**Sudan/South Sudan on the Brink of Catastrophic War**

**By Eric Reeves**

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**Overview**

The price of a year’s worth of international diplomatic failure and facile moral and diplomatic equivocation will soon be paid in blood and suffering by many hundreds of thousands of civilians in Sudan and South Sudan. Hundreds of thousands have already been brought to the brink of starvation because there is no will to confront the Khartoum regime over its intransigent refusal to allow humanitarian access to Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Additionally, more than 100,000 Dinka Ngok civilians—forced militarily from Abyei by Khartoum’s Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) in May 2011—remain displaced and in poor conditions as refugees in South Sudan. Refugees from Blue Nile have found only tenuous relief in the camps of Upper Nile (South Sudan), and the impending rainy season threatens to increase a population of almost 100,000, even as the transport of relief supplies and equipment, especially that needed for provision of clean water, will rapidly become impossible.

Hundreds of thousands in the Nuba Mountains face starvation because of Khartoum’s humanitarian blockade. And in a highly revealing military action, those Nuba who escaped to Yida refugee camp in Unity State (South Sudan) were deliberately targeted by Khartoum’s military aircraft on November 10, 2011—with international journalists present as witnesses. Further, hundreds of thousands of other civilians have, as of April 8, been stripped of their northern Sudanese nationality for no reason other than their “Southern” ethnicity.

And yet Khartoum’s responsibility—for the seizure of Abyei, for the current military aggression on three fronts in northern Sudan, for the obstruction of humanitarian relief (including to Darfur), and for ethnic culling of the northern population—the regime’s direct responsibility for all this stands without consequential rebuke. Instead, international actors have with consistent and shameless expediency apportioned blame in equal allotments to both Khartoum and Juba, no matter what the actual political, diplomatic, or moral equities. This has over time done much to generate the present crises throughout greater Sudan; but given present military developments, such expediency also seems guaranteed to accelerate the move toward a war of unfathomable destructiveness.

Military realities: what renewed war will look like

Traveling to a range of locations in South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains in January 2003 (after the October 2002 cease-fire agreement but before Khartoum began to observe the cease-fire with any regularity), I found a grim but constant perception, a relentless certainty—expressed to me by every military and civil society official I spoke with, including John Garang: “If war comes again, it will be the most destructive of all our wars.” This is an extraordinary observation, coming from people who had just begun to emerge from a civil war that claimed well over 2 million lives and displaced between 4 and 5 million civilians; the prediction was made not in a bellicose spirit, but as a factual matter, one that should be clear to anyone who looked with any understanding at the nature of the military forces in the North and the South. As of today, those terrible premonitions from 2003 seem on the verge of becoming a vast and uncontrollable reality.

For what has also been clear to me in my conversations with Southerners and other Sudanese, now over many years, is that the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) leadership understood full well that there would be no international guarantors of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), completed in 2004 and signed on January 9, 2005. This was the reason the SPLM/A was adamant about maintaining its own army: in the event of military violations of the peace by Khartoum, the leadership knew that no other country would offer anything meaningful by way of help or protection to the South. The reasoning of the Southern leadership was all too astute, as we’re seeing with a grim clarity today.

Thus to understand the painfully high military expenditures by Juba, it’s necessary not only to keep in mind the deeply felt need to prevent excessively rapid and destabilizing demobilization of SPLA forces, which have certainly not been needed in present numbers for military purposes. It must also understood that from the viewpoint of military deterrence, expensive weapons acquisitions such as more advanced tanks, helicopters, and significant anti-aircraft defenses were judged necessary to provide a sufficiently credible deterrent to military aggression by an opponent known not only for aggressiveness, but for duplicity, ruthlessness, and indifference to human destruction, especially when those killed are ethnically African. These relatively advanced weapons, as well as the extraordinarily lethal and advanced weapons acquired by Khartoum over the past decade, ensure that future military violence will be extremely destructive.

