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HIGHLIGHTS:

United Nations and the AMIS-United Nations transition debate

Security Council debates Darfur, Sudan boycotts

Reported by the *AFP* and *AP* and quoted in most major local newspapers is the story of last Monday's closed-door meeting of the Security Council over the situation in Darfur.

The meeting of the 15-member council was also attended by representatives of the African Union, the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Conference but the Sudanese government which had also been invited, did not participate, an absence which US Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton called "disappointing to say the least."

Warning that the situation risks getting out of control in Darfur amid fears of a government offensive against rebels, Bolton said Washington and London would press for a vote on their draft before the end of the month. He called for immediate action on the deployment but reiterated that the United Nations peacekeepers had no intention of forcing their way into Darfur.

The news agencies further report that earlier Monday Rick Grenell, a spokesman for the US mission to the United Nations, accused China of blocking progress on the deployment of the UN force. This has been cited in some of the local newspapers as a sign of divisions within the Security Council over the issue of a transition with *Allintibaha* carrying a headline that read *Security Council divided over Darfur*.

The news outlets further go on to say that Bolton said the council's five veto-wielding permanent members — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — would meet shortly "to see if we can find a way through this, hoping for a vote in a couple of days".

The council also discussed Bashir's alternative plan to deploy 10,500 Sudanese government troops by early January to provide security in Darfur.

Council members were also briefed on the latest Darfur developments by top UN officials in charge of peacekeeping and humanitarian affairs.

Jan Egeland draws bleak picture of worsening situation in Darfur

Jan Egeland, the UN relief aid coordinator, said he gave the council his "bleakest account of conditions in Darfur since the spring of 2004" [*from the same sources as the above*].

"Our entire humanitarian operation in Darfur — the only lifeline for more than three million people — is presently at risk," he told the council and called for immediate action on the political front to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe.

Egeland cited a report that more than 200 women and girls in one camp have been sexually assaulted in less than two months as one example.

"Our warnings have become a black reality that calls for immediate action," said Egeland.

The *AlAdhwaa* headline on this story carries the headline, ***United Nations backs US push to deploy United Nations peacekeepers to Darfur.***

US envoy leaves Sudan without meeting president

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer ended her mission to Sudan late Monday, a day before the U.N. Security Council was to discuss a draft resolution on the peacekeepers[*from the same sources as the above*].

Frazer had been expected to deliver a message from U.S. President George W. Bush to al-Bashir, apparently pressing the Sudanese president to end his rejection of the U.N. deployment but al-Bashir was unable to meet the American diplomat "due to his crowded schedule," the president's office said.

Instead, Frazer handed the message to presidential adviser Majzoub al-Khalifa Ahmed, who in turn gave her a message from al-Bashir repeating his rejection of the U.N. force, presidential spokesman Mahjub Badry, told reporters.

AlRai AlAam reports however that Jendayi Frazer has extended her visit by one day and may meet President Bashir today.

** The stories above have been covered by most major local newspapers quoting the sources from the various foreign news agencies.*

Opposition to the possible deployment of United Nations troops to Darfur

AlAdhwaa daily reveals that the National Resistance Council will stage a demonstration in Khartoum to protest the push for an international force in Darfur.

The paper reveals that the demonstrations will take place on Wednesday starting 09:00 hours when a procession will start marching from the Martyrs' Square in Khartoum to the United Nations headquarters to hand over a memorandum.

The memorandum, adds the paper, is in protest to a deployment of United Nations troops to Darfur and to declare resistance.

AlHayat daily also reports that the governor of South Darfur has echoed President Bashir's rejection to a deployment of international forces in Darfur.

The governor was officiating in the inauguration yesterday of a bridge connecting Murram with el-Diein in South Darfur.

Pagan Amoum accuses the National Congress Party over rejection to transition

Addressing Sudanese students at Rochester High School in New York where he is currently visiting, SPLM Secretary-General Pagan Amoum said that the GoSS is in need of international cooperation to consolidate the tenets of democracy in all parts of Sudan, reports the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, according to *Alwan* daily.

Amoum who gave a long speech on the problems Sudan is facing added that he was very disappointed over President Bashir's rejection to the AMIS-United Nations transition which

is “much needed for an end to the problems in the region and an end to attacks against civilians”.

