Is Peace in Sudan Possible?

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Introduction

Since independence in 1956, peace in Sudan lasted for only eleven years. The country was never united or politically stable. This research paper will examine the Sudanese deep-rooted conflict and point out to its causes. It will also discuss approaches used to manage and end the conflict and evaluate why they have failed so far.

The goal of the paper is to show that the roots of modern tensions and conflict in Sudan lie in the policies implemented by the British administration between 1899 and 1956. The policies first separated the Arab dominated north and the African dominated south of Sudan and led to southern underdevelopment. The decision by the British administration to reverse its policies and put the regions back together in the 1940s led to the northern domination in post-independence Sudan. This consequently triggered the southern rebellion and two civil wars that ravaged the country for the most part of the second half of the twentieth century.

The paper will show that there cannot be peace in Sudan as long as the goal of the Arab dominated government is Islamization and Arabization of the entire country, even the regions with non-Muslim majority. The paper will also show how the discovery of oil in Sudan intensified the conflict and how the lack of unity among the rebels in the south and recently in Darfur is helping the Sudanese government and diminishing chances for peace.

The first part of the paper will give a brief introductory background about Sudan. The second part will examine how and when the divisions between the north and south that led to civil wars were created. The third part will discuss the situation in post-independence Sudan and the issues related to the first civil war. The fourth part of the paper will discuss the second civil war. The fifth part will look at how the war spread from the south to the rest of the country. The sixth part of the paper will discuss if peace in Sudan is possible in the near future.

Brief Background About Sudan

This part of the paper will give a brief introductory background about Sudan. Sudan is the largest country in Africa, with an area of about one million square miles (Bechtold, 1976: 4). It became a political entity in its present boundaries in the nineteenth century,

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when the country's borders were outlined at the Congress of Berlin in 1886 (O'Ballance, 2000: vii). Imperialist and colonial powers drew boundaries of Sudan and the rest of Africa "without regard to ethnic identities" thus, intentionally or not, preparing the ground for future conflicts (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996: 13).

According to the International Crisis Group [ICG] (2006), Sudan is divided by religion (70% Muslim, 25% animist, 5% Christian), ethnicity (between people of African and Arab origin), and tribe and economic activity (between nomadic and sedentary cultures). The country is comprised of almost 600 tribes which for the most of their history never had a common language, identity, or culture (Thomas, 1993: 2).

All Sudanese are black, but linguistic and cultural differences evolved over time and took a meaning of ethnic and even racial differences, dividing people into "Arabs" and "Africans" (Prunier, 2005: 4). The majority in the north are considered to be "Arabs," while the southerners are seen as "Africans" (Eprile, 1974: 25; Holt and Daly, 1979: 3; Thomas, 1993: 1). For centuries, northern Sudan had cultural, economic, political and historical ties to other Arab states, while the south had stronger ties to Central and East Africa (Bechtold, 1976: 11; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2006). Wenger (1991: 4) explains how the north became populated by Muslims, while the south stayed largely animist and Christian:

> The north is closer to Egypt and the Persian Gulf, and thus had centuries of contact and intermarriage with Arab nomads and traders. Over time, Islam spread to northern and western Sudan, a process which facilitated Arabization. Southern cultures and religions seemed more impervious to Islam although there was some conversion.

Bechtold (1976: 37) claims that animosity between the northern and southern Sudanese can be traced back to the "period of slave raids when several northern tribes had been contracted to conduct raiding activities in the south." Albino (1970: 5) believes that one of the main causes of north-south conflict is fundamental difference in aspirations: the Arabs in the north "aspire to Arab nationalism, while the Africans in the south feel they must contribute to the growth of African nationalism and Pan-Africanism."

Like in all other parts of the world, there was always some form of conflict in Sudan, writes Prunier (2005: 23), especially given the country's diversity, but prior-twentieth century conflicts should not be labelled strictly "Arab" versus "African" but more conflicts between different tribes over resources and territory. Strict ethnic and regional separation in Sudan happened only in the twentieth century, helped by the ideological influences brought in by the colonizers (Prunier, 2005: 5).

This part of the paper has given a brief introductory background about Sudan. The next part will discuss how and when the divisions between the north and south that led to two long civil wars were created.

Creating Divisions in Sudan

This part of the paper will examine how and when the divisions between the northern and southern Sudan were created. In the late nineteenth century, Britain conquered Sudan and incorporated its territory to the British Empire. The primary reason for British conquest was the fear of the French takeover (El Mahdi, 1965: 116). During the scramble for Africa, Britain and France almost went to war over who would control Sudan (Woodward, 1990: 14).

In 1899, Britain and Egypt created Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in Sudan. This agreement had no precedent in international law (Beshir, 1974: 20). While the Egyptian

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rights were recognized in the agreement, in reality it was Britain that ruled Sudan on its own since at the same time British occupied Egypt (Holt and Daly, 1979: 118; El Mahdi, 1965: 121; Albino, 1970: 16). Thomas (1993: 3) notes that "Egypt paid" the conquest of Sudan, while Britain ruled and administered the territory. Deng (1978: 151) calls it a "British rule with Egypt as a rubber-stamp half."

