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Article 3 on South Sudan

South Sudan: Situation Analysis

Our Article 1 of December 23rd, 2013 gave quick analysis of the situation in South Sudan. Our article 2 of January 9th 2014 detailed snapshots relating to the US, Uganda, Sudan, UN and IGAD. We will keep this snapshot module for article 3

The US: The USAID Development Outreach and Communication Officer gave us clarification on the \$50 Million. The \$50 million is in addition to \$300 million in Humanitarian Assistance in 2013 and 2014. The \$50 million is going to international governmental agencies dealing with relief and partly to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). They are also redirecting some existing funds to plug other gaps¹.

The US: The Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement or (BATNA) is far better for Machar and company. They have nothing to lose now that they are either in jail or the bush. What is surprising is that the US does not seem to be putting enough pressure on Kiir to release the detainees or stop his counter retake attacks. Repeated calls by Secretary of State Kerry and Advisor Susan Rice² and by UNSG Ban Ki Moon³ have not, as yet, yielded results. To ask Machar to pass on that and go on with negotiations will be asking him to give in on a main issue for nothing in return. The main expertise in negotiations of Machar's group lies in Pagan Amum (Shuluk). The main seasoned legal brain and prominent leader of Akobo West is Jon Luk (Nuer). As time goes by, either Ugandan troops or Dinka Wau (Dinka Bahr El Ghazal) will filter down to the main Nile areas. More seriously will be their filtration into Juba and creating a tribal buttress for Kiir.

The US: News is circulating that the US may be considering targeted sanctions. I cannot see what sanction can be applied on Machar and his supporters other than figuratively. If the US puts Kiir and Machar and their actions on the same platform and yardstick benchmark, they will be making a mistake and supporting an injustice. They need to call a spade a spade an act on Kiir now. While my estimates and those of Jok Madut Jok⁴ were that Nuers make up 50% of the SPLA, an insider has just informed me that they make up close to 70%. If Kiir is not stopped (and soon) we will have a worse situation with Dinkas arming themselves as SPLA.

The US and other donors: Regrettably USIAD did not have time to complete a critical assignments in South Sudan. "Stabilization" was a major concern for the US/USAID. I met with Amy Truesdell and Scott Lyons several times in Jonglei State when they and others of their colleagues were touring South Sudan collecting information on Stabilization. They accompanied me to Twic East in Jonglei State⁵ and attended one session of "Needs Assessment" of

¹ E-mail message from the USAID

² White House 09 01 14

³ UN News Centre 10 01 14

⁴ His article of 04 01 14

⁵ March 2nd 2011

communities in the 11 counties of Jonglei State that I was doing. Had a robust stabilization program been fully implemented in South Sudan, communities may have been more cohesive.

Donors: The work of the USAID and other serious agencies are sometimes undermined by what I call “Fragmented Aid”. Too many people are scrambling in the same kitchen trying to do the same thing. No one wants to do “Independent Evaluations”; especially those countries that are working “At Arm’s Length” and giving their entire aid portfolio to Governmental Organizations as “Grants”. Rainwater harvesting structures have been dug and constructed wrong. Boreholes have been dug to dry out in one year. Roads were built at the most expensive per KM cost in the world or built several times over. Does anyone want proof?

No one should talk about “how much money” was given to South Sudan (the websites are full of that) without saying what that money was supposed to achieve on the drawing board and what it ACTUALLY achieved on the ground.

The impact of the billions on the ground on the people was far less than satisfactory with no one wanting to know what went wrong lest it opens Pandora’s boxes. Having done the Independent Evaluation for the Multi-Donor Trust Fund National (MDTF-N) of Sudan North as team leader for the Oversight Committee (Not the World Bank or it would not have been “independent”), I was advocating a similar Independent Evaluation of the MDTF-SS. The World Bank would have been embarrassed if an independent evaluation is done for their managed MDTF-SS at anytime; both on impact and cost effectiveness.

Can we all learn the lessons if we restart working on Nation Building in South Sudan?

