

Amin Hassan Omer

## History of the Peace Process in Sudan

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1. Since the Salvation Government came to power on June 30, 1989, it made the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Southern Sudan one of its top priorities, considering it a central issue and an important precondition for achieving security and stability in the country, as well as for the development, progress, and overall revitalization of the country.

2. The government announced a unilateral cease-fire, and continued to renew it until it was violated by the rebel movement.

3. The government announced a general amnesty for all those who had taken up arms for political reasons since 1983.

4. The government accepted the continuation of operations to airlift relief assistance to those affected by war in the rebel-controlled areas, ordained by the UN.

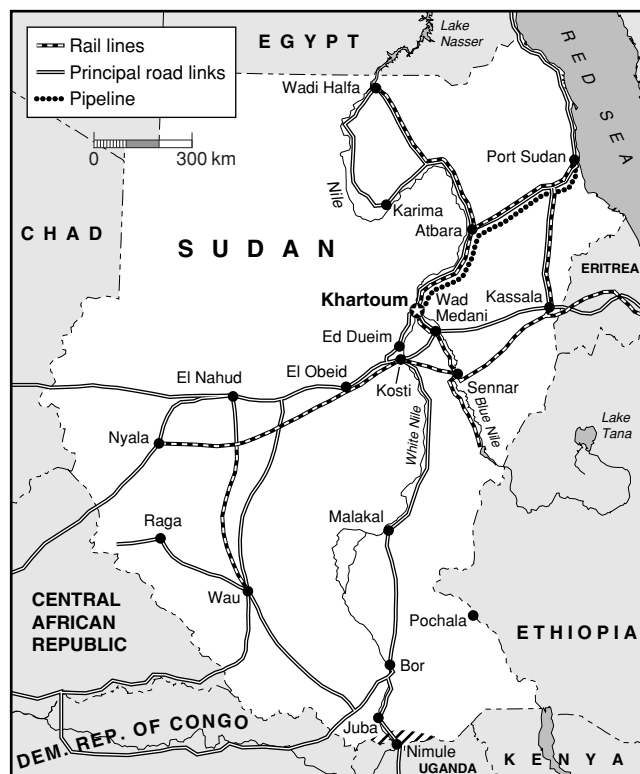
5. Despite shortcomings of the Operation Life Line Sudan I, the government approved the programs of Operation Life Line Sudan II, as well as accepting the continuation of many NGO [non-governmental organization] programs, although it was aware of serious misconduct by some of these organizations in the South.

6. The Sudan government again agreed to allow Operation Life Line Sudan III to go ahead. The government continued to facilitate the operations of UN agencies and various NGOs to ensure safe arrival of food and medicine to those affected wherever they were, despite the rebel movement's intransigent insistence on using food as a weapon in the conflict.

7. The government convened a National Dialogue Conference on Peace between Sept. 9 and Oct. 21, 1989, and representatives from various groups and sections of the community participated in it. The conference came out with definite resolutions, which the Revolutionary Government endorsed and made into a program for peace. The resolutions concentrated on the following:

- Political participation and power-sharing;
- Fair distribution of the national wealth;
- Expression of cultural diversity; and
- The relation between religion and the state.

FIGURE 1



8. The government held a round of talks with the rebel movement in Nairobi, Kenya on Nov. 28 to Dec. 5, 1989, mediated by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. During this round of talks, the government presented its proposed program for the first time to the rebel movement. The rebels recognized the resolutions of the National Dialogue Conference as being a constructive and useful basis for resolving Sudan's problems. This recognition was included in the final communiqué issued at the end of the Nairobi talks. Jimmy Carter also confirmed that the rebel movement did not have any objection against the government peace program.

9. The government took the following steps:

- A federal system of government was promulgated.
- The Southern States were exempted from the *Sharia* (Islamic law) when its implementation was declared in January 1991.

10. President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria made an initiative during the OAU [Organization of African Unity] Summit Conference in Abuja in July 1991.

