

RELEASED IN PART B6

ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AID-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 INL-00 USNW-00
 DODE-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 EAP-00 EUR-00 FBIE-00 VC-00
 H-01 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00 VCE-00 MED-07 M-00
 NEA-00 NSAE-00 OIC-02 PA-00 SSO-00 SS-00 EPAE-00
 ECA-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-00 G-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00
 /010W

-----BAABAE 301526Z /38

P R 301013Z OCT 03
 FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0023
 INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
 AMEMBASSY ASMARA
 AMEMBASSY BERLIN
 AMEMBASSY CAIRO
 DIA WASHDC
 AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
 AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
 AMEMBASSY LONDON
 AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
 AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
 AMEMBASSY OSLO
 USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000959

STATE FOR AF/SPG ALSO FOR USAID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2008
 TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PREL, PINS, EAID, PREF, SU
 SUBJECT: LURKING BENEATH THE SURFACE: THE UNSOLVED PROBLEMS OF
 DARFUR

CLASSIFIED BY: Gerard Gallucci, COM, Embassy Khartoum, DOS.
 REASON: (B), (D)

1.(SBU) SUMMARY: CLAIMS OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR ARMED MILITIAS, INVOLUNTARY POPULATION DISPLACEMENT, LACK OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO THE REGION, AND REFUSAL OF TRIBAL CHIEFS TO ALLOW ARAB NOMADIC TRIBES PASSAGE THROUGH THEIR LAND WERE THE FOCUS OF MEETINGS BETWEEN EMBASSY/USAID OFFICIALS AND DARFUR OFFICIALS AND RESIDENTS BOTH IN KHARTOUM AND ON LOCATION IN AL GENEINA AND EL FASHER. AS THE SUDAN LIBERATION ARMY (SLA) AND THE GOVERNMENTS OF SUDAN AND CHAD CONTINUE TO MEET TO NEGOTIATE AN EXTENSION TO THE CEASEFIRE, DARFURIANS CLAIM THAT THE GOS IS ARMING AND SUPPORTING WESTERN MILITIA, CONTRIBUTING TO A CLIMATE OF INSECURITY IN THE REGION. NGO'S ARE UNABLE TO TRAVEL FAR OUTSIDE OF MAJOR CITIES, AND INTERNATIONAL AID HAS BEEN INTERRUPTED AS A RESULT OF SECURITY PROBLEMS. WHILE THE SLA AND AFRICAN TRIBAL LEADERS HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL MONITORS, THE GOS CLAIMS DARFUR IS AN INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEM WHICH WILL BE SOLVED INTERNALLY. END SUMMARY.)

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Charles Daris, Senior Reviewer

2. DURING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 22, POLOFFS MET WITH DARFUR REPRESENTATIVES IN KHARTOUM ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS. ON OCTOBER 27 CHARGE AND POLOFF TRAVELED WITH USAID ADMINISTRATOR TO WESTERN AND NORTHERN DARFUR FOR MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, NGO'S AND TRIBAL LEADERS. WHILE THE GOS CONTENDS THAT IT WILL SUPPORT A CLIMATE OF SECURITY AND WORK TO RESOLVE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ISSUES IN THE WESTERN REGION, THE STORY WHICH UNFOLDED OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT CHANNELS WAS DIFFERENT. ALTHOUGH IN ABECHÉ (CHAD) GOS, SLA, AND GOC REPRESENTATIVES ARE NEGOTIATING AN EXTENSION TO THE SEPTEMBER 4 CEASE-FIRE, TRIBAL LEADERS TOLD US THAT THE GOS CONTINUES TO SUPPORT AND ARM ARAB MILITIAS, CAUSING MORE INVOLUNTARY DISPLACEMENT. NGO'S ESTIMATE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED DARFURIANS TO BE AT LEAST ONE HALF MILLION. THE CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF REFUGEES WHO HAVE LEFT SUDAN IS ABOUT 30,000.

