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Highlights

CPA-support conference 23 June in Washington – P. Adviser

Presidential Adviser Ghazi Salah Al-Din announced that the USA-proposed conference to support the CPA will be held on 23 June, *Al-Ahdath* reports. However, Ghazi told reporters that the conference would not create mechanisms other than those specified by the CPA, adding Khartoum promised Washington to accept the list of participants. He said the technical committee between the two sides is preparing the conference.

Abyei to implement projects at \$147 million

Al-Sahafa reports the Abyei area Administration has engaged in contacts with several banks to obtain credits to the tune of \$147 millions to implement developmental and services projects. Abyei Head of Finance told the paper that the Administration began serious efforts to seek funds to implement projects after the attempts to obtain budget from the Federal Ministry of Finance did not materialize.

Sudan rejects to normalize relations with Israel

President Al-Bashir has revealed that the government was offered to normalize its relations with the Israel in exchange for addressing all problems and crises the country is facing, *Al-Rai Al-Aam* reports. The President made the remarks in an interview published yesterday by the *UAE's Al-Khaleej* newspaper. The President stressed that Sudan government would not compromise its principles or modify its position on the Palestinian cause. He criticized the USA, describing it as “a failed state” and accused Chad of supporting insurgency in Sudan.

Meanwhile, the President will lead today a high level delegation to participate in the meeting of the Desert and Coast Group in Libya.

Kiir recalls SPLM senior leaders for a meeting in Juba

Ray Al-Shaab reports that FVP Salva Kiir summoned yesterday SPLM senior leaders and advisers including Pagan Amum, Yassir Arman and Malik Aggar and Foreign Minister for an urgent meeting in Juba. The paper described the move as “surprising”. *Ajras Al-Hurriah* has learned of leaks that the meeting would review the status quo and take important decisions.

Meanwhile, SPLM SG Pagan Amum told reporters moments after arrival in Juba yesterday that the SPLM would not take the war path but would not tolerate NCP rigging the elections, *The Citizen* reports.

NCP Shura Council to meet tomorrow

The NCP Shura (consultation) Council is to hold two-day meeting starting tomorrow for consultation on the current political situation including elections and the situation in Darfur and Southern Sudan, *Al-Ahdath* reports. About 600 Shura Council members including President Al-Bashir will participate.

Al-Mirghani and Al-Mahdi to discuss elections coordination

Akhir Lahza reports the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) leading figure Muawia Abdullah Al-Mekki as saying that the DUP leader Mohamed Osman Al-Mirghani and the National Umma Party leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi as well as other senior party functionaries will hold a meeting by the end of this week to discuss a proposed coalition between the two parties to contest

elections and to coordinate their political stances on a range of other issues.

Threat to prevent elections in South a violation of constitution – NCP

Akhir Lahza reports NCP official Mandour Al-Mahdi has rejected SPLM's threat to prevent conduction of elections in the South based on the recently-announced census results. He told the paper that such a step is a violation of the Interim Constitution and the CPA. He added that SPLM leaders' rejection of the census results is inconsistent with FVP Kiir's endorsement and is an indication of presence of elements within SPLM who oppose democratic transition.

President Al-Bashir directs analyzing census results

Khartoum Monitor reports President Al-Bashir has directed the analyzing of the 5th census results in order to overcome the political differences and to assess the available resources and wealth for equitable distribution. The President made the remarks yesterday while addressing the first session of the National Council for Strategic Planning for 2009.

Samar to hear parliamentary reports on Wednesday

The Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Sima Samar will hold a meeting with the National Assembly's Committees for Human Rights, Legislation and Justice next Wednesday for discussion on the situation of human rights, **Al-Sahafa** reports. Sources said Samar would hear detailed reports on the human rights situations and the Parliament's efforts in this regard.

P. Adviser arrives in Riyadh for talks on humanitarian issue

SUNA 27/5/09 - The Presidential Advisor, Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail, arrived in Riyadh Wednesday heading the government delegation for talks on the humanitarian issues in Darfur. Dr. Ismail met in Riyadh with the Chairman of the Saudi Red Crescent, Emir Faisal bin Abdalla, and reviewed the humanitarian situation in Darfur and the humanitarian aid being extended by the Saudi Red Crescent in this respect.

NCP says Supreme Court determines government legitimacy

Sudan Tribune website 27/5/09 – NCP official Nafie Ali Nafie has dismissed calls by opposition parties for the dissolution of the government to prepare for elections. The call is based on “flimsy grounds”, he said.

Nafie said that there is no legal basis for the claim that the government is illegitimate saying those who stand behind it are “fooling people in the name of law and constitution”.