Sudan: Sudan has decided to open the borders with South Sudan. They are 2184 KM of borders between Sudan and South Sudan. 8-10 border crossing points were earmarked. Some of those crossing points are now known: Heglig to Unity, Kosti to Renk by boat and road, Railway through Assimaih to Ariath and Wau and then we have Safaha to Raja in West Bahr El Ghazal. We have to wait and see if the current violence will or will not impede access. All of South Kordofan and South Darfur crossing points may depend on resolving Abyei issues otherwise the Misseriya or Darfur Rebels may have them as legitimate targets.

Sudan: Sudan will need to find a way to resolve the new dilemma threatening their expected trade relations with South Sudan across the borders. That is Uganda and Kenya. Those two countries literally worked and succeeded to road-jack trade from Sudan. With Uganda pumping 1300 military personnel and counting, Kenya hosting scores of Southern Sudanese Refugees and availing Lazarus Sumbeiywo once more as mediator, what reward will they get?

In the east, Sudan borders Upper Nile and other than the western borders of Upper Nile, the rest falls in Blue Nile which is still troubled. Unity borders Southern Kordofan. Warrap borders South Kordofan. Western BG and Northern BG border Southern Darfur. Five Southern Sudan States have no borders with Sudan: Jonglei, Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria and Lakes. A litmus test is needed to see how the crossing and customs points can work on the ground.

Sudan: President Beshir, NCP and SAF shall push hard to inflict maximum damage on the SRF and the SPLM-N. With little to fear in the way of hostilities from South Sudan or their material support to SFR and the SPLM-N, SAF can have easier life during this dry time campaign. President Beshir is already flexing muscles and refusing to talk about any power sharing or wealth sharing in any future negotiations with rebel groups⁶.

Sudan and the upsurge in warmth of relations with South Sudan: The visit of Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin (Watch for our detailed who is who article to come soon) was rather astonishing. Other than border crossing points and opening them, South Sudanese refugees (who were sacked one year back and others are still waiting) shall be received as “Citizens”. 200 oil technicians shall go to Unity and Adar to run the oil facilities. May be they will be the same technicians who were sacked from South Sudan together with the Mobile Phones technicians. Dr. Marial (His first tribal name) mentioned that oil is for all in Sudan and South Sudan. That whatever South Sudan will get as their share could come back to Sudan to buy goods. He stated that they even buy “Snuff” from Sudan⁷! His eloquence in Arabic Language, having had his secondary education in Rufaa in East Sudan and his medical studies in Egypt, come as a great help when dealing with Sudan.

China: The Chinese minister of foreign affairs does not travel for fun. He made sure to have presence in Addis⁸. He did not meet with the South Sudan delegations but met with the Ethiopians including the Prime Minister. He threw in China’s support for the process and initiative.

Why take the trouble? China imports 3% of its total oil imports from South Sudan/Sudan. China as well has scores of Chinese Contractors each one doing scores of projects in Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia. Not the best quality of work as the contractors over-stretch their resources⁹, but no one else is there!

IGAD: A lot of talk. Too many people are talking sometime pre-maturely. Media can be mediations worst enemy if not controlled. Ethiopia needs to exert more control on the process. It will be interesting to know how Lazarus Sumbeiywo is working with Seyoum Mesfin and Gen Mustafa El Dabi. Rather diverse backgrounds.

One could observe the same “Euro-Caucasian” presence, in and about the halls and the hotel, which we saw in the early days of the IGAD Sudan process in Kenya. Is Addis an ideal location for the process? With all exquisite resorts in Ethiopia (Wondo Genet, Bahir Dar, Sodere, and Arba Minch among others) a better and more serene and secluded retreat could have been chosen. Look at how the Kenyans held all the sessions in Safari Lodges starting from Lake Bogoria in 24 September to 4 October 2000 which marked the real entry into the IGAD Talks and its CPA.