He said that the reason the National Congress Party was against a transition was to cover for its atrocities in the Darfur region.

On the other hand, Amoum said that the SPLM sees no reason for the arrest of the *Chicago Tribune* reporter jailed in Darfur on charges of spying.

Abu-Shouk calls for United Nations troops

AlAyaam carries a brief story that residents of Abu-Shouk urged an EU envoy currently touring their areas to “bring in international forces”.

They argue that these forces are necessary to provide protection to the people in the camps.

Deng Alor holds talks with Pronk’s deputy

Under the headline above, *AlHayat* daily carries the story of a meeting yesterday between Minister of Cabinet Affairs Deng Alor and a “deputy of SRSR Pronk” [*the paper does not state who*].

The meeting is said to have focused on the outstanding issues between the SPLM and the National Congress Party relative to the implementation of the CPA.

Alor said that he told the DSRSG that there is no progress with regards the outstanding issues but the Partners are determined to resolve the issues. On the issue of the deployment of United Nations forces to Darfur, Alor said that he told the DSRSG that the Partners are not in agreement over the issue.

SPLA arrests 14 SSDF officers in Upper Nile

Allintibaha carries the story of the arrest by the SPLA in Fam-el-Ziraf in Upper Nile of 14 SSDF officers.

Mjr. Gen. El-Toum Daldoum, the C-in-C of the SSDF, reported that the 14 are of various ranks and were arrested by the SPLA last Friday while on their way from Malakal to Fam-el-Ziraf.

Daldoum added that the commander for the Fam-el-Ziraf area has given the United Nations 72 hours to secure the release of the arrested officers and has threatened war on the SPLA if they are not released. He added that SSDF representatives have handed to foreign minister Lam Akol a memorandum of protest over the incidence and that the foreign minister has promised to convey the same to SPLM/A leader, Vice-President Salva Kiir.

UNDP pledges \$70 million for southern Sudan*

(*Khartoum Monitor* – 29th Aug. **Khrt**) The United Nations USG and Associate Administrator of the UNDP, Ad Melkert, has announced that the UNDP has made pledges amounting to \$70 million for development in southern Sudan which will be made available throughout the next two years.

The USG was speaking in a press conference at Juba Airport on Saturday.

* *The Sudan Vision reproduces the full text of a Press Release by the UNDP on the USG's visit.*

CPA

NCP says SPLM should bear responsibility for development in southern Sudan

AlAyaam reports that Riek Gai, who heads the department on southern Sudan at the National Congress Party said that the SPLM has to face the challenges posed by insecurity and lack of development in southern Sudan.

He pointed out that the National Congress Party has a low share in the GoSS and could therefore not actively contribute to solving these issues and the challenges remain for the SPLM to bear.

GoNU

President el-Bashir not reliable, says commissioner

Under the above heading, the *Citizen* newspaper has the story of a public rally that took place yesterday in Rumbek North in Lakes State.

The paper reveals that the commissioner for the area described President Bashir as unreliable. He cited the president's earlier promises to the people of the area such as the promise to build universities nearby and a road linking the Rumbek North to Rumbek town but pointed out that all this has not materialised.

He urged the people to hold firm to the CPA which, he adds, will give them what they want despite the meagre resources at its disposal.

The commissioner questioned the point of clinging to an "unreliable leadership" while the option of a southern sovereignty is offered in the 2011 referendum.

Salva Kiir travels to Asmara

Reported in *AlAyaam*, Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit travels today to the Eritrean capital.

State Minister for the Presidency, Tilara Deng, said that the V-P's discussions during this meeting will focus on bilateral relations.

Protests continue over price hike

AlAyaam reports today that the Sudan Forum has condemned an attack by police yesterday on participants at a rally in Khartoum protesting the recent hike in price of combustibles.

The forum claims the police used teargas and unnecessary violence on the organised and orderly procession.

The paper goes on to say that the office of the spokesperson for police declined to comment when approached and only said they were not aware of the incident.

In a related story, the paper reports that political parties are gearing up for a demonstration of protest over the recent price rise.

