

Breakup of Sudan: challenges for North and South

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“What happens in Sudan in the days ahead may decide whether a people who have endured too much war move towards peace or slip backwards into bloodshed.” - President Barack Obama.¹

South Sudan’s week-long self-determination referendum that started on January 9, 2011, was the capstone of decades of civil war in the country. According to official results announced on February 7, 98.83 per cent of voters opted for independence. However, the new government of an independent South will assume office on July 9, as per the condition of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and South Sudan will become the 193rd member state to join the United Nations. The referendum itself was a historic occasion as the independence of South Sudan will be Africa’s first secession through a popular vote - since the end of colonialism, Eritrea has been the only African country to become independent, but that came about as the result of war, when it defeated Ethiopia militarily.

As South Sudan is heading towards independence, both the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) leadership, and the people of the south are in high spirits. It is also encouraging that Omar Hassan Al Bashir, the North President, has accepted the results with an open heart and stated that he will recognize the new state - a goodwill gesture that has been lauded by South Sudan President Salva Kiir. Although such proclamations from the presidents in both north and south are elevating, many post-referendum issues are yet to be ironed out and will need tangible cooperation.

Currently, both sides are struggling to deal with issues of security, citizenship, oil and water resources, currency, assets and liabilities and international treaties and agreements. Also, there are further reasons for the south to be especially concerned as it gains independence. The greatest threat the new state will face will be to overcome growing internal challenges to its authority without resorting to repression. There are chances of unrest within the southern military if expectations of the new government are not met. Similarly, in the North, secession may cause shocks and President Bashir will have to change his leadership style to calm the enraged and disgruntled population, particularly in Darfur.

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In addressing issues of the history of the conflict between the north and south and the consequent January 9, 2011 referendum, this paper will look at the following questions: What are the parallels between the Sudanese separation and India-Pakistan in 1947, and Pakistan-Bangladesh in 1971? How has the international community and Sudan's neighbors responded? What are the challenges that the North and South face after secession? What will be the impact on the Darfur issue?

History of the conflict between North and South Sudan

The north-south issue has included struggle over political power, cultural identity, land, water, and natural resources. In addition, governance by the elite; attempts at building a national identity around Arabic culture and Islam in a multicultural society (in which only 30 per cent of people identify themselves as Arabic while large parts in south are mostly African and Christian); Sudan's incomplete process of state-building; and a clash between processes of economic modernization in the 1970s with more traditional ways of living, are some of the factors that exacerbated the problems between north and south Sudan for 37 years.² In fact, the northern and southern Sudanese were not on good terms even before colonialism as slave trade was encouraged where invaders from the north took control of people in the south. Between 1899 and 1955, when Sudan was jointly administered by Egypt and Britain, the British adopted a policy of isolating the South from the rest of the country, and when Sudan gained independence in 1956 as a single unit, the two sides were suddenly brought together as one country. This later resulted in a civil war.

Since a coup in 1989, Sudan has been ruled by the National Islamic Front (NIF), and its successor organization, the 'National Congress Party (NCP), led by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir. The NIF and NCP both gained power by enhancing their control over the country's economy and military, and have also been able to run its system of Islamic banking.³ The political and economic policies of the NIF and NCP have not gone well with southern Sudanese and resulted in the formation of the Southern People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in 1983. The SPLM/A was mainly structured on the basis of discriminatory policies adopted by the government of Sudan (GOS) against south Sudan and its elements were mostly drawn from farmers and pastoralists.⁴ However, the SPLM/A went through a series of divisions in the early 1990s because of the rebellious approach of various commanders and it was only in 2001 that it united itself properly under the command of John Garang de Mabior.

