

Sudan Domestic Media, March 15, 2011 (covering March 08 –March 14, 2011)
By Janis Grychowski

State Media

(Suna news agency website, Khartoum, in English 13 Mar 11)

- The joint Sudanese-Chadian force will hold its second conference this week in N'djamena to discuss the extension of the mission along the joint border.

(Sudan Vision website, Khartoum, in English 13 Mar 11)

- In an address to the opening session of the National Congress Party, the Chairman stated that the Party will support the establishment of a political party in Southern Sudan. He went on to state that the party will represent "cooperation and brotherhood between north and south states."

(Sudan Vision website, Khartoum, in English 13 Mar 11)

- The National Congress Party has reaffirmed its commitment to stability in Southern Sudan after accusations that the National Congress Party is supporting rebel movements in the South. The Joint Political Committee has already discussed the investigation methods towards the information that has been aired by the SPLM.

(Akhir Lahzah, Khartoum, in Arabic 13 Mar 11)

- The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has announced that it has suspended talks with the National Congress Party on post-referendum issues as a result of its perception of obstruction of stability of the Government of South Sudan. The SPLM stated that the National Congress Party has trained militias in the north for military operations in South Sudan. The SPLM has stated that it will not return to talks until the NCP has ceased carrying out these activities. A contact from the SPLM has stated that the UN Security Council has been contacted to investigate the issue.

(Sudan Vision website, Khartoum, in English 13 Mar 11)

- The Sudanese government in Khartoum stated that the Abyei region is an internal and national issue in which the two governments are working to resolve. In relations to Darfur, the government of Sudan in Khartoum has stated that the UN and the African Union are reporting stability in the region and that the government is adopting a comprehensive strategy based on dialogue, voluntary return, tribal reconciliations, development, and sustaining peace.

(Sudan TV, Omdurman, in Arabic 0700 gmt 14 Mar 11)

- In press conference at the National Congress Party's headquarters, a senior Gen Salah Abdallah Gosh said that peace between the north and south is a priority for the party but will not allow any "violations". "The group which has attacked Malakal was group of Shulluk [tribe] which was basically formed to protect their families. Clashes between

SPLA forces and those groups, which had emanated from personal problems, occurred and led to the incidents that happened in Malakal town. “

(Republic of Sudan Radio, Omdurman, in Arabic 1300 gmt 14 Mar 11)

- President Umar al-Bashir issued a directive that pushes for transformation of the judicial process including the creation of a law against laundering. In a meeting, the President discussed the improvement of the prosecution services and the government plan to increase access to these prosecution offices across the country.

Private News Media

(UN-sponsored Miraya FM website, Juba, in English 12 Mar 11)

- Through a statement issued on Friday, the United Nations Mission in Sudan is concerned with the continued SPLA operations against rebel forces in Jonglei State and its impact on the civilian population. The United Nations has called on all parties to refrain from activities that may harm civilians and/or property and to allow unhindered access to assess the humanitarian situation and needs. The UN stated that the government of Southern Sudan has a responsibility to adhere to international humanitarian law in its response to security threats in the area. Responding to this statement, the Secretary-General of the SPLM has stated that the UN has failed in its role

(UN-sponsored Miraya FM website, Juba, in English 12 Mar 11)

- The Joint Committee of the National Congress and the SPLM has completed a roadmap for resolving the disputed five border points between north and south Sudan. The meetings concluded on Friday, March 11 and the recommendations will be handed over to each presidency for resolution before 9 July 2011.

(The Citizen, Khartoum, in English 12 Mar 11)

- According to satellite monitoring, northern and southern Sudanese troops have taken up new positions in Abyei region which has raised the threat of an escalation of violence. According to the Sentinel Project, satellite images showed armed men had moved to new frontline positions in Abyei where they had built up forces. Analysts say that the Abyei region is one of the most likely places for conflict to erupt in Sudan as the country prepares for the secession of Southern Sudan on 9 July, 2011. "This increased military activity is a warning that the recent village razing in Abyei could be a prologue to wider and worsening conflict," said John Bradshaw, executive director of the Enough Project campaign group, part of the satellite project. "Northern-aligned troops appear to have constructed a forward operating base in the past two weeks at Bongo, some 15 km (9 miles) from the recently razed village of Maker Abior,"

The Southern Sudanese army has said that over 100 people have died as a result of violence between the north and south armies in the region last week and has been condemned as unacceptable by the United States.

Southern Sudanese turned out in remarkable numbers to vote on secession. However, residents of the Abyei border region were not able to participate as a result of disagreement over who was in fact qualified to vote.

(Al-Sahafah, Khartoum, in Arabic 12 Mar 11)

- Editorialized report written by Sabah Ahmad, "Kampala: New Roles in the Dark"

"It was no coincidence that the two leaders of the Sudan Liberation Movement, Mani Arkoi Minawi and Abd-al-Wahid Muhammad Nur should settle together with their families in the Ugandan capital of Kampala.

This is in line with visits by top Darfur political and military leaders to Kampala at different times lately. They use it as a transit point from and to other states or to the capital of the South, Juba, and at times to the battlefield in Darfur!

But perhaps what is new in the story is the apparently intention of all these leaders to turn Kampala into a headquarters or a permanent centre for the launching of their activities, especially in view of the pressure that the Northern government has exercised on the South government to expel the leaders of the armed militias after they gathered in the South, with battles even taking place between the armed forces and the rebel forces in Darfur in some of the border engagement regions between the South and Kurudfan on the one hand and between the South and Darfur on the other.