One of the policies that have been "at the root of much of the tension and conflict" (Thomas, 1993: 4) and have left deep divisions in Sudan had been British "divide and rule" strategy. This policy separated southern provinces from the rest of the country and "slowed down development of the southern part of the country while allowing things in the north to take their natural course" (Eprile, 1974: 17; O'Ballance, 2000: vii; ICG, 2006). British isolated southern provinces from Arab influence "without attempting to modernize the economy and the political system in the south" (IDMC, 2006). Apart from discouraging any contact between the north and south, British did nothing to educate the southerners and raise their standards of living (Eprile, 1974: 70).

At the same time, the British administration heavily invested in the Arab north, modernizing and liberalizing political and economic institutions and improving social, educational, and health services (El Mahdi, 1965: 122; IDMC, 2006). British Condominium government had nothing against Islam in the northern parts of Sudan. In fact, British encouraged Islamization of the north through financial help for building mosques and pilgrimage travels for Muslims (Holt and Daly, 1979:124). In southern Sudan however, British, with the help of Christian missionaries, wanted to prevent the spread of Islam (O'Ballance, 2000: vii) and "preserve purely African way of life of the southern people" (Albino, 1970: 19). Wenger (1991: 4) claims that British "planned to attach southern Sudan to British colonial East Africa."

Another policy that created divisions in Sudan had been "indirect rule." In order to prevent religious leaders and educated urban class from influencing social and political life in southern Sudan, British Condominium government decided to give "power" to the tribal leaders and ruled through them (Holt and Daly, 1979: 136-137). Like the "divide-and-rule" strategy that separated north and south, "indirect rule" divided the south into hundreds of informal chiefdoms. British authorities made their "indirect rule" policies official through the "Southern Policy" document.

The Southern Policy stated that, "the policy of the government in southern Sudan is to build up a series of self-contained tribal units with structure and organization based upon indigenous customs, traditional usage, and beliefs" (Albino, 1970: 19). These southern tribal units were to be completely separated from the rest of the country. Under the Policy, northern officials were transferred out of the south, trading permits for northerners were withdrawn, and speaking Arabic and even wearing of Arabic dresses were discouraged (Albino, 1970: 21; Eprile, 1974: 70; Deng, 1978: 4; Holt and Daly, 1979: 125). Cohen (1996: 83) believes that British colonial policies retarded interactions among different groups and lead to conflict between them:

> The protective umbrella of indirect rule made it possible for some tribal groups to develop vital interests while other groups became relatively underprivileged. When British withdrew, an intense struggle for power ensued. The privileged became exposed to the danger of losing power and had to mobilize their forces in defence, while the underprivileged aligned themselves to gain power.

Deng (1978: 152) notes that the period of the British rule in the south was the "longest period of peace and security [in history], at least from invasion and the use of crude force." Toynbee (quoted in Albino, 1970: viii) believes that, while the British had prevented the "oppression and exploitation" of the southern Sudanese by their northern countrymen, they did little to help the south "to learn how to hold their own in the modern world."

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The British administration reversed its Southern Policy in 1946, stating that the southern Sudanese were "inextricably bound, both geographically and economically, to the Arab northern Sudanese as far as future development was concerned" (Eprile, 1974: 18; Bechtold, 1976: 39). One of the reasons for this sudden decision, writes Eprile (1974: 19), was a need to repay northern Sudan for helping Britain during World War II.

The tensions and mistrust between the northern and southern Sudanese that had been building up over decades culminated into a large scale armed conflict in the mid-1950s (Eprile, 1974: 8). Fearing marginalization by the more populous and developed north, "southern army officers mutinied in 1955, eventually forming a guerrilla movement" (Bechtold, 1976: 37; ICG, 2006). This was the beginning of the first long civil war in Sudan. Arnold Toynbee (quoted in Albino, 1970: ix) believes that the British policies in the Sudan were the primary cause of conflict that began in 1955:

> British differentiated the northern and southern Sudanese from each other without separating them politically. This made it virtually inevitable that, if and when the British abdicated, the northerners, being by far the stronger of the two sections of the Sudanese people, should attempt, as they have done, to assimilate the southerners by force. This, in turn, has made it inevitable that there should be a southern resistance movement.

While the cultural identity was always strong in the north, this was not the case in the south. Serious southern consciousness only began emerging in the 1950s, helped by a "feeling of common animosity toward the Arabs from the north, the 'new imperialists' who soon supplanted British in their functions as colonizers in the south" (Bechtold, 1976: 11). Fearing Arabization, the southerners developed strong ethnic identity that would manifest itself through resistance (Woodward, 1990: 233).

This part of the paper has examined creation of divisions between the Arab dominated north and the African south of Sudan. The next part will discuss the situation in post-independence Sudan and the issues related to the first civil war.