He called for those questioning the legitimacy of the national unity government to resort to the constitutional court for a ruling on the issue.

Nafie rejected any attempts to undermine the credibility and independence of the electoral commission denying that it is influenced by the government.

Sudan to replace Darfur top negotiator

Sudan Tribune website 27/5/09 — Sudanese government is considering to appoint Presidential Adviser Gazi Salah Eddin Attabani as new top negotiator for Darfur peace talks.

The current official in charge with Darfur peace negotiations Presidential Assistant Nafi Ali Nafi who is also Deputy Chairman for the political affairs at the National Congress Party (NCP) asked the party to entrust Attabani with Darfur peace file.

Nafi told the party that the preparation for the upcoming elections and the political contacts with other political forces absorb all his time, Attabani said today confirming reports speculating about his appointment as top negotiator for Darfur peace talks.

The presidential adviser said he is not yet in charge with the peace talks adding such huge task needs some preparations before.

Attabani leads currently the NCP bloc at the National Assembly and the party is mulling who would replace him.

He also pledged to work in close cooperation with Nafi, First Vice President Salva Kiir Mayadrit and Senior Presidential Assistant Minni Minnawi.

Mediation seeks strong international support to end Darfur conflict

Sudan Tribune website 27/5/09 — Peace mediators sought yesterday to draw a strong commitment from the Five Permanent members of the UN Security Council saying the complexity of the Darfur conflict requires concerted efforts of the international community.

Presidential envoys from China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States met yesterday in Doha with the Qatari state minister for foreign affairs and the AU-UN joint mediator for Darfur peace.

"The international community needs to demonstrate a strong commitment to help the people of Darfur to achieve peace and development," Qatari State Minister Ahmed Bin-Abdullah Al-Mahmoud told the presidential envoys, according to the Qatari news agency

Al-Mahmoud added that the issue of Darfur has been fueling regional and international concern for years, pointing at the same time that this unfortunate conflict cost many lives and drove hundreds of thousands of civilians from their home losing their money and properties.

The minister also underscored that the solution to the Darfur problem should be based on a broad national consensus aiming for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to stop the war and be a prelude to a sustainable peace based on dialogue and adopting dialogue as the only way to resolve differences and to emphasize the unity of Sudan and the maintenance its territorial integrity.

Speaking to the meeting, Bassolé today informed the five envoys that mediation efforts will focus on the next stage to work out a framework agreement between the negotiating parties. It would include cessation of hostilities and set out a timetable for negotiations leading to a just and lasting peace, he said.

The joint envoy also added that their plan comprises general principles and key points to achieve peace, stability, definitive cease-fire, the sharing of wealth and power, land ownership, justice, humanitarian issues and control mechanisms for peace implementation on the ground.

He pointed out that the forthcoming elections in the Sudan will contribute to in an exceptional manner to the solution of Darfur conflict, saying that allowing the participation of the people of Darfur is important and contributes to stability.

Bassolé stressed the need to diffuse tension and rebuild confidence between Chad and Sudan adding that the attack of Chadian rebels triggered violence between the two countries.

EU Special Representative for Sudan, Torben Brylle stressed the need to resolve the crisis between the two neighbors, saying the resolution of this crisis is an important factor to achieve peace in western Sudan.

The French Presidential adviser for the African affairs, Bruno Joubert, called for a comprehensive process that includes the different rebel groups particularly Abdel Wahid Al-Nur.

He further urged JEM to abide by the principle of open negotiations with the participation of the other groups.

In his speech, Bassolé also expressed hopes that Al-Nur joins the Doha process.

Today's meeting was attended by Chinese envoy to Darfur Liu Guijin, French envoy Bruno Joubert, EU envoy Torben Brylle, Russian envoy to Sudan Mikhail Margelov, UK special envoy to Sudan Michael O'Neill and US envoy to Sudan Scott Gration.

Delegations of the Sudanese government and the rebel JEM arrived yesterday in Doha to resume talks on the implementation of February goodwill agreement. The issue of the exchange of prisoner of war and humanitarian situation in Darfur would top the agenda of the meeting.

Meanwhile, **Al-Ahdath** reports MFA spokesperson Ali Al-Sadiq has described the meeting as "positive". He denied claims of differences between Sudan Government and France and Britain over Sudan-Chad dispute, saying the problem with these two countries is over the ICC. He hoped that the meeting would chart a roadmap to resolve pending.