EL GENEINA

3.(SBU) THREE AND A HALF HOURS BY PLANE FROM KHARTOUM, EL GENEINA IS A DUSTY, LITTLE TOWN SURROUNDED BY DESERT NEAR THE CHAD BORDER. WEST DARFUR BOASTS A POPULATION OF APPROXIMATELY 1.6 MILLION FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS WHO IN THE PAST LIVED IN RELATIVE HARMONY. HOWEVER, HARSH ENVIRONMENT AND COMPETITION BETWEEN ARAB NOMAD TRIBES AND AFRICAN FARMERS -- MOST BASICALLY OVER SCARCE RESOURCES AND ESPECIALLY WATER -- COUPLED WITH LACK OF GOS SUPPORT, HAVE LED TO BANDITRY, ANTI-GOVERNMENT SENTIMENT, AND VIOLENCE. THE GOS HAS MADE THINGS WORSE BY SUPPORTING ARAB MILITIAS KNOWN AS "JANJAWIT," WHO ARE NOT COVERED BY THE CEASE-FIRE. CHARGE AND USAID ADMINISTRATOR, ACCOMPANIED BY STATE MINISTER FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS MOHAMED YOUSIF ABDALLA -- HIMSELF FROM DARFUR -- WERE MET AT THE RUSTIC AIRPORT BY THE ACTING GOVERNOR (WALI) MUSTAFA MOHAMMED ISHAQ, STATE MINISTERS, TRIBAL CHIEFS (EMIRS), AND SUDANESE MILITARY. THE WALI BRIEFED THE GROUP ON THE SITUATION IN WEST DARFUR, EMPHASIZING THE ROLE OF THE UN AND NGO'S IN HELPING TO FEED THE HUNGRY. HE SAID THAT 229 VILLAGES HAD BEEN BURNED IN THE VIOLENCE WHICH BEGAN EARLIER IN THE YEAR. IN ADDITION, HE ADDED, SCHOOLS AND HEALTH FACILITIES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. THOUSANDS OF LIVESTOCK HAVE BEEN STOLEN, AND MANY TAKEN OVER THE BORDER. THE RESULT HAS BEEN THE DISRUPTION OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS AND THE BREAKING OF THE FRAGILE SOCIAL FABRIC WHICH PREVIOUSLY EXISTED. THE WALI AND OTHERS EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE BEFORE THE APPROXIMATELY 200,000 IDP'S WOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES. THE STATE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, IS PROVIDING MEDICINE, FOOD, AND OTHER ASSISTANCE, BUT MORE IS NEEDED.

4.(SBU) REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UN AND MEDAIR WERE PRESENT AT THE BRIEFING, BUT IT WAS CLEAR THE WALI DID NOT WANT THE U.S. DELEGATION TO MEET WITH THEM PRIVATELY. AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE CHARGE AND USAID ADMINISTRATOR, HOWEVER, REPRESENTATIVES OF UNHCR AND MEDAIR JOINED THE AMERICANS FOR BREAKFAST. THEY SAID THEY WERE ALLOWED TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE CITY (THEY PREVIOUSLY HAD BEEN CONFINED TO THE CITY LIMITS), BUT SECURITY WAS

UNCERTAIN AND THEY COULD NOT VISIT ALL OF THE STATE. FOLLOWING AN ATTACK ON A FOOD CONVOY, THEY SAID, MOST FOOD IS NOW BEING

DELIVERED BY AIR - A COSTLY AND INEFFICIENT MEANS OF DELIVERY. THEY WERE RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS THE POLITICAL SITUATION. (COMMENT: THROUGHOUT THE VISIT, QUESTIONS ABOUT THE "JANJAWIT" AND GOS SUPPORT FOR THEM WENT UNANSWERED IN THE GROUP MEETINGS. END COMMENT).

5.(C) LOCAL LEADERS PAINTED A GRIM PICTURE OF THE SITUATION IN WEST DARFUR. EDUCATION HAS SUFFERED GREATLY FROM POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND VIOLENCE. ONLY THE LARGER TOWNS HAVE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND TEACHERS ARE NOT BEING PAID. CHILDREN WHO ARE DISPLACED DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL. HEALTH CONDITIONS ARE DETERIORATING, AND THERE ARE NO LONGER CLINICS IN THE VILLAGES. LAND OWNERSHIP IS A DELICATE ISSUE FOR BOTH THE NOMAD AND FARMING TRIBES, ALL OF WHOM ARE MUSLIMS. THE NOMADS COMPLAIN THAT THEY CAN NO LONGER PASS THROUGH TRADITIONAL TERRITORY WITH THEIR HERDS, WHILE THE FARMERS COMPLAIN THAT THE GOS IS TRYING TO UPROOT THEM AND IS SUPPORTING ARAB MILITIAS AGAINST THEM. PRIVATELY, STATE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS TOLD POLOFF THAT THE GOS IS PROVIDING WEAPONS TO THE MILITIAS AND IS USING MILITARY HELICOPTERS TO TRANSPORT THEM. THE GOS, HE SAID, COULD END THE PROBLEM TOMORROW BY CONTROLLING THE MILITIA, BUT "IT DOES NOT WANT TO." HIS COMMENTS WERE ECHOED BY UN REPRESENTATIVE WHO ACCOMPANIED THE GROUP. CHARGE SAW TWO ARMED MEN IN UNIFORM ON HORSEBACK WITHIN THE TOWN. HE WAS TOLD BY VARIOUS PEOPLE THAT "THEY ARE THE ONES" ALTHOUGH A GOS OFFICIAL SAID THEY WERE ONLY "PDF" (POPULAR DEFENSE FORCE). THE GROUP ALSO SAW A GOS MILITARY HIND HELICOPTER AT THE AIRPORT (AND SNAPPED A PICTURE SUPPLIED TO DLO) THAT AN NGO PERSON LATER SAID HAD BEEN USED TO RECENTLY DELIVER ARMS TO THE MILITIA.