⁶ Shurouq network 10 01 14

⁷ Al Meghar Al Seiasi Local Arabic paper 10 01 14

⁸ Xuihua 07 01 14

⁹ Independent Evaluation of the MDTF-N and personal engagement in South Sudan

Salva Kiir: The man must either be naive or arrogant. How can peace talks come to Juba? How can detainees be released in the morning to participate in the talks and go back to jail in the evening?¹⁰ What more can demonstrate “negotiating under duress”? How can Machar’s group have a “Leveled Field”? All the “ground rules” of negotiations will have been broken. That suggestion was an insult to the IGAD and to the envoys they came to talk to him

Salva Kiir: We must also try to understand the background of President Kiir; his psycho profile and mindset. President (Commander) Kiir himself though coming from Akun in West Gogrial, he hails from a very small sub-tribe of Dinka there. His name was not originally Salva Kiir Mayardit. He started with a “derogatory name”. His father later changed that name for him. But we will come to that in greater details in our articles about who is who and what support they have in their homelands. With hardly any formal education or international exposure to the outside world during the 21 years of the struggle in South Sudan, he lacks a lot of the ingredients of leadership qualifications of the modern world. He does not listen to sound advice and he is intimidated by intellectuals. More is to come in our next article.

South Sudan and the SPLA: The Military Balance of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) London used to put the SPLA at 25,000 to 48,000 during the civil war. Shortly after the CPA, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations of the SPLA informed me that the SPLA was 140,000. This inflation came between 2003 and 2005 when, according to the CPA, the salaries of the SPLA in South Sudan were coming from Khartoum through oil revenues. There was a wild spree of recruitment in North Sudan and mostly Nuers were hurriedly recruited. Now there is a call for more recruitment; but this time it will be different.

South Sudan and the SPLA: The Tiger Brigade guarding Kiir were mostly augmented with starkly crude Dinka Youth from Warrap to guarantee loyalty. This was during 2013. The current drive for the new recruitment of the SPLA will be from Dinka and Dinka Bahr El Ghazal. Kiir and company will embrace the opportunity to balance the tribal headcount between Dinka and Nuers in the SPLA and other regular forces.

This will swell the SPLA to 240,000-250,000. For a population of 9 million, that will be one army soldier for every 38 citizens. The US armed forces are 1,422,000 (Regular) the total population is 314 million (2012). That is one soldier for every 220 citizens. That is *the* USA Armed Forces. AND South Sudan is not fighting wars anywhere outside their boundaries and are not policing the world.

A soldier in the US armed forces, when retired, knows what he will do and life will carry on. In South Sudan DDR has failed miserably. It was one of the glaring failures of the UN/UNDP. When the time comes to release the large excess of soldiers, they will be “ex-army” but not “ex-combatants”.

South Sudan and the SPLA: Even at 180,000 strong (IISS Military Balance in 2012 puts them at 210,000 strong¹¹) that is a large army for 9 million people. Once some “Stabilization” is done and some tranquility returns to South Sudan, donors will wonder why they should support a

¹⁰ Radio Dabanga.org 080114

¹¹ IISS Military Balance page 532

country with such a large army siphoning out over 70% of the National Budget! When the tension between Khartoum and Juba was high, no one could utter a word about the size of SPLA.

Will that change? Chad with 11 million people has an army of 20,000. Ethiopia with 91 million people has an army of 139,000. Kenya with a population of 43 million has armed forces of 25,000¹². Unless Kiir sacks all the Nuers, South Sudan shall have the most inflated army per capita in Subsahara.

South Sudan and the SPLA: Their worst nightmare will be if the UN or a coalition of Western Countries imposes arms embargo on South Sudan. The SPLA are known to be trigger happy and that consumes lots of ammunition.

South Sudan and President Kiir: The revised and restructured Crisis Management Committee (CMC): Everything is now through a presidential decree. Instead of 22 members, the committee now has 27 members. Tilar Deng is no longer the Vice Chair, but Daniel Awet Akot a retired general and an ex-Governor of Lakes State. Please refer to our Who is Who in article 4 within the coming few days

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¹² IISS Military Balance Africa Section