Committee set up to investigate incidents in Meiram

Al-Ahdath reports the Ministry of Interior has set up a committee to investigate clashes between the Messeriya and the Rizeigat that occurred two days ago in the area of Meiram. The South Darfur government is also conducting consultations with the chiefs of the two tribes to contain the incidents. A broad meeting was held yesterday in Abi Jabra in Bahr el Arab between the Interior Minister, governors of South Darfur and Southern Kordofan states, police DG, security officials and tribal chiefs in the two states for discussion on the situation. The meeting decided to demarcate the border between the two tribes. A follow up meeting will be held four days later between the Governor of South Darfur and the governor of the southern Kordofan State in the town of Babanossa.

INTERVIEW-oil to aid Sudan's north-south links-Minister

Reuters 27/5/09 - North and south Sudan will keep strong links between their territories and oil industries, even if the south chooses independence in a 2011 referendum, State Minister for Energy and Mining Angelina Teny said yesterday.

North and south Sudan fought each other for more than two decades in a civil war that was fuelled by a mixture of religion, ideology, oil and ethnicity.

Many analysts remained concerned that if the semi-autonomous south chooses independence it could trigger a return to hostilities.

Teny, who is from the south and married to south Sudan's vice president Riek Machar, said the two parts had a "shared history."

"Even if let's suppose that secession happens, it does not mean that this is a total, absolute break-off of all relations," Teny told **Reuters** in an interview.

"You can't have a neighbour that you don't have relations and joint initiatives with," she said on the sidelines of an energy conference in London.

Major oil finds, helped by record oil prices of \$147 per barrel last year, have helped drive Sudan's economic growth.

Much of the country's oil infrastructure is situated in the north, while oil deposits are prevalent in the south. Teny said there were still "shared interests."

"If that (independence) were to happen you don't just switch off oil wells just like that," she said.

"Many of the oil facilities and infrastructures are kind of northward so even for you to build a pipeline it takes time."

Sudan's National Petroleum Commission -- the north-south body responsible for authorising oil deals -- has not met in a year.

Teny said despite this there had been a "close association" between the energy ministry of the coalition government and its counterpart in the south.

"The two ministries have been working more closely together of late," she said. "It is helping progress in the sector."

Earlier this year Sudan forecast oil production by the end of 2009 would reach 600,000 barrels per day (bpd). "We are still holding to that," Teny said.

"There are lots of new developments and new explorations even in the older fields," she said.

Oil production was in the region of 520,000 bpd from 2007 to 2008, Teny said, adding that investment in the oil sector reached about \$15 billion at the end of last year.

She said a drop in production of the heavy sweet Nile Blend crude oil of late was a concern, adding that the government had commissioned a study to look into ways to "enhance recovery."

Teny said a planned joint-venture refinery project between Sudan and Malaysia's state oil company Petronas 1/8PETR.UL 3/8 was on hold for now due to weaker oil prices.

"The price of actually constructing the refinery has changed a great deal which means you need to go back to the drawing table," she said. "It's not at all an indication that this project is going to be abandoned."

Hezbollah cell training in Sudan

The Bulletin, 28/5/09, Jerusalem — The Middle East Newslines has confirmed the Hezbollah network in Egypt planned to train its recruits in suicide bombing tactics in Sudan and in other countries in the Middle East.

Egyptian security sources report that Hezbollah operatives told interrogators the network worked to send scores of recruits for training in Lebanon, Libya, Sudan and Syria. Hezbollah had prepared training areas and instructors for these Egyptian recruits.

"The issue is much bigger than Hezbollah," Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abu al-Gheit said.

“It is an attempt to harm Egypt’s interests and twist its policy.”

So far, Egypt has identified at least 49 suspected members of the Hezbollah network. The sources said the network numbered 100 members, with about a quarter of them hiding in the Sinai Peninsula.

The Egyptian daily newspaper *al-Masri al-Yom* reported that two of the detainees detailed a Hezbollah plot to conduct a major terror attack in Tel Aviv.

Mohammed Ramadan Abdul Fatah Baraka and Nadal Hassan were identified as members of the Fatah movement who infiltrated Egypt from the Gaza Strip and settled in al-Arish, Egypt.

Hezbollah planned to send Baraka and Hassan to Sudan for training in suicide strikes. From Sudan, the sources said, the two Palestinians had been scheduled to fly to Syria and Lebanon.

Hezbollah recruits were told to report to Libya for intelligence training, but the sources said some of the recruits were unable to enter the North African country.

These Palestinian terrorists were said to have been recruited by the Hezbollah network in Egypt in 2008. After their recruitment, Baraka and Hassan returned to the Gaza Strip and months later infiltrated Sinai before agreeing to participate in the suicide attack.

