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Article 40 on South Sudan

Developments in South Sudan Conflict: Disturbing News Coming Out of Addis and South Sudan

Our Articles 1 to 3 and 5 to 39 were situation analyses of the conflict in South Sudan. Our articles 4 (A), 4 (B) and 4 (C) were the first of our series on “Who is Who”. This article 40 is dedicated to disturbing news coming out of Addis Ababa. It also touches positive negation of emerging information on the visit of President Kiir to Washington DC and the false circulation of Ambassador Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth defecting the SPLM/A-IO and meeting with President Kiir.

Before the ink of our article 39 dried, we got bad news and further obstacles in Addis. Unless the big glitch of exiting the 5 “Multi Stakeholders”, including the group 9 and the small parties, from the hall of the negotiations, no “peace” shall beset the “Mediation Process” let alone South Sudan. We alluded to that danger and to what are “Primary Stakeholders” and what are “Secondary Stakeholder” in our articles # 15 of Feb 10, #19 of Feb 20th, #30 of July 7th, #34 of August 6th, #36 of August 7th and # 39 of August 18th. Hope someone listens!

We were very explicit about that in our document addressed directly to IGAD dated June 20th after a conference in Mombasa, Kenya.

Here is what happened in Addis before the Government withdrew from the talks (and they are correct).

1. The stakeholders including the two primary stakeholders made their positions responses in a plenary so that all positions become known to everyone.
2. IGAD is discussing with the primary stakeholders and parties and the 5 Multi-stakeholders on how to move forward with serious negotiations on the presented positions to reach an agreement.
3. A serious discussion is brewing between the 5 multi stakeholders to form a blocks on modality for negotiations (There are about 200 stakeholders in the hall!!). This was prompted by IGAD refraining from being a “dictator” to “Mediation” oriented as blames mounted against it by the various multi stakeholders parties and the global community that they tend to side with the two warring parties. Now 4 groups have split and pulled out. There is no “Glue” among the or among the CSO.
4. Taban Deng was accompanied by Pagan Amum and Lam Akol visited Dr. Riek Machar for talks. No details have surfaced of what went on in the meeting other than anger of 4 groups.
5. Dr. Riek Machar’s movement seems to be restricted by IGAD and we wonder if that will help or worsen situation in the field with commanders not seeing their boss. Machar planned to go to Pagak last Saturday and then fly to South Africa on August 25th on a pre-planned visit. His requests for facilitation of the trips were rejected by IGAD facilitators. We are still seeking further verification on this issue.

6. Dr. Riek seems to be under the protection of IGAD's security contingent while in Addis and not his own army. That can be fatal. One time Dr. Garang made Arab Moi wait and refused to take Moi's plane from Lokichokio to Nairobi and drove all the way in a convoy of sixteen 4X4 vehicles carrying his own bodyguards. Being in the same venue of the negotiations during the negotiations is a strategic mistake.
7. A big question would be: Is President Kiir really going for peace? If he is, why would he tell John Kerry to give him 3 months to end the "rebellion"?
8. Why would he mobilize forces, buys arms and sends his Chief of Staff to Bor to prepare for a dry season offensive in Jonglei State?
9. We talked to the very person who constructed the story about Ambassador Ezekiel Lol meeting President Kiir in Washington DC and pledging to come back to the ranks of the GRSS. He confirmed to us that it was political manoeuvring and was not true.

Both 1) agreed upon "Ground Rules" for the process and 2) "Process Design" now seem to be absent from the mosaic of the Mediation. If those were in place (and we hope that both Mediation and the belligerents) know what that is, we will not have the erratic performance we now have.

GRSS now pulled out and we need to wait and see how the Mediation can bring them back gracefully without resorting to threats that have become background noise even to observers.

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