6.(SBU) TRIBAL LEADERS WHO MET WITH THE DELEGATION BLAMED THE "ARBITRARY ARMY" FOR MANY OF WEST DARFUR'S PROBLEMS. THERE HAS TO BE PEACE, THEY SAID, AND A SIGN THAT THE GOS IS WORKING TO DEVELOP THE WEST. THEY CLAIMED THAT 76 VILLAGES HAD BEEN BURNED IN THE NORTH, AND THAT ARMED BANDITS ROAM FREELY. THE NEED FOR DIALOGUE IS URGENT, THEY SAID, AND ASKED THAT INTERNATIONAL MONITORS BE STATIONED IN THE REGION TO MONITOR THE CEASE-FIRE.

EL FASHER

7.(SBU) THE CAPITAL OF NORTH DARFUR, EL FASHER IS MODERN COMPARED WITH EL GENEINA. AN IMPRESSIVE GROUP OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND LOCAL TRIBAL AND BUSINESS LEADERS MET THE US DELEGATION AT THE AIRPORT, EACH SHAKING HANDS WITH THEIR AMERICAN VISITORS ON THE SCORCHING RUNWAY. THE ACTING WALI WELCOMED THE GROUP IN THE GOVERNMENT HALL AND, ALTHOUGH THE HOSTS WERE FASTING FOR RAMADAN, SERVED REFRESHMENTS AND THEN LUNCH. ALTHOUGH PRESSED BY USAID ADMINISTRATOR AND CHARGE ON THE SECURITY PROBLEM IN THE REGION, THE WALI WAS OBVIOUSLY UNCOMFORTABLE AND UNWILLING TO DISCUSS THIS OBVIOUSLY SENSITIVE ISSUE. RATHER, HE DISCUSSED THE VIOLENCE CAUSED BY YEARS OF

DROUGHT AND POVERTY. HE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT A SECURE ENVIRONMENT WAS ESSENTIAL BEFORE IDP'S WOULD RETURN TO THEIR HOMES. HE EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO IMPLEMENT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT WATER IN THE AREA.

8.(SBU) OFFICIALS SAID THAT MORE THAN 300 VILLAGES HAD BEEN BURNED AND LOOTED IN 2003, AFFECTING APPROXIMATELY 400,000 PEOPLE. THE MALNUTRITION RATE IS ALARMING, THEY SAID, AND CHILDREN SUFFER THE MOST. A MISSED AGRICULTURAL SEASON AND INABILITY TO HARVEST CROPS HAS ADDED TO THE REGION'S MISERY, AND THE NEED FOR FOOD, WATER, HEALTH CARE AND SANITATION IS GREAT. DURING AN AFTERNOON MEETING WITH 20 TRIBAL LEADERS -- NOMADS AND FARMERS -- THE CONVERSATION BECAME LIVELIER, AS AT LEAST SOME DIRECTLY ACCUSED THE GOS OF HELPING THE MILITIAS AND OF NOT CARING ABOUT DARFUR. A DISTINGUISHED AND ARTICULATE GROUP, THE TRIBAL LEADERS APPEARED UNAFRAID TO VOICE THEIR CANDID OPINIONS. AT SUNSET ALL LEFT FOR PRAYERS, AFTER WHICH THEY INVITED THE AMERICANS TO SHARE THE "BREAK FAST" MEAL OF RAMADAN.

AND IN KHARTOUM

9.(SBU) DURING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 22, POLOFFS MET WITH DARFUR INTELLECTUALS AND TRIBAL LEADERS IN KHARTOUM. OBVIOUSLY NOT NEUTRAL OBSERVERS OF THE SCENE, IN THE RELATIVE SANCTUARY OF THE EMBASSY THEY DESCRIBED GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED VIOLENCE IN DARFUR. A DISTINGUISHED FUR TRIBE LEADER (THE FUR MAKE UP ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF DARFUR TRIBES) LABELED GOS ACTIONS AS "GENOCIDE," CLAIMING THAT PREVIOUS HARMONY AMONG GROUPS HAD BEEN DESTROYED

BY THE GOS DESIRE TO MOVE ARAB TRIBES INTO AFRICAN TRIBAL LANDS. THEY DESCRIBED THE THREE ELEMENTS OF THE CONFLICT AS "ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND POLITICAL," SAYING THAT DARFUR CANNOT BE RESOLVED UNTIL SUDAN IS RESOLVED. IN THE ABSENCE OF DEMOCRACY, THE TRIBES HAVE BECOME POLITICAL PARTIES, FURTHER HINDERING THE UNITY WHICH MODERNIZATION REQUIRES. NO OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF THE ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT EXISTS, THEY SAID, AND THE SITUATION IS ESCALATING. PROTECTION IS NEEDED, AND INTERNATIONAL MONITORS ARE ESSENTIAL, AS NO ONE TRUSTS THE GOVERNMENT. THEY UNANIMOUSLY DESCRIBED DARFUR'S PROBLEM AS A NATIONAL RATHER THAN AN ETHNIC ONE, ADDING THAT THE FIVE MAIN ARAB TRIBES ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE CONFLICT.