Egypt has determined the Hezbollah effort was directed and financed by Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Officials said Tehran has deemed Hezbollah a vital asset in Iran’s strategy to destabilize pro-U.S. regimes in the Middle East.

“Iran’s relationship with Hezbollah has gone beyond the stage of solid ties to a close relationship that has resulted in long-term military cooperation in addition to security and intelligence cooperation,” Egyptian security analyst [Ret.] Maj. Gen. Sameh Saif al-Yazal said.

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Commentary

Is the U.S. selling southern Sudanese down the River?

Sudan Tribune; Roger P. Winter 05/27/2009.

“Selling “ someone “downriver”, according to any U.S.-savvy thesaurus, has the clear connotation of “sell-out” and, with reference to the shameful U.S. history of slavery, of angry masters selling uncooperative slaves down the Mississippi River into harsher conditions further south. In the context of Sudan, of course, the great Nile River flows north through Khartoum. Selling the people of Southern Sudan “downriver” thus would clearly connote selling them out to the Khartoum-based National Congress Party cabal (formerly the National Islamic Front) that purports to ‘govern’ Sudan.

Is this the direction in which the U.S. is now headed?

That conclusion is not at this time clearly justified, but concerns are growing. It is clear that the new U.S. policy on Sudan, which has largely been kept under wraps, has significantly shifted away from the previous policy of confronting the NCP over the gross mistreatment of its opponents, particularly those of African lineage and culture. Beyond the hundreds of thousands

of dead Darfuris are the all-but-forgotten two-and-a-half million dead Southern Sudanese and allied populations who are no longer among the living because of the policies of those currently in power in Khartoum. Since coming to power by coup in 1989, President Omer Bashir has presided over the deaths of some three million of his countrymen, qualifying his regime as runner-up to the Holocaust in body count, without paying any price whatsoever. He was rightly indicted by the International Criminal Court for Khartoum's miscreant performance in Darfur, despite the whining of a morally-deficient African Union and Arab League. Suddenly though, it appears the U.S. Administration wants to make nice with him and his cabal.

There are good reasons to engage Khartoum. The previous Administration's efforts to bring peace to Southern Sudan were energetic and successful; its efforts on Darfur were not. It seemed unable to 'walk and chew gum' at the same time. Its efforts to isolate Khartoum were a miserable failure. A new approach was clearly needed, one that genuinely helps to bring peace, justice and development to the people of Darfur and which also ensures the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which brought peace to South Sudan and its allied regions is fully implemented. There are and, given the track record of the National Congress Party, will surely be reasons to pressure and penalize Khartoum for its frequent unconscionable behavior. But if the Administration's approach actually includes a full range of tough options for responding to Khartoum duplicity, it is a too well-kept secret. Publicly, it has only "made nice" with Khartoum. That track record, especially when reinforced by words of 'niceness' by Senator John Kerry, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, should greatly concern anyone who yearns for a 'New Sudan' of peace, justice and development.

Bashir's twentieth anniversary as President of Sudan will be this June 30th. Ever since he came to power, the leadership group in Khartoum has largely remained intact. That leadership element is very able and also very committed to their divisive vision for Sudan and the region. They have seen scores of American diplomats come and go and have outfoxed and outlasted them all. They are masters at creating a crisis and then, at American insistence, partially 'resolving' that crisis and thereby creating amongst those Americans an image of being "someone we can work with". This, for example, is what Khartoum has done recently concerning the recent expulsion of humanitarian nongovernmental relief agencies from Darfur. That tactic in the past has usually been followed by a pattern of NCP promises made and then broken. It is an established NCP approach that routinely blunts, even shatters, every untutored U.S. diplomatic strategy.

The Administration is, I believe legitimately, intending to reach out to the Arab and Islamic worlds to seek seriously to improve relations. In fact, President Obama is expected to give a speech reaching out to those peoples while he visits Egypt next week. While legitimately engaging responsible leaders and communities, it is terribly important that he not simply lump the NCP with them. As long as an unfettered NCP remains in stolen power at Sudan's Center, marginalized Sudanese-North, South, East and West-will be at risk, subject to NCP whim. Humanitarian assistance and protection of the NCP's civilian victims, while critical, are not a solution per se to this kind of problem. Peaceful change in governance at the Center can be a solution and is the one already agreed to in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

A U.S. policy on Sudan that does not solidly seek to assure full implementation of the CPA would amount to selling Southern Sudanese and Darfuris for that matter, 'downriver'. It would also be an unmerited happy birthday present to Omer Bashir.