In short, this will not be a war between a guerilla force and a national army substantially assisted by proxy militias. It will be a conflict between two very powerful military forces, with a number of advantages accruing to the South: they will have much better logistics and transport than during the 1983 – 2005 civil war, and the SAF will again be fighting far away from Khartoum. The SAF will also not have nearly as easy a time forcibly conscripting recruits into military service from regions it formerly counted on, including Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Darfur, and South Sudan itself. Perhaps most importantly, the people of the South generally feel that if war comes, they will be fighting for their survival, given Khartoum’s unconstrained military ambitions; SPLA morale is correspondingly high. Khartoum’s SAF, by contrast, is poorly motivated in the main and spread very thin, presently waging war in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, Darfur, as well as in the border regions. Moreover, all evidence suggests that the SAF is being badly mauled by the SPLA-North in brutal fighting within the Nuba Mountains, now over many months; Khartoum’s response has been an increasing reliance on bombing, long-range artillery, advanced rocket launchers—”stand-off weaponry”–and the ruthless determination to starve the people of the Nuba Mountains as a way of ending the insurgency. But crushing defeats of the SAF in military encounters with the SPLA-North are increasingly in evidence, and this is taking a significant toll on the larger military force.

Military realities: where is military conflict occurring?

What the SPLM/A did not anticipate in its negotiations for peace was that it would be abandoned diplomatically in ways that have emboldened Khartoum to pick and choose which elements of the CPA Protocols it would observe and which it would ignore. Nor did Juba anticipate that the National Islamic Front/National Congress Party regime would fully renege on key provisions of the CPA without meaningful consequence, Abyei most notably. Indeed, to understand the current extraordinarily precarious military situation, one must see just how poorly the international community performed in securing from Khartoum good faith participation in negotiations over delineation and demarcation of the North/South border per the terms of the CPA.

It not surprising that there is a good deal of confused news reporting on the situation in the Tishwin (Unity State)/Heglig area, where the most serious fighting is concentrated; for this is part of the North/South border that has not been delineated, even as many Southerners believe—with good reason—that Heglig is actually in the South as defined by the 1956 border (at independence). This makes Khartoum’s use of Heglig as the launching point for two major offensives against the Tishwin area all the more galling to Juba. President Salva Kiir had the strong support of most Southerners when he declared in a Presidential Statement today that, “the Republic of South Sudan is prepared to withdraw its forces from Heglig if a clear mechanism and guarantee can be provided that Heglig will not be used to launch another attack against South Sudan.”

Kiir has rightly placed the diplomatic ball in the international court; unfortunately, he has already and preemptively been denied the very assistance he needs to help produce a military de-escalation in the Tishwin/Heglig area. Indeed, Kiir and the Southern Sudanese leadership stand accused by the UN, the AU, the EU, the UK, and the U.S. of military aggression against northern Sudanese territory (see below). This is so even as all evidence—including that of UN observers from UNMISS, journalists on the ground, and oil workers—points to the fact that in both assaults on Tishwin, Khartoum was the clear aggressor, and that the SPLA’s military response was defensive, and retaliatory only to the extent consistent with further self-defense. Following the most recent assault, Juba understandably decided that it would not allow Heglig to be used yet again by the SAF as a staging ground for military assaults on the South, hence President Kiir’s statement.

Some of the confusion in international responses seems to come from a failure to follow the course of the dispute over Abyei, which is key here. Six months following the CPA signing (and thus also formal ratification of the Abyei Protocol) the Abyei Boundaries Commission (ABC) presented its findings to Khartoum (July 2005), as mandated by the Protocol. The regime immediately and categorically rejected the boundary findings, even as the ABC membership was selected equally by Khartoum and Juba. In May 2008 Khartoum’s regular and militia forces brutally assaulted Abyei town and the surrounding area, killing many civilians and forcing many tens of thousands to flee to the South. UN forces in what was then UNMIS (UN Mission in Sudan) stood by passively. For its part, the Southern leadership—convinced that the matter should not be resolved militarily—concluded that “final and binding” arbitration of the border issues was essential, and was successful in having the case concerning delineation of Abyei’s boundaries heard before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (The Hague). The July 22, 2009 ruling by the PCA was dismaying to the South, which saw much of what was traditional Dinka Ngok Abyei disappear, but Juba nonetheless accepted the finding.

What must be understood is just how narrowly the Court’s “final and binding” ruling actually was:

[from GOS-SPLM/A Final Award July 22, 2009 Page 267-68 Eastern Boundary (of Abyei)]

“1. In respect of the ABC Experts’ decision that “the eastern boundary shall extend the line of the Kordofan – Upper Nile boundary at approximately longitude 29°32’15″ E northwards until it meets latitude10°22’30″ N, the ABC Experts exceeded their mandate.

