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HIGHLIGHTS:

AMIS-UN transition

Pronk - Growing climate of distrust of UN looms in Sudan

(UPI/ST – 28th Feb. **United Nations**) The U.N. envoy to Sudan says there is a strong distrust of the United Nations and talk of al-Qaida activity to resisit the UN force is growing in the capital, Khartoum.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Special Representative Jan Pronk Tuesday said both are linked to the uncertainty surrounding peacekeeping operations in the strife-torn Darfur.

"We are strongly opposed to any foreign intervention in Sudan and Darfur will be a graveyard for any foreign troops venturing to enter," he was quoted as saying Saturday.

"Politically we are a bit in a stalemate," Pronk said, referring to the African Union peacekeeping force in the Darfur region, and whether it would be replaced by a U.N. operation.

"The climate in Khartoum against the United Nations is heating up very strongly... threats, there are warnings, there is talk about al-Qaida. There also is fear in Khartoum the U.N. transition was but a conspiracy which will bring Sudan into the same situation as Iraq a couple of years ago.

Bashir, who regularly accuses the United States and its allies of fomenting a conspiracy to plunder his country's resources, again accused the West of seeking to use the western region of Darfur as a launch pad to spread its interests in Sudan.

"It's also a feeling which is true for many people in the streets of Khartoum, and in that very difficult situation we at the moment are working," said Pronk, who heads the U.N. Mission in Sudan.

Sudan seeks to stop UN taking over AU force in Darfur

(AP/ST – 1st Mar. **United Nations**) The Sudanese government has launched a campaign to stop a U.N. force from taking over peacekeeping duties from African Union troops, the top U.N. envoy in Sudan said Tuesday.

At the same time, Jan Pronk said an anti-United Nations climate is heating up strongly in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, with threats and warnings, and fear that handing over to a U.N. force would put Sudan "in the same situation as Iraq a couple of years ago."

On Jan. 12, ambassadors on the African Union's Peace and Security Council agreed in principle to hand over peacekeeping to the U.N. but left a final decision to a ministerial meeting on Friday. In the meantime, the U.N. Security Council authorized the start of planning for a takeover, and U.S. Ambassador John Bolton tried unsuccessfully to get the council to authorize the new U.N. force.

Pronk told a news conference the African Union may be reconsidering the decision to relinquish peacekeeping responsibilities. He said Friday's scheduled ministerial meeting has been postponed for a week at Sudan's request until March 10.

"Sudan has sent delegations to many countries in the world in order to plead for its case, namely, let the African Union stay and let the U.N. not come - no transition," he said.

"We do not know whether the African Union next Friday will reconfirm its own decision. That is not certain any more," Pronk said.

If the African Union decides against handing over, he said, the Security Council cannot then say it is taking over peacekeeping.

Pronk told reporters the situation in Darfur remains difficult with groups of 3,000 militia on camel and horseback attacking villages with army cars behind them.

That means a robust force is still needed to prevent attacks as well as a peace agreement to end the conflict.

Pronk said there is a possibility that peace talks in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, could produce an agreement in March, but "the most important question is not whether there will be an agreement but what will be in the agreement."

A peace agreement must have teeth and ensure that the parties do not return to fighting and that violators are punished, he said.

In the next few weeks, Pronk said, "there are many uncertain variables" including the future of the African Union force, a possible peace agreement, and an international meeting which had been scheduled for February in Europe, where donors had been expected to pledge enough resources for the African Union force to stay through the transition to a U.N. force.

If the African Union decides against a handover, Pronk said, there will also be a question of whether it can stay in Darfur "because there are no resources."

Earlier this month, U.S. President George W. Bush made his strongest statement of support yet for an expanded international role in Darfur, backing a larger force for Darfur and NATO involvement.

Pronk said a NATO-led force in Darfur would be "a recipe for disaster."

"As soon as you make clear to them that there will be decisions without consultation and just come in, then they speak of recolonization, invasion, imperialism and they speak about Iraq and Afghanistan, that is the fear," Pronk said, recalling meetings with traditional leaders in Darfur.

"You need either an AU force which is effective, and the present one is too small, not strong, big, etc., enough, or you need the U.N.," he said. "There is, in my view, no alternative."