Post-Independence Sudan and the First Civil War

This part of the paper will discuss the situation in post-independence Sudan and the first civil war. Independent African states that were once colonized faced a problem of "state formation preceding nation formation" (Pieterse, 1996: 25), as it was the case in Sudan; its borders were drawn by the Europeans during the Congress of Berlin in 1886 and hundreds of tribes without anything in common were forced to live together. The majority of post-colonial states proved to be unable to unify their societies politically and socially "out of the mosaic of ethnic fragments bequeathed by colonial administration" (Fenton, 2003: 140).

At the time of independence in 1956, the population of Sudan was about 10 million, divided into almost 600 tribes who spoke more than 110 languages (O'Ballance, 2000: viii). The country was divided into nine provinces – six in the north and three in the south (Bechtold, 1976: 6). 7.5 million people lived in the north and 2.8 million in the south (O'Ballance, 2000: 2). The census in 1956 shows the diversity of Sudanese population: 39% of the people were Arabs, 20% Nilotic, 9% Fur, 6% Beja, 6% Nubiya, and 5% Nilo-Hamitic (Deng, 1978: 4).

As noted above, cultural differences among Sudanese tribes evolved over time and came to be seen as ethnic differences between Arabs and Africans. DeVos (1975; quoted in Eller, 1999: 8) defines ethnicity as the "subjective symbolic or emblematic use of any aspect of culture by a group in order to differentiate themselves from other groups."

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Anstey (2006: 14) writes that groups evolve "different ways of life, cultures, ideologies, and religions" and these differences fuel their unity and identity. Schermerhorn (1996: 17) defines ethnic groups as collectives that have "real or putative common ancestry and memories of shared past." Hutchinson and Smith (1996: 5) define ethnic identity as the "individual level of identification with a culturally defined collectivity, the sense on the part of the individual that she or he belongs to a particular cultural community." Comaroff (1996: 166) writes about the origins of ethnicity:

> Ethnicity typically has its origins in relations of inequality: ethnogenesis is most likely to occur through social processes in which culturally defined groups are integrated into a hierarchical social division of labour. Ethnic identities are always caught up in equations of power at once material, political, or symbolic. They are seldom simply imposed or claimed; more often their construction involves struggle and contestation.

Enloe (1996: 198) adds that the most serious conflicts among different ethnic groups take place when they also differ in their religious beliefs and when their religions are "theologically and organizationally elaborate and explicit." In the case of Sudan, Islam, Christianity, and animist religions were never able to live tolerantly next to each other, mainly due to aggressive attempts by Arabs to Islamize the rest of the country.

Political nationalism in newly independent states required citizens to be "united and homogenous" despite their differences. This caused new conflicts in ethnically diverse states (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996: 11). A "nation" is an "idea of peoplehood" unifying diverse groups living inside country's borders (Fenton, 2003: 162). Smith (1991; quoted in Eller, 1999: 17) defines nation as a "named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths, historical memories, common economy, and common legal rights and duties for all members." Eller (1999: 17) emphasizes that many people in Africa do not see themselves as members of their nations when Smith's definition is taken into consideration. People who live in Sudan never had any of the above in common.

Having a country's formal citizenship does not automatically mean emotionally belonging to that nation. "Belonging is where the sociology of emotions interfaces with the sociology of power, where identification and participation collude, or at least aspire to or yearn for (Yuval-Davis, 2004: 216). In the case of Sudan, the southerners never identified with the northern Sudanese nor they ever participated in the nation building on equal terms. Ever since 1955 and the outbreak of the first civil war in Sudan, the majority of southerners fought for independence, or at least autonomy of their region.

The post-independence conflict in Sudan was largely caused by the "divisions imposed by the British-Egyptian colonial administration and pre-colonial structural disparities which have been perpetuated in the post-independent period" (IDMC, 2006). The south was "backward" (Albino, 1970: 88) and economically underdeveloped due to the British legacy and "its indigenous ethnic structures had never been as effectively tied into the state as was the case with the north" (Woodward, 1990: 134).

As a result of underdevelopment and the lack of political organizations, the southern region was not prepared to actively participate in the Sudanese government (Schafer, 2007: 2). Regional differences resulted in a deeply divided and economically differentiated Sudan after independence: "an Arab north, economically and politically stronger than the isolated, underdeveloped and demographically weaker African south" (IDMC, 2006). The southern provinces, sidelined during the British rule, continued to be marginalized and underdeveloped in independent Sudan controlled by the northerners (Woodward, 1990: 231).

With British gone, there was no one to stop the spread of Islam to the south. In 1957,

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the Sudanese government began opening Islamic institutes, schools, and mosques in the south, while Christian missionaries were prohibited from opening new schools (Holt and Daly, 1979: 178). Fearing the possible Islamization and revolted by the underdevelopment of their region, the southerners began developing their own ethnic identity which was best manifested through their armed resistance (Woodward, 1990: 233). Fenton (2003: 114) emphasizes that threats to ethnic identity can be a great mobilizer. If people are concerned about their well being and survival, they can be easily brought together and be a "powerful source of action." Pieterse (1996: 37) adds that uneven regional development and competition over power and resources are seen as "the key to ethnic group formation."