11. During the preparation for the Abuja peace talks, on Aug. 28, 1991, a split occurred within the rebel movement. The faction that led the split became known as the Nasir faction, and the remaining one became known as the Torit faction. This split resulted in a setback for the Nigerian

peace initiative, because of the new proposals by the rebel movement, known as the Torit Resolutions. These resolutions called for confederation or self-determination for the South.

### **Federalism Is Accepted**

12. The government made an initiative to meet with the Nasir faction in the search for peace. This resulted in a series of meetings in London and Nairobi, and ended in the Frankfurt meeting of February 1992, in which the Nasir faction accepted federalism as the basis for a political settlement of the conflict.

13. The first round of talks was held in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, between May 26 and June 4, 1992. After lengthy and fruitful deliberations on the problems of national unity, identity, the sharing of power and wealth, and the expression of cultural and racial diversity, the meeting came out with the following resolutions:

a) That a peaceful dialogue is the only way to solve Sudan's problems, and therefore it was agreed to continue with the talks mediated by Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida, until the time he left office as chairman of the OAU.

b) That Sudan is a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and multi-religious country, and as such the meeting agreed to work out constitutional and political arrangements to accommodate these diversities similar to what has been done in Nigeria.

c) To agree on interim arrangements to enable all the groups to build confidence, so as to be ready to share power and wealth and achieve balanced development.

d) To establish a national committee for the distribution of national wealth on a fair basis during the interim period.

e) To resume negotiations at a time to be specified by the Nigerian government in order to discuss interim arrangements.

14. It is worth mentioning that the factions of the rebel movement had decided during the negotiations to reunite under the leadership of William Nyuon, the deputy leader of the Torit faction.

15. As a reaction to this development, John Garang held a press conference in Kampala, Uganda and rejected what was agreed to at the Abuja talks, saying that William Nyuon had exceeded the powers delegated to him. This led to another split in the movement, with William Nyuon becoming the head of a third faction.

16. In the run-up to the second round of the Abuja talks, Garang, in a message to the Nigerian government, insisted on confederalism as a basis for a settlement, advocating the creation of two nations with separate constitutions, separate political institutions, and independent jurisdiction in the realms of defense and foreign affairs. This totally contradicted

the Abuja I resolutions, which called for a constitutional arrangement within a united Sudan.

17. The deadlock was only broken when Dr. Ali al-Haj, the spokesman for the government delegation to the peace talks, met with Garang at Entebbe in Uganda on Feb. 23, 1993, in talks mediated by Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni.

### **Abuja II Talks Sabotaged**

18. The government delegation held preliminary talks with the delegation of the Torit faction of the rebel movement (which started calling itself SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] Mainstream) in Abuja during April 26-30, 1993, followed by official talks during May 1-17, 1993, known as the Abuja II talks.

19. In Abuja II it was agreed to divide powers in several key areas between the Central Authority and the states, and to form a committee for distribution of the national revenue during the interim period, and another committee for resettlement and rehabilitation

20. The discussions centered on the following:

- Powers of the Central Authority;
- Judicial system;
- Power-sharing between the Central Authority and the states;
- Length of the interim period;
- Position of the South during the interim period;
- Security and military interim arrangements; and
- Nature of referendum and when it should be held.

21. Nigeria made efforts to narrow areas of difference. But when these efforts were about to bear fruit, and the Nigerian mediators were drafting the final communiqué, Col. John Garang suddenly arrived in Abuja and ordered the inclusion of a new proposal calling for any residual powers not mentioned after the distribution of powers between the Central Authority and the states, to belong to the states. The government delegation objected to that proposal because it saw no point of including it after everything was discussed, and also because the proposal contradicted the fact that in a federal system all powers on which the constitution is silent automatically belong to the Central Authority and not to the states. The government delegation considered this an attempt to abort the talks, which was the main objective for which Garang came, just a day before the end of the talks.

22. The Abuja II talks ended without agreement even on a final communiqué.

23. The Abuja II talks ran concurrently with the Nairobi talks between the government delegation and the SPLA-United faction of the rebel movement during May 10-25, 1993. (The United faction was formed in March 1993 following a merger between Nasir, William Nyuon's, and Karubi-on's factions, which broke away from Garang and rejected his leadership.)