Reports over the past days said that Abd-al-Wahid Muhammad Nur has entered Kampala with a Ugandan passport, travelling from the Israeli capital, Tel Aviv. He was soon joined by his family to remain in Kampala. Mani Arkoi Minawi moved from Juba with his family southward towards Kampala with the same intent.

Let me say that Kampala originally - under the tense conditions existing between it and Khartoum - always had some presence of those opposed to the Sudanese government, whether from the South, North, or Darfur.

But what is to be noted lately is the increasing flow of the opponents of the Khartoum government towards Kampala, something which makes it a candidate to become a new Mecca and an alternative to other capitals that used to receive those opposition members headed by Asmara, N'djamena, Tripoli and Cairo.

Because one thing leads to another, let us pose an objective question about the extent of the impact and the ramifications of changing the political map in some of the regional states, for example what happened in Egypt and what is presently taking place in Libya, in addition to the improvement in Sudan's relations with Eritrea and Libya. Does what happened and is happening at present has any reflections on the presence of the leaders of the militias in these countries, and therefore their choice of Kampala as a new headquarters for steering the opposition in both its political and military aspects especially as the relations between Sudan and Uganda are either frozen or hostile?

The questions above appear logical to a large degree and require answers. Police Brigadier Hasan Salih Bayumi looks at the case from the aspect that the issue is

naturally governed by interests. On that basis, he finds that Uganda would have no interest in receiving and hosting the opposition. The same goes for the government of the South which has begun to emerge as a new State in need of the North's support. The South is also bound by several common interests with the Khartoum government including the oil pipeline across the North. He says that the government in the North commands many instruments of pressure through which it can make the South government 'think a thousand times' before supporting those in opposition to the Khartoum government.

Bayumi, who was talking with me yesterday, defends his theory that Uganda has no real interest in hosting the Darfur rebels. He cites financial considerations: Who would finance this and why, except for Israel which has become a present factor in the Darfur issue and has a security, political and economic presence in Uganda as well as a military base in Kampala.

This is one facet of the case. Are there other details to the story?

Let us put the question to Dr Salah-al-Din al-Duma, professor of political science at Omdurman's Islamic University and hear what he says about the matter! Al-Duma starts by referring to aspects that he says always remain unknown or hidden to many concerning how the United States feels about opponents of the Sudanese government remaining in or heading to any of Arab, African, or European capital. He says that the United States does not mind the presence of the leaders of the rebellion in those States. It may even ask these States to host or continue hosting them, directly or indirectly through intermediaries or allies. Al-Duma adds that what appears on the surface is only the tip of the iceberg. Al-Duma cites US double standards on Sudan. He notes that the Sudanese government used to ask the French government to expel Abd-al-Wahid Muhammad Nur and at the same time call on the US Administration to pressure France to do so.

In effect, the former US envoy, Natsios, asked the French foreign office to expel Abd-al-Wahid but was taken by surprise to see the official in charge of African affairs in the US Administration, Jendayi Frazer telephone French President Nicolas Sarkozy and ask him to keep Abd-al-Wahid Nur. Al-Duma concludes that the presence of the Sudanese opposition in certain capitals cannot take place without US approval. He says the Sudanese government knows that well but it has been used to 'look at the elephant and stab at its shadow only'.

Last but not least, Uganda has long been viewed by the US Administration as the counter and antidote to the Sudanese government. The presence of Abd-al-Wahid and Minawi in Kampala could be seen from this angle. Moreover, the State Secretary in the era of Bill Clinton, Madeleine Albright, at one time gathered all the Sudanese opposition factions in Kampala.

And now it is as if history is repeating itself!"

(Al-Sahafah, Khartoum, in Arabic 13 Mar 11)

- The Sudanese Communist Party affirmed in a press statement that they will continue their struggle to topple the government and will take steps to set up a transitional

government that will solve border issues the Abyei region and the situation in Darfur. It has further called for the holding of fair and free elections in South Kurdufan.

(UN-sponsored Miraya FM website, Juba, in English 13 Mar 11)

- The Sudan People's Liberation Army has stated that militias headed by General Olony attacked the town of Malakal on 12 March. One UN staff person was injured and the total number of casualties remains undetermined.

(Juba Post, Khartoum in English 14 Mar 11)

- According to the SPLA Spokesperson, Col. Phillip Aguer Panyang, forty people were killed by militias in Malaka, Upper Nile Statel and many others are missing as a result of militia attacks against the SPLA. The SPLA will continue to monitor the situation in the Upper Nile State.

(Juba Post, Khartoum in English 14 Mar 11)

- Youth in Wau town in the Abyei region have begun a massive demonstration against the north's claims to ownership of the region. The demonstrators are calling for a speedy referendum process so that the region can be declared independent. "Abyei is part of South Sudan and there is no doubt you people will soon joint brothers and sisters in the South" State Government Capt Kamila Wana Urac said.

(Juba Post, Khartoum in English 14 Mar 11)

- UN official, Justice Chande Uthman has asked the government of Southern Sudan to strengthen rule of law. He said that the government needs to honour the fundamental values of human rights and must create laws that are necessary to protect human rights through professionalized government institutions. He further went on to stated that customary laws must adopt universal standards that guarantee the rights of all. There is a definite fear, according to the UN official that if there is "no new law that comes into place then the old law shall apply."