“2. The eastern boundary of the area of the nine Ngok Dinka chiefdoms transferred to Kordofan in 1905 runs in a straight line along longitude 29°00’00” E, from latitude 10°10’00” N south to the Kordofan – Upper Nile boundary as it was defined on 1 January 1956.”

The central implication for purposes of understanding the present military conflict in the Heglig region, lying east of Abyei as defined by the PCA, is that this ruling did nothing to settle where the “1 January 1956 border” actually lies. It had no mandate to make such a determination, and did not attempt to do so. This was to have been determined by post-CPA negotiations between Juba and Khartoum. But feeling no real international pressure, Khartoum has never engaged in good faith negotiations on either delineation or demarcation of the North/South border; indeed, Khartoum militarily prevented demarcation of areas that had actually been delineated in the Abyei region.

The importance of negotiations to settle the location of the “1 January 1956 border” has been made repeatedly clear, most authoritatively by historian of Sudan Douglas Johnson, a member of the Abyei Boundaries Commission. His analysis from January 2011 (“The Road Back from Abyei“) and other work gives us a detailed sense of how for decades the Khartoum regime has been moving the North/South boundary southward, often by proxy:

“Violence spilling over from Bahr el-Ghazal during the civil war in the 1960s brought the first armed conflict between the Ngok and Misseriya since the 19th century, and it was at this time that the Misseriya began claiming and occupying the northern-most Ngok settlements. The violent displacement of Ngok from their villages by armed Misseriya, sometimes with the backing of members of the local police, was accelerated after the end of the first civil war in the 1970s when the Ngok were offered a referendum on whether they wanted to be incorporated into the newly-established Southern Region, or remain as part of Kordofan. Following the discovery of oil flowing beneath Abyei Khartoum blocked the referendum, in a move that preceded and led to the abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1983. The Abyei referendum, therefore, is unfinished business.”

Long-time and highly informed Sudan observer John Ashworth notes just today that:

“[I] t is widely acknowledged that the current border is NOT the 1956 border. Successive Khartoum governments have pushed the border southwards, particularly since the discovery of oil in the 1970s. South Sudanese have waited patiently while Khartoum procrastinated on border negotiation while continuing to attack locations which are known to be well within South Sudan according to the 1956 border.” (email received April 12, 2012)

These historically informed assessments make clear that statements such as we are hearing today from various international actors are in fact judging a matter—the location of the North/South border—presumptively; they are determining an issue that should still be very much on the negotiating table. But Khartoum has refused to negotiate boundary issues, and this is the fundamental problem that has yet to be frankly acknowledged. Peremptory judgments like those that have come today from the UN, the U.S., the AU, the EU and the UK are all unwittingly but effectively encouraging Khartoum to remain intransigent in any future negotiations on the location of the border.

In a ghastly way, this represents a reprise of the international failure in responding to Khartoum’s intransigence on Abyei, including the denial of a self-determination referendum. And just as a weak and compromising response ensured the military take-over of the region, so present international responses work to ensure that this part of the disputed border becomes a cartographic fait accompli. Such an outcome will in turn ensure that conflict continues, and it is here that we should bear in mind the time-line of serial failures leading up to the seizure of Abyei. It’s important to remember that judgments in both Juba and Khartoum have been shaped by the consequent abject failure to bring meaningful pressure to bear on the regime to withdraw its forces and thereby create a security environment necessary for the return of the Dinka Ngok. Instead, these displaced people continue to struggle to survive, often in extremely challenging circumstances—and this because the international community cannot escape its expedient habit of equivocation:

“‘The AU notes with alarm, the occupation of the Heglig by the forces of (South Sudan) and calls for their immediate and unconditional withdrawal,’ a statement from the AU Commission said on Wednesday, amid continued fighting in the region.”

“State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters when asked about the surge in border fighting between Sudan and the newly independent state of South Sudan [that] the State Department would issue a ‘statement which strongly condemns the military offensive, incursion to Southern Kordofan state, Sudan, by the SPLA today.’” (Agence France-Presse [Washington, DC], April 11, 2012)

“‘The move by the South Sudanese armed forces to occupy Heglig in Sudan is completely unacceptable, as are the continuing bombings of South Sudanese territory by Sudan, [UK Minster for Africa Henry Bellingham] said in a statement.”