Pieterse (1996: 35) would label Sudan after independence as "ethnocracy," where the state is a tool of "domination by privileged ethnic groups who engage in a form of cultural despotism." Bechtold (1976: 292) believes that attempts by the northerners to assimilate the southern provinces into "Arabic nation" had a negative effect given the mistrust built over centuries. "Each increase in pressure from the north only heightened the sense of psychological and physical insecurity among the southerners and finally resulted in parallel increase of direct resistance." The southerners soon organized and armed themselves to the point that they could not be defeated by the government forces. The result of more than a decade of fighting was the suffering of civilians and destruction of public order, economy, and property (Deng, 1978: 161).

In the years after independence, apart from the civil war in the south, Sudan was also politically very unstable. Parliamentary democracy in independent Sudan lasted only for two years, when the military took over in 1958 and suspended all political parties. Following years saw more coups, attempted coups, and fighting over power (Bechtold, 1976: xvii; O'Ballance, 2000: viii). Holt and Daly (1979: 195) claim that military coups in Sudan were not only bids for power, but "reactions to the collapse of the political system" that ruled the country. "The high hopes of the independence days had given way to growing disenchantment with the unproductive bickerings among various politicians" (Bechtold, 1976: 197).

The civil war stopped after the Addis Ababa agreement was signed between the Khartoum government and the Southern Liberation Movement in 1972 (Deng, 1978: 163; Connell, 2003: 3). By this time over 500,000 people had died in the war (Eprile, 1974: 49). Under the agreement, territorial integrity of Sudan – important to the northerners – was safeguarded while the southern provinces got regional autonomy (Eprile, 1974: 151; Bechtold, 1976: 272; Holt and Daly, 1979: 204; Schafer, 2007: 3).

The agreement was "passed as an organic law" called "the Southern Provinces Regional Self-Government Act," and also included in the Sudanese Constitution in 1973 (Woodward, 1990: 143). Woodward (1990: 143) believes that, while the agreement gave some regional powers to the south, it also attempted to bind the region to the rest of Sudan. Schafer (2007: 4), on the other hand, believes that the agreement failed to bring the country together and that the southern autonomy only created further regional divisions. Furthermore, the Addis Ababa agreement radicalized many northerners who did not want any compromise with the south, but only a military defeat and Islamization (Bechtold, 1976: 273). The importance of this in the years to come was enormous.

Holt and Daly (1979: 204) emphasize the complex situation in the south in the early 1970s: "The south had been ravaged, its population uprooted, its vulnerable economy all but destroyed, its poor infrastructure badly damaged. The physical scars of the war would prove as difficult to efface as the emotional." High hopes of self-governance in the southern provinces died out soon after the Addis Ababa agreement was signed. Widespread unrest in the south began in 1976, caused by anger at the slow "economic development of the region" and corruption of the southern politicians (O'Ballance, 2000: 107). Political instability in the northern Sudan continued as well. The north witnessed a

number of attempted military coups to overthrow an Arab military regime that was in power (Holt and Daly, 1979: 207).

This part has discussed the situation in post-independence Sudan and the issues related to the first civil war. The next part of the paper will discuss the second civil war.

The Second Civil War

This part of the paper will discuss the second civil war in Sudan that began in 1983. Systematic violation of the Addis Ababa agreement by the Arab military government, radical Islamization of the country, and discovery of oil in the southern regions eventually led to a new war (ICG, 2006). Substantial oil reserves in the south added to the region's "geopolitical importance" and the government soon stepped in to try and control it (Connell, 2003: 3).

In 1983 the Sudanese government introduced Islamic law (Sharia) and attempted to impose it across the country, even in the regions populated by non-Muslims. The southerners saw the instalment of Sharia law as yet another attempt for the northern conquest and spread of Islam and Arabization of the southern region (Woodward, 1990: 184). The Sudanese regime welcomed foreign Islamic extremists into the country and strengthened its ties with Iran, Iraq, and Libya, the countries that supported Sudan's war against the south (Martin, 2002).

The introduction of Sharia law resembled the Mahdi religious movement in Sudan from the late nineteenth century, which wanted to establish a state where Islamic law would be a Constitution of the government and the Koran a guiding principle of the society (El Mahdi, 1965: 97). O'Ballance (2000: 131) writes that the government's primary reason for the introduction of Sharia law was not so much religious one; they wanted to divert attention "away from the disastrous economic situation and political instability" in the country. Sudanese economy deteriorated in the early 1980s due to many severe droughts (O'Ballance, 2000: 141).

The government terminated constitutional guarantees for the southern autonomy in 1983 and declared Arabic as official language. This, in addition to the southern complaints that their natural resources such as "water, grain, timber, minerals, and oil were being exploited by the north," caused new unrest and armed rebellion in the south, triggering a new civil war (O'Ballance, 2000: 132; BBC, 8 July 2005; Quénivet, 2006: 39; ICG, 2006). One of the primary causes for the termination of the southern autonomy was the discovery of oil in southern provinces (IDMC, 2006), which the Sudanese government wanted to control and profit from.