24. The Nairobi talks started where the Abuja I talks ended. They concentrated on the subject of political interim arrangements, which would lead to a peaceful and permanent settlement of the Southern problem. The political interim arrangement considered distribution of powers, wealth, security arrangements, role of religion, share in development, and the question of a referendum at the end of the interim period.

25. The two delegations agreed that the interim arrangement would be instituted within a united federal Sudan.

### **The Importance of the Fashoda Meetings**

26. The Nairobi talks continued with the government delegation meeting with the SPLA-United faction in August 1993 at Fashoda in Upper Nile.

27. The Fashoda meetings were preceded by a series of contacts between the government and the United faction, which resulted in several agreements on opening of the roads for the passage of the relief assistance and to allow the civilians to leave the areas of military operations. These agreements prepared the way for further political contacts with this faction inside the Sudan. The Fashoda meeting of Aug. 1, 1993 is considered the most important contact because it transferred the talks from outside to the inside of Sudan, where there is strong pressure for peace. It paved the way to the Khartoum Peace Agreement, and resulted in achieving peace and stability, especially in Upper Nile State.

28. During the summit meeting of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGAD) which took place on Sept. 6-8, 1993 in Addis Abeba, the Presidents of Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea expressed their concern for stability in Sudan and their determination to contribute toward peace efforts, especially between the government and Garang's faction, and which had stopped as a result of the recent political events in Nigeria, leading to the resignation of President Babangida at the end of August 1993. Thus, a quadripartite committee, headed by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi, was formed for this purpose. The Sudan welcomed and appreciated the initiative by the Presidents of the four countries.

### **The Sudan Peace Agreement**

29. The peace process which was conducted inside Sudan resulted in the Sudan Peace Agreement, signed in Khartoum in April 1998. The parties to the agreement were:

- a. The Government of The Sudan
- b. The South United Democratic Salvation Front (UDSF), comprised of:
  - i. The South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM)
  - ii. The Union of Sudan African Parties (USAP)
  - iii. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM)
  - iv. The Equatoria Defense Force (EDF), and

v. The South Sudan Independents Group (SSIG)

The general principles of the agreement were:

1) The general principles contained in the political charter signed in Khartoum on April 10, 1996 shall be part of this agreement and shall guide and explain its provisions.

2) During a four-year interim period, South Sudan shall enjoy a special status as defined in this peace agreement.

3) The interim arrangements shall be preceded by a declaration of permanent cease-fire and general amnesty proclamation.

4) The people of South Sudan shall exercise the right of self-determination through a referendum.

5) The problem of Abyei has been discussed and a final solution is referred to a conference on Abyei that will be convened in the area within the interim period.

The agreement, although still holding, suffered many setbacks as a result of the strife between the faction that signed the charter and the agreement, and because of many pressures applied by foreign powers on the Riek Machar group to come again to a common understanding with the Garang movement. Although Machar left Khartoum to go to Nairobi, no party has said that the agreement is not binding.

The government took many steps to reinforce the application of the agreement since the departure of Machar to Nairobi, especially in the field of development and services; an extensive crash program which has been worked out convinced many observers that the Khartoum agreement could be rehabilitated, and many expected Machar to proceed with his efforts with the government to guarantee full execution of the agreement.

### **30. Progress in the Negotiation**

Since the setup of the Secretariat in January 2000, four rounds of talks have taken place: Jan. 15-20, Feb. 21-26, April 3-7, and Sept. 21-Oct. 1. These rounds have consisted of the meetings of the political committee, in which both the government of Sudan and the rebel movement presented their positions and discussed the issues under items 1-3 of the IGAD Declaration of Principles (DOP).

During the January meeting, the two parties signed a document titled "Common Understanding and Points of Differences." The documents summarized the points of agreement and points of divergence. The second round in February discussed points of disagreement so as to reach a solution to the issues that the SPLM showed a tendency to compromise on.

