



ENDING MAYHEM IN THE SUDAN

Too many lives have been lost for too long. Misery, pillage, rape, and killing fields have disfigured the Sudan without effective regional or international intervention. Those were the stark, simple messages emerging from a heated, thoughtful meeting of Sudanese and United States officials, and experts on the Sudan, at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government early this month.

Conflict is still very hot in Darfur, the Sudan's westernmost region, and at a much lower level in the nevertheless tense Beja-dominated areas of the northeast. In Darfur, at least 200,000 civilians have died since hostilities emerged in 2003, and about 2 million remain in squalid camps for refugees or internally displaced persons. Very recently, Darfur's battles between various rebel groups and government-backed militias have spilled across the border with Chad, where fighting continues.

The strong policy recommendations that emerged from the Kennedy School meeting were directed foremost at reducing or eliminating violence in Darfur. There was widespread recognition that the existing 7,000 person African Union monitoring force within Darfur had not stopped attacks by militias against civilians in or out of the existing camps. Nor had it been able to forestall assaults by anti-government rebel groups.

A more robust peace enforcement arrangement was urgently needed. As contemporary discussions at the United Nations, and in Washington and Brussels, hinted, this arrangement must include a tougher mandate, more troops, better troops, and more strongly equipped troops. Those officers and soldiers cannot necessarily be found from within the African Union, but more likely will be NATO personnel or UN-recruited battalions. About 20,000 to 40,000 are needed, but they must have orders to disarm the government-backed militias and the rebels, and to impose the kind of peace that will permit refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes. Waiting until the African Union shifts responsibilities to the United Nations, supposedly in September, will not do.

A "no-fly" zone needs to be established, as over Iraqi Kurdistan in the 1990s. This zone could be controlled by French pilots from bases in Chad, or by Americans from Djibouti.

In addition to a new military detachment to enforce the peace in Darfur, the international border between Darfur and Chad should be patrolled separately, perhaps by a French legion

or by NATO or European Union soldiers. That new force need not be as large as the new internal contingent.

These new peace mechanisms in the Darfur region should be complemented by renewed attempts to create a durable ceasefire, if not a full peace, at the ongoing talks between representatives of the rebels and the Sudan government in Abuja, Nigeria. Those talks have been held half-heartedly for most of last year, with no seeming urgency. But Washington and the UN may this week have injected a new concern into the arena.

Whether or not the talks in Abuja succeed, many of the participants at the Kennedy School meeting also recommended that a wider set of discussions, a form of *loya jirga* for Darfur, be convened to take any Abuja-organized ceasefire to a sustainable level. At such a *loya jirga*, all the tribes and factions in Darfur, not just rebel factions and the government, need to be represented.

All of these ideas for resolving the war in Darfur met with little favor from high level representatives of the government of the Sudan. They asserted that the African Union was performing reasonably, and merely required more funding from the United States. They were also opposed to strong suggestions that the U.S. and the UN should supply full information on crimes against humanity in Darfur to the International Criminal Court, the jurisdiction of which neither the Sudan nor the U.S. recognizes in Darfur.

Using indigenous methods of reconciling the competing groups in Darfur would obviously be essential, after hostilities cease. Alternatively, the current Government of National Unity of the Sudan, or a successor, could contemplate a South African Truth and Justice Commission to take testimony about depredations in Darfur and throughout the Sudan. Many participants demanded, however, that the key criminals be held to an international legal standard of justice, as in the Arusha tribunal proceedings for the Rwandan genocide.

Beyond Darfur, there was clear acknowledgement that the Eritrean-backed rebel movements in the northeast, near Port Sudan, were still active, but were not currently strong enough to threaten the government, or the main roads or oil pipeline that bisects their territory. Hamish Koreib, a small town near the Eritrean border, was a possible flashpoint. Southern troops are supposed to withdraw from that area. When they do, combat between Beja insurgents and government forces may start again.

A long-term solution to that insurgency, to the troubles in Darfur, and to potential unrest throughout the entire Sudan—whether or not the essential North-South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is fully sustained—is a shift from unitary, central government (the Sudan's present form) to a seriously devolved federal arrangement. Greater autonomy is desirable for the vast country's regions. Whether the final configuration should be confederal or modestly federal was not decided. But the question should be studied intensively.

The participants also called for a punctilious attention to the completion of the first phases of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Otherwise, the North-South settlement could unravel, throwing the South back to war. Most critical was a final determination of the boundary between the North and the South, because its demarcation directly affects petroleum revenues and their distribution—the economic lifelines of both sides.

Likewise regional governments in Abyei and the Nuba Mountains need to be created, as contemplated by the CPA. Scheduled withdrawals of government troops from the South, and the further reintegration of the common army, should be completed.

Arrangements for a national census, on which so much else depends, requires action and oversight. If the census is delayed or is not regarded as legitimate, then scheduled elections in 2008 cannot be held. The credibility of those elections will need outside authentication, too.

Finally, but hardly least, there were critical questions regarding the formulas in the CPA for the composition of the central government between North and South. Those formulas need revisiting, particularly since they do not take explicit account of representation from the northeast, from Darfur, or elsewhere.

The Sudan is Africa's largest failed state. The end of the North-South war was intended to usher in a period of development, but the so far flawed implementation of that agreement, and the wars in Darfur and elsewhere within the country, make the creation of a stable national peace the ultimate, overriding goal. With the enactment of the measures contemplated in this Policy Brief, an enduring foundation for peace will finally be laid.