O'Ballance (2000: 204) writes that, confronting a strong armed opposition in the south, the Sudanese government soon realized that it could not win the war by military means. Faced with fighting in the south, economic collapse in the whole country, political unrest in the north, and unable to defeat southern rebels, the Sudanese government eventually offered a compromise to the south in 1989. The first step towards negotiations and peace would be suspension of Sharia law. A few days before the agreement with the south was signed, yet another military coup led by Islamic extremists took control over the government, cancelled the deal, intensified attempts for Arabization of the entire country (Connell, 2003: 3), and broadened the "ideological divide" between north and south (O'Fahey, 1996: 259). Prunier (2005: 161) notes that, with the rise of radical Islam in Sudan, the conflict between the north and the south began to be seen as a clash of Islam and Christianity, both in Sudan and abroad.

To add to an already difficult situation in the south, the leadership struggles among the southern Sudanese led the rebel movement to split into many fractions along tribal and

ethnic lines and to start fighting each other. This could be expected since more than 400 tribal and ethnic groups live in the south (Spiegel, 2 August 2004). The result of the internal southern conflict has been a "dramatic shift in the regional balance of power in favor of the government of Sudan" (Hutchinson, 2001: 307-8).

This part has discussed the second civil war in Sudan. The next part of the paper will look at how the war spread from the south to the rest of the country.

War Spreading Across Sudan

This part of the paper will discuss spreading of war from the south to the rest of Sudan. While the government's main focus for decades have been the war in the south, the second civil war eventually evolved into fighting and rebellion in almost every corner of Sudan (Quénivet, 2006: 40; BBC, May 10 2006). All conflicts in Sudan have a similar cause: "poor governance and a belief that the central government does not act on behalf of, or represent the interests of," all parts of the country (ICG: Africa Report 130, 2007: 8). Quénivet (2006: 40) notes the difference between the civil war that began in 1983 and one that lasted from 1955 until 1972:

> The civil war which began in 1983 was no longer a south versus north war, but a Sudan-wide war which engulfed the east, the west and the south. In fact, Sudan is a clear case where, from its very inception, the State was incapable of asserting control over all its sovereign territory because it lacked the resources and political ingenuity to look beyond the immediate interests of the dominant northern Sudanese elite *vis-à-vis* the rest of the country.

Many secular Sudanese Muslims also opposed radical Islamization imposed by the regime, eventually forming their own rebel forces in the northern, eastern, and western parts of Sudan. Connell (2003: 4) writes about the change in conflict patterns:

> What started as a conflict between the Arabized north and the African south became a fight between the 'fundamentalist' Islamist movement at the country's centre and a diverse alliance of peoples and political groups, Muslims, Christians and animists alike, challenging the government from the periphery.

After oil was discovered in Sudan in the 1980s (BBC, 22 September 2007), the government moved to secure control of all oil-rich regions through military actions. "Since the oil fields lie almost exclusively in the south, the government had to redouble its efforts to wipe out resistance in the area and consolidate its control" often displacing hundreds of thousands of people (Martin, 2002; Rone, 2003).

Having more enemies that ever before, the Sudanese government began investing most of its resources into military buildup. Oil exports contributed greatly to the "conflict's sustainability." Profits from oil gave the government a long needed internal source of financing for war (Martin, 2002). "Up to sixty percent of the oil revenues went to military spending" (Rone, 2003).

Sudan's oil reserves, an estimated two billion barrels, made the country interesting to the rest of the world (Spiegel, 2 August 2004) and influenced many countries, such as China, Holland, France, Japan, and Germany, to forget about human rights abuses in Sudan and form economic ties with the regime. "Prior to the oil boom, foreign diplomats seemed concerned with Sudan's chronic droughts, refugee crises, and human-rights violations. Since oil entered the picture, foreign emissaries have become more circumspect in their criticism of the regime" (Martin, 2002). Apart from diplomatic gains for the Sudan's government, oil has dramatically increased stakes in the conflict, "as well as the government's ability to pursue the battle" (The Washington Post, 23 December

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2004).

Realizing that being on good terms with the United States is crucial in today's international relations, Sudan recently shifted its policy of openly supporting Islamic terrorism. In 1996, they expelled Osama bin Laden, who enjoyed Sudanese hospitality for a long time. After September 11, 2001, the Sudanese government arrested a number of suspected terrorists and gave Washington information about alleged terrorist groups (Martin, 2002; Rone, 2003).

In 2003, Darfur province became yet another battlefield in the Sudanese civil war after rebel groups took arms against the government. The origins of the conflict in Darfur date back to the early 1980s "when drought and concomitant desertification led to intensified competition for land and scarce resources" between Arab and African tribes (IDMC, 2006). All sides in Darfur are followers of Sunni Islam (Prunier, 2005: 161; Baldo, 2006), but members of different tribes.