Thus, the parties failed to reach any agreement or sign any document. In April, the same issues were thoroughly discussed without any results, and it appeared that the SPLM lacks any degree of commitment or respect for the peace process. This was shown evidently when the SPLM refused

to attend the next round of talks scheduled to begin on May 16, on the pretext that the government bombarded civilian areas controlled by the rebels. On June 20, the SPLM announced its willingness to resume negotiations; this resumption was not possible until Sept. 21, and five months elapsed as a result of these delaying tactics of the rebel movement so as to gain time to try one of the two other tricks declared by Garang as alternative ways to solve the issue of Southern Sudan: by toppling the government or by defeating it. In summary, there was little progress during year 2000.

The burden of the blame lies upon the rebel movement and the international powers supporting its designs, namely, the U.S. Administration, which did not bother to hide its agenda in using the war as an instrument to overthrow the Khartoum government. Other regional parties have their own agenda, and some of them, although considering themselves mediators, did not manage to conceal their hostility toward the government of Sudan. Some observers do not spare the Secretariat of the blame of being passive and unchallenging.

The IPFs exert very little pressure to make the SPLM accept the comprehensive cease-fire, which will show that the rebel movement is finally resorting to a peaceful solution to the conflict. Some of them even do not entertain the idea of stopping some of the NGOs supplying the movement with arms and ammunition. It is widely known that U.S. agencies paid tens of millions of dollars to the SPLA using humanitarian aid as a disguise.

### **31. What Is To Be Done?**

The impasse opened the way for new initiatives to try to solve the problem. One of these initiatives is the Egyptian-Libyan initiative, which tried to convene all the parties including the NDA [National Democratic Alliance], but this effort did not succeed because the rebel movement showed no enthusiasm toward what it calls Arab initiatives. The movement claims that there is no possibility to merge the IGAD initiative and the Arab one because the Egyptians will never accept the principle of self-determination for the people of Southern Sudan. Thus, the current situation shows no real chance of a peaceful solution. If a peaceful solution is to be reached, the IGAD members, African countries, and IPFs should:

- Show more concern about the peace process by activating the role of the IGAD Council of Ministers so as to support the Secretariat to be much more positive in its role as a mediator.
- The Secretariat should be firm and not accept any form of deviation from the DOP.
- The IGAD members and the IPFs should pressure the SPLM to agree to a comprehensive cease-fire, so as to open the gateway for a peaceful solution and to apply pressure on the movement to negotiate in good faith.

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Tagilsir Maghoub

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## **Toward a Dialogue Among Civilizations**

*Dr. Maghoub is Secretary General of Sudan's National Fund for State Support. Subheads have been added.*

Based on my responsibility as Secretary General of the National Fund for State Support, which is responsible for the wealth-sharing aspect, I would like to focus on this issue and its contribution to the peace process. Mr. Amin has provided the background, to see the steps taken so far.

Last night, while I was reflecting on the issue of peace, I started thinking about what the word "peace" itself stands for. When we start talking about certain things, I take every letter of the word, and see what it stands for. *P* is political will: If there is will and determination to solve the problem, it can be done. *E* is empathy, putting yourself in the other person's shoes and doing what can be done. *A* is the accommodative spirit, trying to accommodate each other, and help pave the way for a peaceful settlement. *C* is conflict resolution through confidence-building, which is key to resolving the peace issue. *E* is the execution of commitments, through political will, empathy, etc. This will pave the way to a final peaceful settlement. That's a simple exercise, as an introduction.

### **The Sudan Conflict**

Thinking along the same lines, let us come to the roots of the Sudan conflict. There is the vulnerability of economic security, inequitable power and wealth sharing, a feeling of lack of enhancement of human dignity, and the role of the international agenda. All four contribute to deepening the conflict.

Sometimes we fail to assess what the adverse consequences of the conflict are, what the cost of that conflict is. If we look at the economic and human cost of war lingering for a long time, we find it has created a number of adverse consequences, the first of which is the destruction of the social fabric; it has created separation of families, massive dislocation, weakening of social institutions, erosion of power of the leadership, massive environmental destruction, devastation of the productive base and infrastructure, drainage of resources away from development to security-related expenses, deterioration of education and basic services, and poverty. These are the outcomes of the lack of peace. In the situation in the south, due to the lingering of war, which is being ignited every now and then, if we look at agriculture, we find it is