Africans unsure on UN fielding Darfur force: UN

(Reuters/ST – 28th Feb. United Nations) The African Union appears to have second thoughts about handing over its mission in Sudan's Darfur region to U.N. command after heavy lobbying by Khartoum, the top U.N. official in Sudan said on Tuesday.

The United Nations has started contingency planning for a takeover from the African Union, which has 7,000 troops and monitors in Darfur. But the U.N. Security Council cannot authorize a U.N. force unless the AU agrees.

U.N. envoy Jan Pronk also told a news conference that many Sudanese in Khartoum feared fighters from al Qaeda would stream into the country, like they did in Iraq, if a U.N. force took over in Darfur, especially if it had Western contingents.

"There is intelligence information that there are people in Khartoum who were not in Khartoum before," Pronk said, in reference to al Qaeda. "In these situations it is to a certain extent conjuncture (but) it would be unwise not to take the beginnings of such warnings seriously."

Pronk said that Sudanese leaders, whose consent is also needed, were hardening their position at a U.N. force, even though NATO is helping the underfinanced AU operation.

"There is fear in Khartoum that the U.N. transition will be a conspiracy to bring Sudan in the same situation in Iraq," Pronk said.

He said such fears about "recolonization, invasion, imperialism, Iraq and Afghanistan" were genuine but they "can be made bigger than they are" by the government.

Pronk said that a peace agreement between rebels and the government being negotiated in Abuja, Nigeria, was a necessity before a robust U.N. force entered. He said there might be a pact in March but if it was merely a "fake" ceasefire without follow-up it would again falter.

AU meeting on Darfur handover to UN postponed

(Reuters/ST – 28th Feb. Addis Ababa) A meeting of African Union members on whether to hand over the AU's mission in Sudan's Darfur region to the United Nations has been postponed until March 10, an AU spokesman said on Tuesday.

"It was postponed to give ample time for all those concerned in the Darfur crisis to attend," AU spokesman Assane Ba said, without elaborating.

The AU meeting to make a final decision on a handover in Darfur was originally due to take place on Friday.

The United Nations has already started contingency planning for a takeover, but Security Council members say a resolution should come only after AU foreign ministers make a decision on whether to turn over the mission.

If AU requested transfer of its mission, that would be a breach of confidence

(Sudan Vision – 1st Mar. Khartoum) The Governor of North Darfur State and Chairman of the all-Darfurians Conference, Osman Kibir, said that if it has been discovered that the African

Union (AU) has requested for the transfer of its mission to UN forces this would amount to a breach of trust and failure of AU mission.

Kibir who was talking at the SUNA Forum yesterday said that Sudan had dealt with the AU mission as quests operating under its control and in accordance with the N'Djamena Ceasefire Agreement concluded between the Sudan and the Darfur Armed Movements. The Governor added that the Sudan extended all possible support to the AU mission for being the closest to the Sudanese psyche, referring to the demonstration staged at Al-Fashir.

Kibir said the security conditions in Darfur are improving but admitted the existence of some security problems which he said will not justify foreign intervention.

The Governor pointed out that the basic goals behind convening of the all-Darfurians Conference was to facilitate negotiations at Abuja and to prepare for the Conference to follow after signing of the peace agreement. Kibir highlighted the major recommendations of the Conference, stating that they focused on peace negotiations and services. The Governor referred to the tribal reconciliations that took place in North, South, and East Darfur, adding that contacts are continuing with the political parties. Governor Kibir said the three tasks of the Conference are manifested in the implementation of recommendations, pushing forward the talks and working to cement the unity of Darfurians. In a related development, head of the delegation emanating from the Darfurian Conference to the Abuja talks, Amin Banani, demanded the armed groups to liberate themselves from all forms of partisan containment and foreign agenda, noting that foreign intervention will complicate efforts rendered to resolve the problem. Banani who talked at the SUNA Forum added on the government to implement the Conference recommendations particularly commitment by parties to N'Djamena Ceasefire Agreement. Rapporteur of the Conference, Najib Adam Qamar Addin, said the Conference Recommendations represent the vision of Darfurians for resolving the conflict

UN

UN to impose sanctions on 10 members of Sudanese government - report

(The Guardian/ST – 1st Mar. London) The UN intends to impose targeted sanctions on up to 10 members of Sudan's government and others involved in the Darfur crisis, after an increase in killings in recent months and access being denied to aid camps.