The demonstrators will take to the streets tomorrow and hand a memorandum signed by representatives of a number of political parties [*baringr the Umma and Popular Congress Parties*] and civil service organises to the President of the Republic seeking his intervention to reverse the decision and to hold the finance and energy and mining ministers accountable for the issue.

Darfur/DPA

Sudan, Chad sign understanding on normalizing ties

The *AP* reports that Chad and Sudan agreed Monday to immediately resume diplomatic ties, severed in a dispute this year over rebel groups operating along their border.

Stories of the agreement are also carried in the local dailies.

The agreement came in a joint statement signed by the two countries' foreign ministers that also committed them to resume bilateral cooperation in all fields "of common interest."

In the understanding signed Monday, the two sides promised not to interfere in each other's internal affairs and not to host the opposition of one country in the other's territories.

The Sudanese and Chadian sides also agreed to establish a joint military- security commission in addition to forming joint forces to secure the common borders.

Chadian Foreign Minister Ahmat Allami said he hoped the agreement would help improve the situation in Darfur.

"The Chadian government will spare no effort to help implement the Darfur peace agreement and will stand against anyone who attempts to undermine implementation of this agreement," Allami said.

AlRai AlAam daily reports that the Sudan government has promised it will study a Chadian proposal that the Sudan mediate between N'Djamena and Chadian rebel forces while N'Djamena will back Sudan in its opposition to the deployment of a United Nations force to Darfur.

“Group of 19” says it will cooperate with AMIS on investigations over attack

AlAyaam reports that the “Group of 19” has offered to cooperate with the AMIS in investigations into attacks on AMIS forces in Darfur.

A military information officer for the group says they have sent a formal letter to the AMIS offering its cooperation.

Other developments:

50 die of watery diarrhoea in Khashm el-Girba

(*AlAdhwaa* – 29th Aug. **Khrt.**) 50 people have reportedly died in Khashm el-Girba as a result of a watery diarrhoeal disease.

Health officials attribute the widespread disease to the presence of a large number of decomposed bodies floating down from the Ethiopian highlands and held by the lake formed behind the Khashm el-Girba hydro-electric dam.

The officials warn of a looming serious health problem unless the central and regional governments come to the rescue.

It is worth mentioning that the last statistics on the watery diarrhoea was by the WHO and put the figure at 17,613 including fatal cases.

Heavily armed force attacks students in a primary school in el-Damazeen

(*Rai AlShaab* – 29th Aug. **el-Damazeen**) A heavily armed group beat up a student at a primary school in el-Rosseires, el-Damazeen, fracturing his arm while colleagues and teachers helplessly looked on.

The armed group was in a vehicle along the road when the student came crossing the road causing them to break in heavily. The angered group then chased the student into the school and beat and kicked him up and when fellow colleagues and teachers tried to come in, used teargas and fired in the air. Some students and teachers fell unconscious as a result.

The headmaster was in a meeting at the school with a visiting United Nations human rights delegation and the head of the local police force was also there when the incident happened.

The commissioner for the area, the head of the JIUs in the area and the local prosecutor later visited the area and legal steps have been taken to bring the culprits to book.

Commentaries:

International troops and the National Congress Party's persistent rejection

Mahjoub Osman, a columnist for *AlAyaam*, writes under this heading the visiting US envoy may or may not succeed in securing an audience with President Bashir.

He points out that the decision to reject must definitely have its repercussions that the Presidency of the Republic is fully aware and is prepared to face.

Citing the UK-US draft resolution before the Security Council, the writer points out that the draft merely talks of an expansion in the mandate of the United Nations forces currently on the ground in southern Sudan and the transitional areas to allow these forces to operate in Darfur with a mandate of preserving order and monitoring the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement on the ground. He points out that the draft resolution comes with nothing new but only expands the mandate of the current force that is in the country with the consent of the government.

He further says that the situation in Darfur is bad and worsening as all parties, with the exception of the government, say. This, he says, is the criteria that the government has to take into account in deciding on the issue. He adds that it is ample reason for a need for international forces.

He further points out that it may seem that rejection to a United Nations force in Darfur is something that members of the National Congress Party are bound to do and points out that even Vice-President Taha who held a different view two months ago is now against a transition.

He points out however that the points for are more convincing than those against a deployment.