation efforts have become part of the parties' strategy for sustaining the war, rather than purely impartial interventions.

44. Deby is weaker than ever before. He has lost crucial kinsmen and allies, who were killed or defected (or executed when they rejoined his side). Popular sentiment is against Deby to the extent that any change is welcome. The role of the Darfur rebels in policing N'djamena on behalf of Idriss Deby is not winning them friends among the Chadian populace. The unreported razing of large areas of N'djamena has intensified hostility against the president. It is remarkable that Deby is so little liked that large sections of his own populace would prefer GoS-backed armed factions as their rulers. The warning signs are flashing for another battle for Chad.

45. The credibility of French and European policy in Africa has been seriously damaged by the battle for N'djamena and the perception that France is cynically reprising its neocolonial role. The belief that France made a trade off with Chad over the Zoe's Arc kidnapping scandal does not help. Chadian popular opinion is deeply anti-French. Most seriously, France and Deby have put EUFOR in an impossible situation in which it has no political mandate and no formal mechanism for liaising with the rebels. This could prove a disabling handicap.

Prospects for the Darfur Mediation

46. The likelihood of the international mediation for the Darfur conflict making significant progress in the coming months is close to zero. The mediation possesses neither strategy nor leverage to bring the parties closer to an agreement, and has identified its overriding objective as restarting talks. International efforts to bring peace to Darfur are exhausted, throwing the onus of action back onto the Sudanese. The most

important characteristic for the next chief mediator for the Darfur conflict will be the readiness to spend long periods listening to people in Darfur and the ability to translate those views into a peace process appropriate to today's constrained realities.

47. The NCP and JEM are ready to discuss power-sharing on a bilateral basis without international involvement. To the extent that UN-AU mediated peace talks occur, they are likely to be a façade behind which the parties pursue other interests and options. If the most important political issues are in fact dealt with in another forum, then the UN-AU mediation needs to consider which issues it should focus upon, and how.

48. Khartoum will continue to attend peace talks because it wants to show a respectable face to the international community and because it is confident that the armed movements will either fail to turn up, or should they turn up, fail to put together a coherent negotiating strategy. In the meantime it will pursue its military options in Chad and Darfur. The GoS has nothing to lose from the mediation because it expects nothing from it. The UN-AU mediators possess no leverage which might compel Khartoum to alter its strategy.

49. The rebels' main interest in the mediation is the legitimacy it confers and the possibility of obtaining resources independent of the GoS and Chad. Insofar as they see other regional or international sponsors with more capability, they have little interest in the mediation. And insofar as they are seeking recognition from the mediation, their interest may in fact be in sustaining the status quo rather than reaching a peace deal that would require them to deal with Khartoum directly. By this process, a high-profile mediator may be sucked into the conflict and become a factor helping prolong the conflict rather than ushering it to a conclusion.

50. The divisions among Darfur's elites should not be the occasion for dividing the communities of Darfur or leaving them hostage to these political gyrations. For this reason the mediation should encourage parallel processes at community level and among civil society to achieve consensus on the core substantive issues facing Darfur. The Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation seeking common ground among Darfurians is a promising process that should be facilitated. Its outcomes will bear fruit at such time that a genuine peace process can once again begin.

Prospects for UNAMID

51. UNAMID has been asked to perform mission impossible. Despite its Chapter VII mandate it is in reality a classic peacekeeping operation with a few additional protection elements added to its task list. It is deployed in the middle of an ongoing war, without a ceasefire or a functional mechanism for dealing with most of the belligerent groups, and with a mismatched counterpart in Chad that has no mechanism for dealing with the Chadian rebels. It is deployed in the middle of a political battle between Khartoum and three of the P5, in which Sudan suspects that UNAMID is the vanguard for a hostile deployment. GoS opposition to any troop contingents that might fall under NATO command is logical in this context. The rebels hope that UNAMID will ultimately deliver

something akin to Kosovo, as certain U.S. politicians and columnists have advocated. Disinterest in peace and escalation of conflict are logical in this context.

52. The immediate obstacles for UNAMID are the logistical difficulties it faces in operating effectively. It is underperforming AMIS. Its best option at present is to concentrate on the existing ten battalions and make them properly functional, with adequate base facilities and transport, rather than trying to expand its size. The GoS is extending just sufficient cooperation for the major onus of responsibility for non-performance to fall on the international donors.

53. The greatest risk for UNAMID is that the war of words between Washington DC and Khartoum will escalate, to the extent that the GoS sees a rationale for taking pre-emptive action in advance of possible military strikes. Thus far UNAMID has been fortunate in that neither side has chosen to endanger it militarily. The best case scenario is that UNAMID will survive this year undamaged.

Next Steps

54. International options for making progress on Sudan are severely constrained. The Darfur policy is essentially at a dead end. International peacemaking and protection efforts in Darfur are exhausted and the best opportunities for progress lie with recognition among ordinary Darfurians that this is the case, so that they take matters into their own hands. The central question before a new chief mediator for Darfur is how to identify and pursue a strategy for peacemaking that takes account of the improbability of any progress within a year or two, given the continuing unrealistic demands for progress coming from the UN Security Council and western capitals.

55. International policy is rebalancing. However, there is little time to revive a useful policy on the CPA and elections, with time lost and leverage wasted. In this regard, a correct assessment of why the Naivasha talks succeeded and the Darfur engagement has failed, is necessary. Most importantly, no progress is likely while western political leaders tout offensive military action as a realistic option.

56. Khartoum is clearly worried by the prospects of a Democratic administration in Washington DC, fearing that it would take a bellicose stand against the Sudan government. For this reason, the GoS welcomed the new U.S. Special Envoy, Ambassador Richard Williamson, on his recent visit to Khartoum. The GoS wants to put its relations with the U.S. and other western nations on a new footing. Many in the U.S., for their part, recognize that they need to do business with Khartoum. Williamson proposed a sequence of reciprocal steps that each could take. The main problem is that there is so much distrust on both sides that no leader in Khartoum or western capitals is ready to take the other's commitment in good faith. All will wait for clear evidence that the other side has delivered before responding. The GoS will not abandon its bellicose posture towards Chad without firm guarantees that its interests can be protected. Khartoum continues to believe that there are individuals well-placed within the administration who advocate regime change. Given the difficulties of the GoS adopting

and sticking to a single coherent policy, especially under these circumstances, it is inconceivable that the GoS could display sufficient good intentions within a six month period, for the U.S. administration to be satisfied and change policy before the Presidential elections.

57. The greatest opportunities for international support and leverage lie with the SPLM, which looks to the international community, especially the U.S., for endorsement of its policies. The reflexive solidarity that America has extended to the SPLM has not always served the best interests of movement or the people of Southern Sudan. Much work still needs to be done if the SPLM is to form a capable administration of Southern Sudan and be an effective democratic force in the North.

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