According to the London based The Guardian, a security council resolution, sponsored by Britain, will recommend a travel ban, a freeze on overseas accounts and other assets, and, possibly, the issuing of warrants by the International Criminal Court, which deals with crimes against humanity.

The UN drew up a confidential list last year of dozens of Sudanese leaders it claims are responsible for deaths and displacement, as well as leaders of the government-backed militia and two rebel movements.

Sudan's interior minister, defence minister and the director of its national intelligence service are named in a confidential list of individuals who could be considered for sanctions by the UN Security Council over their alleged role in the conflict in Darfur.

A British official said the resolution naming individuals in "close to double figures" would be put in the next fortnight; the names would not be revealed beforehand, for fear they would

move their assets or go into hiding, but at least one was a senior member of Sudan's armed forces.

UN seeks new mediator for talks on eastern Sudan

(*AlAyaam* – 1st Mar. **Khartoum**) A source from the Eastern Front has disclosed that a UN delegation held talks with them recently in Asmara and has proposed that the leadership of the Eastern Front propose a mediator of their choice for talks with the Sudanese government.

He said that the Eastern Front has requested to be allowed some time before coming up with a decision on the Tripoli forum.

Another source expects the UN to play a more active role in the issue of talks on eastern Sudan and maybe take over the role of mediator.

UN is a facet of the US, says Nafei Ali Nafei

(*AlAyaam* – 1st Mar. **Khartoum**) Vice-Chairman of the National Congress Party Dr. Nafei Ali Nafei has accused the UN of intentions to intervene in Darfur and says it is nothing but a facet of the US.

He blamed the big powers for the failure of the AU to continue on their duties by cutting funds to the regional body and thus opening the grounds for an international intervention.

CPA

Machar says financial constraints affecting JIUs

(*AlSahafa* – 1st Mar. **Khartoum**) Vice-president of the GoSS and the SPLM has blamed the SAF for dragging its feet in relocating its forces to the north.

Dr. Riak Machar said that the SPLA has completed fielding in its contingent to the JIUs and has named Mjr. Gen. Thomas Cirrilo as their commander while the SAF is yet to finish their part and this, he adds, hampers the work of the JIUs especially when it comes to following orders.

He also cited the irregularity of salaries as another problem hindering the work of the JIUs. He also says there are financial obstacles that hinder the formation and functioning of the JIUs. He said salaries for these forces are irregular.

When asked to comment, the spokesperson for the SAF described Machar's allegations as false.

GoNU

Minister of Energy says GoSS has received oil money

(*AlRai AlAam* – 1st Mar. **Khartoum**) Oil minister Awad Ahmed el-Jaz says the National Congress Party has no objections to giving the SPLM access to the documents on oil revenue right from the date of production.

The minister who was speaking to *AlSharq AlAwsat* newspaper said that the government is also prepared to put the records straight should it be proved revenue from certain oil wells wrongly designated as northern oil wells have gone into northern coffers.

On accusations by SPLM officials that they have not received the GoSS share of oil revenue, the minister pointed out that the officials are still around, the money is with them and the records of transaction available at the Ministry of Energy and Mining showing when and how the money was transferred to the SPLM are all available and everything can be proved without much fuss.

President issues amnesty to el-Fateh forces

(*AlSahafa* – 1st Mar. **Khartoum**) Sources say President Bashir has issued an amnesty to members of the *el-Fateh* armed group (one of the major components of the NDA military wing).

The president's decision repeals an earlier decree branding as criminals the NDA forces blamed for staging a raid on Kassala and bombing the petroleum pipelines.

Military sources say that the President's decision is very important for the implementation of the Cairo Agreement signed earlier between the GoS and the NDA. The sources further point out that the ongoing consultations between the NDA and the government will guarantee the return of these forces and facilitate their reintegration into society.

Darfur/ Abuja talks

Refugees from Chad seek safety in Darfur

(*Sudan Vision*– 1st Mar. **Geneva**) Chadians fleeing mounting insecurity at home are crossing the border into Sudan's Darfur region, increasing already staggering refugee pressures there, the United Nations said on Tuesday.

