

Disarming JJ 010706

1. A commonly heard criticism of the DPA is that it “gives the Janjaweed to the GoS.” Taken at face value this is an absurd criticism because no international force would contemplate disarming the Janjaweed and the Movements insisted throughout the Abuja talks that the GoS had armed the Janjaweed and so should disarm them. Some commentators who should have known better (e.g. ICG) have peddled this line. Why does it continue to be said and what does this represent?
2. Many of those who make this argument are really saying that no agreement is possible with the GoS because it has such a poor record of abiding by agreements, and that the only solution to overthrow the Government and use international forces to create a new order. Hence the GoS will not disarm the Janjaweed because of its ill intent. This argument leads us nowhere except advocating invasion. Others argue this case on the grounds that the GoS cannot disarm the Janjaweed because its authority in Darfur does not extend beyond the towns and it cannot impose its will on the Janjaweed or any other militia. This is valid. But the conclusion that the UN or NATO should impose their will on these militia is not valid. If we estimate the Janjaweed at 20,000 strong, and note that forcible disarmament requires fighting a counterinsurgency, this implies an international force of 200,000 ready to do battle, take casualties, and focus entirely on this task until its completion before turning to the other tasks of returning IDPs to their homes, etc.