Like southerners for decades, Darfur rebels claimed that the government controlled by the northerners deliberately marginalized the region politically, economically, and socially (ICG, 2006; Baldo, 2006). Prunier (2005: 58) agrees that post-independence governments of Sudan "had never cared about Darfur" and its development. In retaliation to the rebellion, the government forces and Arab militia known as the Janjaweed began fighting the rebels and carrying out a "scorched earth policy against civilians, primarily members of the same tribal groups as the rebels" (Totten and Markusen, 2005: 280). Since the fighting began in 2003, more than 200,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million have been displaced (BBC, 6 September 2007; Time, 18 October 2007).

In September 2004, then American Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that a "genocide was being committed in Darfur and that the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed bear responsibility" (Time, 4 October 2004; The Washington Post, 19 November 2006). However, no one intervened to stop it, despite the fact that the international Genocide Convention, signed by 135 countries, "obligates signatories to prevent genocides" (Time, 4 October 2004). China, Russia, and Pakistan claimed in the UN Security Council that "the human suffering in Darfur was insufficient to provoke serious reflection on whether Sudan was fulfilling its responsibilities to its citizens" (Bellamy and Williams, 2006: 150). Despite continued fighting and reported atrocities in Darfur in 2005, the Security Council was "prevented from enacting stiffer sanctions [on Sudan] due to resistance from China and Russia" (Human Rights Watch, 2006). One of the main reasons for China's defending of Sudan at the UN is the fact that China is buying 60% of Sudan's oil and "Sudanese production covers 6% of China's crude oil needs, about as much as the country currently imports from Russia." At the same time, China is Sudan's "biggest weapons supplier" (The Washington Post, 23 December 2004; Spiegel, 17 January 2005).

Rone (2003) notes that the Sudanese government's key weapon on all fronts had been an "ethnic [and tribal] divide-and-conquer policy." Over the decades, it proved "remarkably adept at fostering further divisions within the southern military hierarchy" (Hutchinson, 2001: 321). The government usually makes a deal with one rebel group, securing their support and fractioning the rebel movement. "Deep internal divisions have long plagued southern politics, as evidenced by the ease with which Khartoum has found southern proxies to fight its war" (Martin, 2002). Similarly, in Darfur since 2003, two rebel groups split into at least dozen fractions, thus "exacerbating conflict and hindering negotiations" (ICG, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2007; BBC, September 6 2007). Tribal elements have been seen as a main divisive factor among Darfur rebels (Newsweek, 26 October 2007).

For more than eighteen years of the civil war that began in 1983, "Sudan has not had a

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credible peace process" (ICG: Africa Report 42, 2002: 16). During this time, over 4 million people were internally displaced, 600,000 took refugee in neighboring countries, and 2 million died from fighting, famines, and diseases (Schafer, 2007: 1). Martin (2002) explains the difference between Sudan's war and other wars fought in a "traditional" way:

> Sudan's low-intensity conflict little resembles a war in the traditional sense, with national armies fighting over a contested border. The vast majority of Sudan's casualties are not combatants killed in battle but civilians who fall victim to famine and disease - the products of a devastated rural economy, abandoned social infrastructure, and limited access for humanitarian groups.

The protracted fighting has accomplished little for any side in the conflict. Over the years, the government was able to take control of only a few towns in the south, while the southern rebels, due to their divisions, were never able to defeat the government forces (Martin, 2002). Schafer (2007: 10) thinks that the northern attempts to "convert the south to Islam and to implement Islamic law in the national constitution were major obstacles to negotiations and a peace agreement." In contrast, O'Fahey (1996: 264) believes that because the southerners were "so divided, it was difficult [for a long time] to find a coherent southern leadership which would negotiate a settlement."

Finally in 2002, the southern politicians were able to put their differences behind and unify in their opposition to the north and start serious negotiations with the government (Schafer, 2007: 6). After three years of negotiations, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the Sudanese ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in January 2005. The agreement gave autonomy to the southern region for the next six years and included a referendum on self-determination for the south in 2011. The agreement also included "power and wealth sharing arrangements aimed at ending decades of political and economic marginalization of the south" (ICG: Africa Report 106, 2006: ii). Under CPA, half of the revenues from oil produced in southern Sudan should go to the southern regional government (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

In 2006, the African Union helped the government and the rebels negotiate a peace deal in Darfur. However, only one rebel group signed the deal while the rest of the rebels continued fighting against the government forces and the Janjaweed militia (BBC, September 6 2006; ICG: Africa Briefing 39, 2006: 17). For a negotiation process to be successful, all parties must have an intention to achieve a settlement and believe that resolving conflict through negotiations is the best option available (Anstey, 2006: 138). The Darfur Peace Agreement did not succeed because it did not "adequately deal with key issues, too few of the insurgents signed it, and there has been little buy-in from Darfur society, which was not sufficiently represented in the negotiations" (ICG: Africa Report 125, 2007: i).