“”The move by the South Sudanese armed forces to occupy Heglig is completely unacceptable. So is continued aerial bombardment of South Sudanese territory by the Sudan Armed Forces,’ EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said through a spokesman. ‘Both parties must also stop supporting armed groups in the territory of the other state’ and should ‘cease hostilities, withdraw forces immediately back within their own borders and respect each other’s territorial integrity,’ Ashton insisted.”

“[Salva Kiir, speaking in Juba today] ‘He gave me an order, the U.N. secretary-general, that I’m ordering you to immediately withdraw from Heglig. I said, “I’m not under your command.” If I’m head of a state, an independent state, nobody will tell me that—do this, under duress.’”

“The UN Security Council is demanding demands ‘a complete, immediate, and unconditional: end to all fighting; withdrawal of (South Sudan’s Army) from Heglig; end to (Sudanese Armed Forces) aerial bombardments; end to repeated incidents of cross-border violence between Sudan and South Sudan; and an end to support by both sides to proxies in the other country.’”

Moral equivalence is fully preserved here, along with a border defined so that Heglig is in North Sudan. Only Norway managed anything reasonably appropriate to the situation, and even this statement represents the conflict as the equal responsibility of the two parties:

“‘We urge both parties to pull back their troops to where they were positioned before the recent escalation. We also urge them to immediately remove the last obstacles that are preventing the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mission from coming into operation, as they have previously agreed,’ said Mr Støre.”

But of course the obstacles to this Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mission are virtually all a function of Khartoum’s obduracy. Juba could wish for nothing so much as an active and robust JBVM Mission. Only Khartoum benefits from ambiguous borders, and an ability to project military power without a clearly defined trip-wire. It is also the ambiguity of the border delineation that permits what has now been photographed and witnessed first-hand: a secret “tie-in” oil pipeline, originating in Heglig and making its way toward Southern oil fields where it apparently would have had the capacity to siphon off as much as 25,000 barrels of Southern crude per day (Reuters [Juba], April 5, 2012). Such subterfuge is possible only because of the ambiguous borders that Khartoum is working so hard to maintain, knowing that it has already seized a great deal of what is Southern territory and would only lose territory, and military cover, if reasonable border delineation and actual demarcation actually occurred.

The large Kafia Kingi enclave in far western Western Bahr el-Ghazal, for example, has been seized by the regime on the basis of Khartoum’s 1960 redrawing of the “1 January 1956 boundary”; per the terms of the CPA, Kafia Kingi should revert to South Sudan, since the entire enclave was created by the southward swoop of the factitious 1960 border. So far Khartoum has been unyielding, no doubt in part because there is copper to be mined and evidence of other minerals and ores as well. By cleaving to an untenable claim on Kafia Kingi, Khartoum has also made the enclave—as an authoritative Rift Valley Institute study suggests—a potentially useful bargaining chip in other border negotiations, if these ever occur. Of course there have been no international voices calling for a halt to Khartoum’s violation of this remote part of sovereign Southern territory.

Restraint and forbearance

What becomes clear in the pronouncements by the U.S., the UK, the UN, the EU, the AU and others over the past day is that Juba is in effect being punished for its forbearance in the face of relentless military provocations by Khartoum. These include aerial military attacks on civilian and military targets in South Sudan going back to November 2010—two months before the Southern self-determination referendum. Altogether, even before the recent onslaught of bombing attacks, there have been more than 40 confirmed incidents of aerial assault on Southern territory (www.sudanbombing.org). Painfully little has been heard from the international community about this indiscriminate barbarism, and what we do hear has taken on the form of boiler-plate condemnation that barely registers in Khartoum. This is one reason the regime’s military leaders felt free to escalate dramatically its aerial offensive by attacking Bentiu today, the capital of Unity State. Bentiu is a major city, not a town or a village, and an attack on such a large civilian population certainly demands more than the familiar perfunctory demands that the bombing stop. There has been none.