AN INSIDER VIEW

10. (C) DURING THE PLANE RIDE TO DARFUR, [REDACTED] PROVIDED AN INSIDE VIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOS POLICY ON DARFUR. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] INDICATED THAT HE WAS ASKED TO RETURN TO SUDAN TO WORK ON DARFUR LAST JULY. [REDACTED] SAID HE ADVISED THE GOVERNMENT IN FEBRUARY THAT A POLITICAL APPROACH WAS NEEDED TO THE REBELLION IN DARFUR BUT THAT PRESIDENT BASHIR HAD BEEN CONVINCED BY HARDLINERS AND THE

B6

MILITARY THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD "CRUSH THEM." WHEN THE MILITARY WAS INSTEAD DEFEATED, THE GOVERNMENT BEGAN ARMING MILITIAS. MOHAMED SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW WORKING TOWARD A POLITICAL SOLUTION THROUGH THE TALKS IN CHAD AND THROUGH OUTREACH TO DARFURIAN POLITICAL LEADERS. (PRESIDENT BASHIR MET WITH DARFURIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS LAST WEEK AFTER THEY WALKED OUT OF PARLIAMENT.) [REDACTED] SAID HE NEEDED THREE MONTHS TO SORT THINGS OUT AND WOULD TRY TO SEEK A CONSENSUS RESOLUTION.

B6

THE U.S. RESPONSE

11. (SBU) THE CHARGE AND AID ADMINISTRATOR ASSURED THOSE THEY MET WITH THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD REMAIN INTERESTED IN DARFUR AND WOULD WORK TO HELP DEVELOP THE REGION ONCE A PEACE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN SIGNED. THEY EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO MOVE FROM HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AS SHORT A TIME AS POSSIBLE, ADDING THAT THE GOS MUST CONTRIBUTE ITS SHARE. THE CHARGE FURTHER EMPHASIZED THAT MUCH DEPENDS ON SUDAN'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD, AS BY THAT IT WILL BE JUDGED INTERNATIONALLY.

12. (C) CHARGE RAISED CONCERNS OVER DARFUR AND CONTINUING INVOLVEMENT BY ELEMENTS OF THE GOS IN STIRRING ON THE MILITIA WITH [REDACTED] ON OCTOBER 30. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN COMPARING NOTES AND SHARING INFORMATION WITH THE UN AND EU AMBASSADORS. THE EUROPEANS ARE FACING AT HOME A GROWING TIDE OF PUBLIC CONCERN OVER DARFUR AND HAVE WARNED THE GOS OF THE INCREASING LIKELIHOOD OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE DARFUR PROBLEM IF THE SITUATION IS NOT RESOLVED.

11. (SBU) COMMENT: DARFUR IS A COMPLEX ISSUE, WITH SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR LASTING PEACE IN SUDAN. THE OVERWHELMING HOSPITALITY OF THE DARFUR HOSTS WAS ENCOURAGING, BUT THE OFFICIAL CONTROL OF MEETINGS WAS NOT. ONLY IN PRIVATE DID SOME TELL US THAT THE GOS WAS CONTRIBUTING TO RATHER THAN CURBING THE TIDE OF VIOLENCE IN THE REGION. IN FACT, DUE TO INSECURITY AND RESTRICTIONS, FEW NGO'S HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TRAVEL FAR OUTSIDE THE CITIES, AND THE REAL PLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE OF THE REGION MAY WELL BE WORSE THAN DESCRIBED. THE NUMBER OF DISPLACED PERSONS IS ALARMING, AND SOME CLAIM THAT THERE ARE MANY MORE. FOR THEM TO BEGIN TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES WILL REQUIRE ACTION BY THE GOS TO CONTROL THE MILITIAS IT HAS CREATED AND TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ASSIST THE RETURNEES. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DRAW THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION TO THE NEED TO CONTROL THE MILITIAS AND SEEK A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN DARFUR. WE ALSO PLAN TO RETURN TO DARFUR SOON TO UNDERLINE OUR INTEREST.

GALLUCCI

NNNN



National Security Archive,
Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University,
2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037,
Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, nsarchiv@gwu.edu