About 8,000 to 10,000 people, among them "an undetermined number" of Chadians, have set up camp on the Darfur side of the frontier after a rebel attack in the Chad border town of Adre on Dec. 18, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said. "Confirmation that Chadians have crossed into Darfur is certainly a worrisome new development and a sign of the deteriorating security situation across the border," UNHCR spokeswoman Jennifer Pagonis told a press briefing.

U.N. officials said it was difficult to estimate the numbers of Chadians in the makeshift camps because Sudanese nationals were also seeking shelter there from the ongoing Darfur conflict between rebels, the government and government-backed militias. Chad has withdrawn its border troops to protect its main frontier towns, including Adre, after the December attack and officials say that has created a dangerous security vacuum along the Sudan-Chad border.

U.N. and human rights officials say the Darfur conflict is spreading over the frontier and Chadian rebels hoping to depose President Idriss Deby present a new threat. In addition to pressures along its eastern border, Chad has also received 5,000 refugees from the Central African Republic in small villages in the south of the country this month. Pagonis said banditry and hostilities between rebel groups and government forces in the Central African Republic had spurred an influx into Chadian border towns Beka and Bekoninga. U.N. and

other agencies have begun moving refugees to the Amboko and Gondje sites near Chad's southern town of Gore, she said.

Southern Sudan

Sudanese Salva Kiir commends Kenya's role in peace realization

(*KBC/ST* – 28th Feb. **Nairobi**) Sudanese first Vice-President Salva Kiir has thanked the Kenyan government for the role it played in the realization of peace in southern Sudan, the Kenyan KBC Radio reported.

Speaking when he paid a courtesy call on President Mwai Kibaki at State House, Nairobi, today, Vice-President Kiir also hailed the support Kenya has continued to give southern Sudan in its reconstruction efforts.

He appealed to President Mwai Kibaki to continue playing a facilitative role in the implementation of the comprehensive peace agreement that brought to an end the conflict in southern Sudan. He lauded the existing cooperation between Kenya and southern Sudan, citing construction of the road and railway line that will link the two countries as one of the priority areas.

Responding, President Kibaki assured the Sudanese vice-president that the government will continue supporting southern Sudan in the implementation of the peace accord. The president said Kenya was also keen on ensuring that the road and railway line to southern Sudan was constructed to promote trade.

He thanked Vice-President Kiir for today's donation of 75m shillings (1m US dollars) towards the national famine kitty saying the gesture showed southern Sudan's commitment to boosting existing cordial relations.

UN starts implementation of recovery program for S. Sudan

(*Xinhua/ST* – 27th Feb. **Juba**) The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) announced here in southern Sudan on Monday that it started to implement its Recovery and Rehabilitation Program (RRP) for Sudan.

A ceremony was held in the Juba Hotel. Officials of the Sudanese Government of National Unity and the government of south Sudan as well as representatives of the European Commission (EC), UNDP and some non-governmental organizations (NGO) signed the documents relating to recovery and rehabilitation projects in five states in southern Sudan.

Another ceremony is to be held later this week in Khartoum for the signature of documents relating to recovery and rehabilitation projects in five states in northern Sudan.

The UNDP said in a statement that a total of 50 Sudanese and international NGOs were working together for the first time in 10 states across Sudan.

These NGOs, along with the communities and the local administrations, will build water points, healthcare units, schools and sanitation systems, develop income-generating projects, address the capacities of local administrations and respond to other priority needs defined by the communities themselves, said the statement.

It said that the RRP was finalized by the EC in the framework of its development assistance it re-launched following the signature of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005 with a budget of 50 million euros (about 60 million U.S. dollars).

"The RRP aims at achieving tangible improvements at the community and local administration level whilst providing a foundation for increased productivity from the grass roots," the statement said.

Human rights

Beja Congress to hand memorandum to human rights rapporteur

(*AlAyaam* – 1st Mar. **Khartoum**) The Beja Congress intends to present a memorandum to Human Rights Rapporteur Sima Samar on the human rights situation in eastern Sudan.

Sources say the memorandum may contain requests for an international probe into the incidents in Port Sudan last year which left some people dead.