Juba also made the excruciatingly difficult decision not to resist militarily Khartoum’s May 20-21 (2011) seizure of Abyei: coming less than two months before Southern independence, the regime’s seizure took advantage of the desperate desire by the South not to allow any event, however unjustified or provocative, to derail the achievement of independence. But there was a great deal of bitterness throughout the South, and particularly those from the Abyei area, that the international response was so flaccid—the more so since Khartoum’s military ambitions had long been clear and yet provoked no decisive objections from the UN, the U.S., the EU, the AU, or others. And even now the AU is calling for “both sides to remove their illegal military presence in Abyei”: given the truculent refusal of Khartoum to remove any of its SAF forces that were instrumental in the seizure, or its Misseriya militia allies, the suggestion that the SPLA has a comparable military presence is preposterously disingenuous. It should also be noted that Khartoum agreed to withdraw its forces as part of the June 20, 2011 settlement that created the terms of deployment for an Ethiopian brigade under UN peacekeeping auspices. It never did so. The regime has yet again reneged on a signed agreement, and has yet again been emboldened by the failure of the international community to do more than huff and puff.

Just as difficult for Juba has been the decision to limit severely the assistance it provides to the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army-North, former comrades-in-arms. A recent report from the authoritative Small Arms Survey (Number 19, April 2012

 Reaching for the Gun: Arms Flows and Holdings in South Sudan) presents evidence that Juba is in fact assisting the SPLA-N. It finds precious little, however, and even less in the nature of physical evidence, such as the sort by which SAS has clearly established that Khartoum is the source of weapons for the vicious South Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA), a proxy force that mainly kills civilians. And many of the weapons in possession of George Athor’s former militia group in Jonglei also originated in Khartoum; in many cases they have ended up fueling terrible ethnic conflict in Jonglei. The entirety of the SAS account of Juba’s support for the SPLA-N fits in a small box insert (about one-third of page 4); and as to sources for the only generalizations of significance, only one is named: Military Intelligence Officer General Sa’ad Omer of the Sudan Armed Forces.

What is certainly clear is that there is a gross asymmetry between Khartoum’s supplying of militias bent on creating havoc, and Juba’s assistance, probably mainly food and fuel, to the SPLA-N. SAS specifies nothing in the way of quantity or the particular nature of any putative military assistance because there is no evidence extant that would allow for the possibility of quantification and specification. Certainly if Khartoum had any such evidence it would broadcast the fact and the evidence widely. Even so, this hasn’t prevented the U.S. and other consequential international actors from speaking of “assistance to proxy forces by both Khartoum and Juba” as if they were in any way truly comparable. Such disingenuousness sends a clear signal to Khartoum: there will be no real consequences for its immensely destructive and disruptive military assistance to renegade militia groups that have no meaningful political agenda, and which trade only speciously on local agendas.

Looking forward

The outlook is extremely bleak. There are in no evidence of countervailing forces that can bring Khartoum back from its present commitment to characterize the fighting as “South Sudan’s blatant invasion of Heglig,” with a corresponding need for the SAF to engage in massive military retaliation. The obscene international indulgence in “moral equivalence” is the only reason Khartoum has pushed as far as it has; and to see today the judgments of Juba by various international actors is to see precisely what has emboldened these brutal thugs. That the diplomatic world cleaves to its shameless expediency about conflict in Sudan justifies the grimmest pessimism about near-term military developments. The likelihood of all-out war is extremely great, and yet those diplomatically in charge refuse to recognize where the center of power lies in an increasingly brutal and unconstrained National Islamic Front/National Congress Party. Princeton Lyman’s assessment evidently stands as that of virtually all diplomatic actors; speaking to Asharq Al-Awsat, Lyman was blunt:

“Frankly, we do not want to see the ouster of the [Sudanese] regime, nor regime change. We want to see the regime carrying out reform via constitutional democratic measures.”

We might chalk this up to foolish credulity had not Lyman given us ample reason to believe that in fact it represents the grossest expediency, an unwillingness to confront Khartoum—even when the issue is emergency humanitarian relief access. We might well wonder how Lyman squares his optimistic assessment of the regime with the fact that more than two months after the UN, the AU, and the Arab League prepared an agreement guaranteeing humanitarian relief to Sudanese civilians in the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, Khartoum still refuses to sign on (the SPLM-N signed on February 9). Indeed, two months later, with people already seen starving in the Nuba, the regime claims to be “still studying the proposal,” and has conducted factitious food assessments that reveal “no problems in South Kordofan.” This is of course transparent mendacity: the regime is attempting (among other things) to wait until the rains begin, in a matter of weeks, ensuring that delivery of international relief assistance will be immeasurably more difficult, and that in the interim the destruction of civilian lives and agricultural livelihoods can proceed apace with only a few intrepid journalists as witnesses (see al-Jazeera’s recent video dispatch from the Nuba by Peter Greste).

