

God, Oil and Country: Sudan's Long Road to Peace

By John Prendergast, International Crisis Group

During the past few years Sudan has resembled a dizzying rollercoaster.

- High points: Forward progress for IGAD, protocols, humanitarian access
- Low points: oilfields, missed deadlines, Darfur

Until recently, there has always been more track and therefore analysts could see where the rollercoaster was going. Unfortunately, the track has simply disappeared.

- Taha: Naivasha Abyei (totally unknown)
- Darfur negotiations (totally unknown)

In the very near future, we need to figure out whether peace is possible in Sudan.

I. What are the obstacles?

1. From the perspective of American and British diplomats, the biggest obstacle appears to be Garang and the SPLA.

There is no doubt that the SPLA's negotiating tactics are irritating, even exasperating, but I believe that they have made a strategic decision to conclude this peace deal and are simply looking to maximize their returns.

The SPLA can be managed, and the US role should be to lean hard on them at appropriate points in the process.

2. The government's motivations, however, are much more opaque

(2 competing explanations)

- Conventional: end-game, digging in for best result, believe they compromised too much on South
- Conspiratorial: process has been a big deception, GOS lured the international community into a peace process, making the hardliners the heroes

Which is true? Unclear.

In either case there are benefits for the GOS to delaying the process.

Benefits of delay:

- Provide diplomatic cover to Darfur offensive
- Expose potential divisions within SPLA
- Expose potential divisions in international community

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- Expose potential divisions in NDA
- Continue to pocket oil money
- Leverage SPLA for political partnership

Result: GOS will stall until their calculus changes.

II. The cost calculus

- Neither side will come to closure as long as one or the other finds benefits in delay
- Costs may not yet be significant enough
- Real policy issues emerge:
 - Constructive engagement versus pressure
 - Carrots versus sticks
 - US & UK have favored constructive engagement

The international community's response so far has been:

- Priority should be given to maintaining diplomatic access
- Do not enrage hardliners
- Remain engaged in Naivasha

The international community's response should be:

- Completion of agreement is possible but not through constructive engagement
- Focus pressure on GOS (and SPLA if it becomes problem)
- Recognize that IGAD process is not occurring in isolation (Darfur)
- Connection between LRA & GOS needs to be dealt with

III. Darfur

- Darfur is linked to Naivasha in the following ways:
 - GOS believes SPLA is behind SLA
 - SLA/JEM rebellion came about because they were left out of the peace process
 - Khartoum delayed in Naivasha to cover Darfur offensive
 - Darfur affects both parties' calculations
- Evolution of Darfur conflict
 - Initially small, insurgent attacks
 - Attacks escalate
 - GOS increases aid to Janjaweed
 - Increased attacks by Janjaweed

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- GOS offensive
- Rebel counteroffensive
- Protracted civil war?

- Implications
 - Threatens regimes in Sudan and Chad
 - Currently, most violent conflict in Africa, humanitarian crisis
 - Allegations of genocide, ethnic cleansing
 - Potential to degenerate into inter-ethnic war
 - Potential to undermine Naivasha
 - Potential to become wider war against GOS

IV. Way forward

- When will the international community say enough is enough?
- Darfur needs political negotiations because there is no clear victor
- Pressure GOS to negotiate on political issues in Darfur
- US is turning the ship in the right direction by increasing pressure
 - Good cop/bad cop tactics
 - Public diplomacy
 - Congressional letters
 - Pledge to pen a US draft
- Using other diplomatic influence (Norway's Hilde Johnson key)
- Still a good chance for peace in Sudan, but much more to be done to get there.