The agreement, instead of bringing peace, caused more fighting among the rebels and between the Sudanese government forces and rebel groups (Human Rights Watch, 2007). The rebel fraction that signed the peace deal immediately initiated combined military action with the government's army against the non-signatory rebel fractions. "This went badly, and they were pushed out of most of north Darfur by the rest of the rebels, quickly losing much support from people who saw them as having become another government militia" (ICG: Africa Report 125, 2007: 8).

This part of the paper has discussed spreading of war from the south to the rest of Sudan. The next part will examine if the peace in Sudan is possible.

Is Peace in Sudan Possible?

This part of the paper will discuss whether peace in Sudan is possible in the near future. If the CPA is not fully implemented, Sudan will most likely return to "full-scale war, with dire implications not only for its own people but for all its neighbors as well" (ICG: Africa Report 130, 2007: i). Report by Human Rights Watch (2007) warns that many of the reforms specified in the CPA are behind schedule. According to the International Crisis Group (Africa Report 106, 2006: 2), the Sudanese government is systematically attempting to "undermine, delay or simply ignore the elements called for in the CPA that would fundamentally alter the status quo and its grip on power." Another report by the International Crisis Group (Africa Report 130, 2007: 1) claims that the ruling party in Sudan "considers that its very survival is threatened by full CPA implementation."

The international community must seriously get involved in implementation of the CPA if they truly want to see peace in Sudan. The agreement is in danger of collapse "due to government sabotage and international neglect" (ICG: Africa Report 130, 2007: i). The international community must monitor key elements of the CPA implementation process, put pressure on the parties, and "flex political muscle to get the implementation process on track" (ICG: Africa Report 106, 2006: 28-29).

After a period of cooperation, SPLM pulled its ministers out of Khartoum in October 2007, accusing the Sudanese government "of failing to follow through on a peace agreement signed in 2005." SPLM voiced concerns over the withdrawal of northern troops from the south, the north-south border, and the control of oil that lie in the south (Time, 18 October 2007; Mail and Guardian, 21 October 2007). The government yet has to share with SPLM the information relating to oil production figures and existing contracts (ICG: Africa Report 106, 2006: 7-8). The oil issue is especially important to both sides. It accounts for practically all revenue in the southern region, while it also remains the "largest source of foreign currency" that is allowing the Sudanese government to "wage its war in Darfur and buy off challengers as it pursues divide-and-rule tactics throughout the country" (East African, 23 October 2007).

With Muslim extremists in power, Sudan has little chance for peace. The northerners want full Islamization even though Muslims are not the only people living in Sudan. No one actually knows who and how many people live in Sudan since the last census was in 1956. In 1991, it was estimated that some 21 million people lived in Sudan: 65% Muslim, 5% Christian, and the rest animist (Wenger, 1991: 3). Rone (2003) emphasizes that forced Islamization is the main reason why the conflict has been protracted in post-independence Sudan:

> One of the chief causes of the war's persistence and spread beyond the south - to central Sudan in the 1980s, the east in the 1990s, and the west since 2003 - is that the ruling Islamist party does not respect diversity among Muslims and Arabs, much less the country's African majority. If the government could abandon its central program of Islamizing and Arabizing the people and agree to real multi-party democracy and respect for human rights, peace might have a chance.

Thomas (1993: 137) writes that the southern Sudanese will never accept to live under Sharia law and any attempts by the northern Arabs to spread Islam to the south will "alienate the southerners further and inevitably lead to fragmentation." The United States envoy in Sudan believes that, even after the CPA was signed, the northern Sudanese government and southern rebels will not be able to resolve their differences (BBC, 6 October 2007). O'Fahey (1996: 266) argues that, to establish peace in Sudan, it may be necessary "to redefine Sudan as a state geographically." According to German newspaper Spiegel (2 August 2004), the majority of the people in the south are for partition. The southerners believe that "the cultural gulf between blacks and Arabs is too deep, the hatred too firmly rooted. Partition would correct the old colonial borders for a

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second time since the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia."

Martin (2002), however, sees "insurmountable obstacles on the road to [southern] independence." One of the biggest issues will be the north-south border. "The richest oil fields lie just south of the traditional divide, and now more than ever the north will be unwilling to relinquish them." The oil revenue and the autonomy agreement for the south will likely intensify conflict across Sudan, giving an incentive to the rebels in other regions to step up fighting in order to be in a position to negotiate similar deals (Thomas, 1993: 137; BBC, 8 July 2005; Quénivet, 2006: 40; ICG: Africa Report 130, 2007: 8). Rone (2003) emphasizes that the Sudanese government prefers unity and will do everything to stop southern self-determination, "if only because the oil lies mainly in the south."