Moreover, in allowing Khartoum to commandeer the diplomatic agenda by means of military aggression, the international community becomes complicit in a range of collateral damage that follows directly from what is now total absorption with a crisis that the regime has orchestrated. The agony of the people of Darfur will continue, even more silently, without any meaningful news profile, excepting only a bizarrely distorting upbeat dispatch from the New York Times. Refugees from Blue Nile and South Kordofan are being doubly victimized by current violence; for virtually all of them fled initially because of Khartoum’s violence against civilians or the consequences of comprehensive destruction of crops and plantings. Now, because of violence around Heglig, they receive precious little attention, even as those refugees in Upper Nile especially are poised to endure an extremely dangerous rainy season. The same wretched conditions confronting the refugees from Abyei will also likely become less visible, and thus more acceptable.

And in another source of potentially explosive conflict, tensions between the Dinka Ngok displaced from Abyei and the Misseriya herders who are moving north again from Southern grazing areas are such that violence could easily flare. Very little attention is being paid to this potential crisis.

What should happen

•The international community must put Khartoum on notice that it will be held responsible for its actions, and that there will no longer be some factitious parceling out of blame to Juba as well with every serious condemnation of the regime’s military violence or support of proxy forces. To be sure, the odds for changing this decades-long pattern seem exceedingly small, and the likelihood of war commensurately greater.

•Every single bombing attack on sovereign Southern territory should be investigated, detailed, and highlighted publicly for meaningful condemnation. (Juba, of course, has no offensive military aircraft.) Having escaped meaningful censure following more than a decade of indiscriminate aerial assaults, Khartoum must face condemnations marked by both discipline and conviction, and a specified set of punitive sanctions. For in virtually all instances, given the inherently indiscriminate nature of Antonov “bombers” and inexpertly piloted jet aircraft, these attacks are war crimes, and collectively—given their massive destruction of civilian lives and livelihoods—crimes against humanity.

•The UNMISS force should be capable of re-deploying much more rapidly, have much better transport, and most importantly should confirm reported military events more expeditiously and fully. Currently, UN political officials are continuing to conceal most of these findings. This is so despite the fact that many of the incidents and observations make perfectly clear, to all who would simply look, that despite Khartoum’s vehement denials, the military actions reported by Southerners and the SPLA have in fact occurred. UN political suppression of observations and investigations that have direct bearing in assigning responsibility for the current military situation is deeply irresponsible, finally immoral. In many cases the world learns more from intrepid journalists than from the UN; witness the recent Agence France-Presse dispatch with a Tishwin dateline, and a BBC interview of an oil industry worker in the Heglig area who declared to the BBC: “The Sudanese attacked first but they didn’t have as many soldiers, so they were forced to fell back” (in The Guardian, April 11, 2012).

•The Border Verification and Monitoring Mission should deploy wherever security permits, with a robust response force continually at the ready to provide additional security. The Mission should report frequently and publicly on its findings. Khartoum will resist, and may make deployment impossible in many areas; this fact should then be made widely known.

•Border delineation should begin in earnest, with substantial diplomatic commitment to securing meaningful participation from Khartoum. In the absence of sharply delineated borders, clearly demarcated, Khartoum will continue to test, to probe, to move in militarily threatening fashion, and in general keep the border regions unstable. The primary motive is to de-stabilize Juba, as it is with the regime’s support for militia proxies.

•The UN should be prepared to authorize non-consensual cross-border relief efforts in the event that Khartoum persists in denying all access to South Kordofan and Blue Nile. We cannot allow hundreds of thousands of civilians to starve because some feel obliged to respect the territorial integrity of a genocidal regime.

•The UN should immediately reconfigure and augment UNMISS, both in light of the Jonglei crisis and as a means of creating a credible, effective “trip-wire” along the North/South border to prevent, if possible, future aggressive military actions against the South by Khartoum.

The painful truth is that none of these measures is likely to be taken. Khartoum’s obduracy will be used to justify any diplomatic fecklessness—the regime’s claim of “national sovereignty” long ago having trumped the “responsibility to protect.”

This new war will be born out of international expediency, disingenuousness, and cowardice. Few seem to care that this is so.

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