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The Secretary's Meeting with Sudanese Foreign Minister Osman Ismail

(June 29, 2004)

Mr. Minister

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CONTEXT

Our goal for your meeting with Foreign Minister Ismail is to convey the USG's grave concern over the atrocities being committed in Darfur and the humanitarian crisis there. We have a dual message: If actions to stop attacks by the Jingaweit militias are not taken, we will press for UNSC action and will publicly name GOS officials supporting atrocities; if, however, the GOS does what is necessary, we will respond positively. Ismail knows that we have linked normalization of relations not only to a north-south peace agreement, but also to Darfur.

It would be useful to underscore that the crisis in Darfur threatens the implementation of a north-south peace agreement. The major progress made in the north-south negotiations provides a window of opportunity to intensify efforts to resolve the Darfur crisis. We hope and expect that Vice President Taha and SPLM Chairman Garang, as part of their new partnership for peace, will work together on Darfur.

ISSUES TO RAISE

1. **Emphasize necessity for immediate, dramatic and verifiable actions to resolve Darfur crisis; We want the GOS to: (i) stop Jingaweit violence by employing military force if necessary; (ii) remove all obstacles to humanitarian access; (iii) cooperate fully with international monitoring, and; (iv) agree to engage in political talks with the Darfur armed opposition.** There are 1.2 million displaced persons in Darfur at imminent risk, and another 160,000 refugees in Chad. USAID projects that as many as 350,000 persons will die by the end of this year as a result of starvation and disease even if full humanitarian access is gained in the immediate future. While the GOS has expedited issuance of some visas and has removed some travel restrictions, a range of obstacles remain (including customs delays; failure to approve visas for some aid and human right workers; lack of cooperation by some local officials; restrictions on transport, among others).

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The GOS has never acted on visa applications by DRL A/S Craner and S/WCI Ambassador Prosper, for example. The GOS must allow human rights monitors unfettered access throughout Darfur to investigate atrocities. Continued widespread Jingaweit violence and atrocities inhibit food deliveries and terrorize the displaced. Under pressure the GOS signed a ceasefire with the Darfur rebels in early April and subsequently agreed to international monitoring. The first group of approximately 24 monitors led by the African Union are in Darfur. The GOS must allow the AU to fulfill its mandate.

Ismail will cite recent public commitments by President Bashir to take steps on Darfur, but these and previous statements have not been matched with action.

2. **Stress to Ismail that the government must immediately disarm, arrest, and hold accountable those responsible for atrocities.** NGOs, analysts, and a number of Congressmen are beginning to conclude that any number of indicators for genocide are being met. The situation in Darfur is not a humanitarian crisis that occurred from natural causes. It is a direct result of what the militias, and the government via its support for them, are doing. Having the world call this genocide will only increase Sudan's isolation and the pressure the international community is bringing to bear. The government must take immediate, transparent action not only to disarm the Jingaweit, but to arrest those – in the militias or among government troops – responsible for atrocities. These steps must be taken in a transparent and verifiable manner.
3. **Lay out U.S. intentions to push for UNSC action; willingness to help and to respond positively if GOS takes necessary steps.** Your visit, the UNSYG's visit, the recent visit of AU Secretary-General Konare, and the just-concluded visits of Congressman Wolf and Senator Brownback highlight the degree of international concern. Simultaneous to your visit, we are floating a draft UNSC resolution within New York that imposes Chapter 7 targeted sanctions on the Jingaweit and threatens imposition on the GOS if they do not act. The GOS viewed the removal of international sanctions in 2001 as a huge victory and a mark of international respectability. The threat of possible renewed sanctions places major pressure on the GOS. The text includes language making it clear that the GOS can put its pariah status behind it if it makes the right decision on Darfur and follows through on North-South peace. The resolution will be a tough sell in New York and the text will likely get leaked to Khartoum in short order. We have publicly named Jingaweit leaders responsible for the violence

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and hold them accountable. We should indicate that our investigations continue, including on the cooperation between the GOS and Jingaweit, and that, if evidence warrants, we will focus on naming others. At the same time, the GOS needs to know that we will respond positively to dramatic, verifiable actions on Darfur, including normalizing relations if the Darfur crisis is resolved and there is a north-south accord.

4. **Urge GOS to hold political talks with the Darfur rebels.** The GOS has sought to side-step direct political talks through a call for a meeting of all Darfur political groups. However, they will meet separately with the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in Paris. Direct discussions between the GOS and the armed opposition are essential to resolve local grievances. We have been working quietly to facilitate discussions. The Center for Humanitarian Dialogue has the rebels' confidence and is ready to host something. The AU is considering an effort to organize talks, and we could support that. We do not believe that Chad is appropriate as the venue for leadership for talks, given the GOC's special relationship with the GOS.

IF RAISED ISSUES

5. **Ismail will allege that rebel groups in Darfur are responsible for some of the violence and human rights atrocities, and that the Jingaweit cannot be disarmed until the rebels are.** While the rebel groups have been responsible for some violations of the ceasefire, the vast majority of violence and atrocities have been committed by GOS forces, particularly the Jingaweit militias. Stopping the Jingaweit immediately is essential to start stabilizing the situation. The Jingaweit are not, as some in the GOS allege, "out of control."
6. **Ismail will claim the SPLM supports rebel groups in Darfur as well as opposition groups that have potential for violence in eastern Sudan and other areas.**

[REDACTED] The rebel groups know that whatever political settlement they reach with the GOS will have to be folded into the broader framework of the national north-south agreement (autonomy and federalism provisions, constitutional revision). Garang is uniquely positioned to work with both the rebels and Taha to encourage political talks.

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We have told Garang that we do not want to see the SPLM provide material support to the rebels.

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Secretary-Ismail Meeting

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Sudan

Foreign Minister Ismail
(Others TBD)

Attachments:

Biography: FM Osman Ismail

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