Another issue concerning independence is the fact that the southern Sudan does not have enough qualified people to run a country. In the last five decades, the south had "a minimal level of administration" and the region is lacking "structures upon which to build the new government" (ICG: Africa Report 106, 2006: 10). SPLM has been a rebel group for a long time. Its biggest challenge is to "convert itself into a governing political party, and allow power sharing and multiparty democracy in the south" (Rone, 2003). SPLM still does not have "functional party structures or party decision-making mechanisms" (ICG: Africa Report 106, 2006: i). Given diversity in the south, the lack of power sharing could again spark violence and war among different tribes and ethnic groups. Yet another issue concerning possible southern independence is that it could inspire secession movements across the African continent. "The spark of secession could consume Africa by social and ethnic upheavals and military conflicts of unforeseeable proportions" (Spiegel, 17 January 2005).

The situation in Darfur is nowhere near solution and peace. A report by International Crisis Group (Africa Report 130, 2007: 16) presents mistakes made by the international community relating to the CPA and Darfur crisis:

> International efforts have become so concentrated on Darfur, albeit without much success, that CPA implementation – the bedrock for peaceful transformation in the country – is being ignored, in effect a reversal of the situation in 2003-2004, when the focus on ending the north-south war led to diplomatic reluctance to address the unfolding catastrophe in Darfur.

Some analysts claim that the peace agreement between the south and the government "has enabled Sudan to switch its military resources to Darfur" (BBC, 8 July 2005). Darfur's conflict further escalated and became more complex in 2006, due to the divisions among the rebels (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Currently, there are at least 17 different rebel groups in Darfur (BBC, 30 September 2007). The first step for any lasting peace in Darfur is a rebel unity, or at least cooperation. If they can "cement the ties and sustain them for longer that a weekend, then peace may have a chance" (BBC, 8 August 2007). The implementation of security provisions accepted in the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) is another crucial step for peace in Darfur. Without this, "the rebels [and Arab militias] will not disarm and the displaced and refugees will not return – that is, the war will not be over" (Baldo, 2006).

One of the main disadvantages of the DPA, apart from the fact that it was ignored by most rebel groups, is that the agreement "relies far too much on the government to carry out many of the accord's provisions." The agreement calls for the government to disarm the Arab Janjaweed militia, "despite its failure to comply with earlier commitments under UN Security Council resolutions requiring it to neutralize them" Baldo (2006). It is possible that the international community, "in its eagerness to get a deal, has brokered one that is structurally weak. Without the good faith of the parties, particularly of the government, the DPA is destined to fail" (ICG: Africa Briefing 39,

2006: 4).

New peace talks to end crisis in Darfur have began at the end of October 2007 in Libya. While the Sudanese government announced cease fire, the key rebel leaders are boycotting the talks (BBC, 28 October 2007). A peace agreement, to be long lasting, must, among other things, "meet the legitimate interests of all sides" and be negotiated and signed by all parties involved in the conflict (Anstey, 2006: 137-38). Analysts believe that these new talks will not have any impact on the ground (BBC, 28 October 2007).

The UN Security Council has recently passed a resolution to send 26,000 peacekeepers to Darfur. Analysts note that this force "will not be able to stop fighting between the rebels, army and pro-government militias. There must be a peace for them to keep" (BBC, 1 August 2007). Jan Eliasson, the UN Secretary General's special envoy for Darfur agrees that "without a peace to keep, peacekeeping becomes futile" (Newsweek, 26 October 2007).

Conclusion

Sudan became a country in its present boundaries at the Congress of Berlin in 1886. It was never united or politically stable before or after independence. Since 1955, peace in Sudan lasted for only eleven years.

The roots of modern tensions and conflict in Sudan lie in the policies implemented by the British administration between 1899 and 1956. British policies first separated the Arab dominated north and the African dominated south of Sudan and caused southern underdevelopment. The decision by the British administration to reverse its policies and put the regions back together in the 1940s caused northern domination in post-independence Sudan. This consequently led to the southern rebellion and two civil wars that ravaged the country for the most part of the second half of the twentieth century.

There cannot be peace in Sudan as long as the goal of the Arab dominated government is Islamization and Arabization of the entire country, even the regions with non-Muslim majority. The Sudanese government never respected any peace agreement; they see the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the government and the south in 2005 as a threat to their hold to power. The southerners want autonomy or independence and control of oil and revenue from it. This may cause yet another civil war since, analysts believe, the Arab controlled government will not easily give away full control over oil fields located mainly in the south. In Darfur, the current lack of unity among the rebels is only helping the government to fragment the rebel movement, thus diminishing chances for peace. When everything is taken into consideration, Sudan will need some kind of a miracle for a long lasting peace.

Woodward (1990: 239) predicted in 1990 that the Sudanese conflict would continue indefinitely, the economy would be destroyed in much of the country, and millions of people displaced. Sudan would be "endlessly trapped in a cycle of ineffective civilian and military regimes, with neither form of rule capable of breaking out of the vicious circle of decay." This came to be true and it seems that this prediction will hold true in the near future. The situation in Sudan is similar to the "Thirty Years' War in Europe: countless fronts, changing alliances - and those who suffer most are the common people… Consequently few people believe in a lasting peace" (Spiegel, 2 August 2004).

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