The author is the Former Special Representative on Sudan

Commentary

This Darfur prosecution is deadly

The Guardian, Conor Foley, 27/05/2009

Luis Moreno-Ocampo must answer a few questions over the ICC's indictment of Sudan's president over the Darfur massacre.

Reluctant as I am to defend the British Foreign Office at the moment, the Guardian's headline attacking it for its failure to support the ICC over Darfur was inaccurate and unfair.

I attended the debate at the Hay literary festival where Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the ICC's prosecutor, spoke, and it is quite a stretch to suggest that this summarised his general remarks that the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, Britain included, should be doing more to resolve the Darfur conflict. The chair of the meeting, Philippe Sands, did actually press him quite hard on this point. It is a shame that some of his other questions were not more searching.

Darfur is very far from the world's worst humanitarian crisis at the moment. Just over 600 people were killed there last year and there is general agreement that the situation is a "low-intensity conflict". Yet millions of people remain displaced from their homes – entirely dependent on humanitarian relief agencies for food, shelter and medicine. Two months ago, Sudan expelled 13 international aid agencies in retaliation for an ICC decision to issue an arrest warrant for the president, Omar al-Bashir. Clearly, the humanitarian consequences of this are serious, and it is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of thousands of people may die as a result.

Since the ICC has no way of enforcing its arrest warrant, the consequences of its indictment need to be subjected to some kind of cost-benefit analysis. Moreno-Ocampo's preparedness to debate this is to be welcomed, and so here are three questions that require answers.

1) Timing. On 10 July 2008 Moreno-Ocampo told the Washington Post he intended to pursue Bashir on charges of genocide. The day before this announcement, an industrial tribunal ruled that the ICC had wrongfully dismissed an employee who had initiated a complaint about Moreno-Ocampo for alleged sexual misconduct. Inevitably, this has led to accusations that the timing of the announcement was designed to "bury" the news about the case. First of all, why was this day chosen for such a significant decision? Second, why was the announcement made publicly when a sealed indictment could have been issued that would have had a far better chance of allowing for Bashir's apprehension on a trip abroad?

2) Genocide. There is broad agreement that horrendous crimes have been committed in Darfur, but genocide is a very specific charge related to premeditated, cold-blooded extermination. It happened in the Holocaust, Rwanda and Srebrenica, but probably did not occur during recent conflicts such as Sri Lanka and the Gaza. The previous Bush administration in the US declared that genocide was occurring in Darfur and one campaign group ran advertisements saying that 400,000 innocent civilians had been killed. But a UN commission of inquiry did not back these claims, and the advert was withdrawn after the Advertising Standards Association ruled that it was inaccurate. The panel of judges at the ICC did not accept Moreno-Ocampo's case that there was sufficient evidence of genocide. Why is he so certain of this claim?

Moreno-Ocampo graciously spoke to me after the debate and made the case that the Sudanese government's interference with aid deliveries was designed to kill people. Most aid agencies do not accept his assertion that 5,000 people a month are dying in the camps and, having worked in about a dozen war zones around the world over the last 10 years, I have learned to take all such figures with a large pinch of salt. But clearly, the expulsion of the aid agencies is going to

send the death rate up, and so this could become a self-fulfilling prophecy – as happened in Kosovo, where Nato's bombing campaign triggered the humanitarian crisis it was supposed to avert. We need to discuss this issue more openly.

3) Double standards. The one point on which Sands did press Moreno-Ocampo was why he was bringing cases in places such as Sudan, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, but not in Afghanistan, which is subject to the ICC's jurisdiction. Moreno-Ocampo replied that he had only received one complaint about Afghanistan, which was from Sands himself. I presume that this was meant as a joke, since I set up a legal aid project in Afghanistan six years ago and we documented dozens of cases that fell within the court's jurisdiction. I know of at least one aid agency that sought the court's advice on investigating the murder of some of its employees. Incidents such as the massacre in Baghlan a year and a half ago are also crying out for investigation. This issue is serious and deserves to be answered honestly.

Although Moreno-Ocampo portrays his role as politically neutral, he has enormous discretion on where, when and whether to initiate investigations and bring charges. Clearly, the court has chosen to focus on places that are of limited strategic interest to the western powers and to limit its activities in places that are more controversial. Given that he is using his discretion in order to avoid -taking cases that might damage the court's standing in American eyes, we have a right to ask for a similar respect for the lives of Sudanese civilians.

The meeting at Hay concluded with a collection for a humanitarian aid agency and many people who warmly applauded the ICC prosecutor no doubt made donations as they left the room. If I ran the aid agency that the money was collected for, I would send it back.