The north-south conflict is part of a chain of conflicts engulfing Sudan. Many peace-building efforts have been initiated by the international community and Sudan's neighboring states in the past to end the north-south divide and some eight overlapping peace initiatives between 1972 and 2005, involving at least 25 rounds of direct or mediated talks, have taken place. The first attempt by the international community was made in 1972 in the form of the 'Addis Ababa Peace Agreement', which was able to stop the war for ten years. However, relations started to sour due to changes that took place in the north and once again the country returned to civil war due to, one, the growing Islamisation of the north, especially the decision by then President Gaafar al-Nimeiry to impose Sharia law; and two, changes made to clauses of the peace accord, causing the South to lose some of its representation in the northern government.

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Nonetheless, in 2005, the international community, through continuous efforts, was able to break a deadlock between the government of Sudan (GOS) and the SPLM/A in the Kenyan town of Naivasha, by bringing them to a Comprehensive Peace Agreement or CPA, which was recognized by the UN Security Council under resolution 1574. The CPA was the result of three years of hard work and sustained negotiations under the patronage of the Inter-Governmental Draught Authority (IGAD), backed by the African Union, the Arab League, the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and the governments of Italy, Norway, UK, the United States and Netherlands.⁵

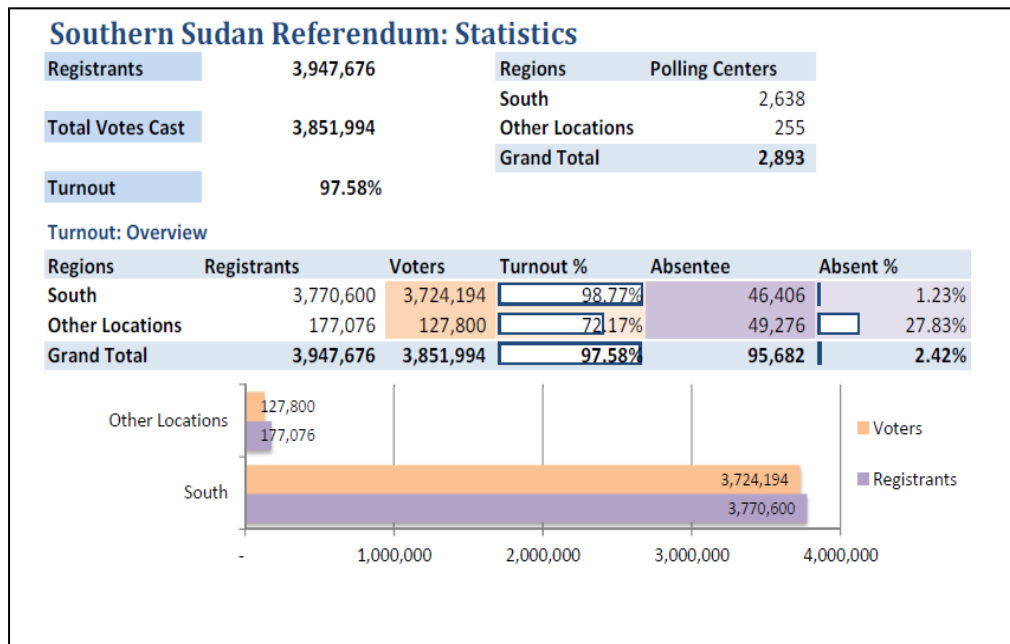
The CPA carries special importance in the history of Sudan as it formally ended 37 years of armed conflict, which occurred in two phases of wars (1956-1972 and 1983-2004) between north and south Sudan. It includes agreements for an interim period, from 2005 to 2011, on security, wealth sharing, power sharing, and the status of the three regions of Abyei, Southern Kordofan, and the Blue Nile.⁶ In addition, the CPA includes a special provision that gives the people of South Sudan the right of self-determination. And thus, it called on all political forces in 2005 to

hold a referendum, which on January 9, 2011, ultimately led to the southern Sudanese deciding whether they wanted a united Sudan or secession.

South Sudan referendum

Thousands of national and international observers and party agents were deployed at polling centers across South and North Sudan, and in eight other countries where a large number of Sudanese live. The international observers monitoring the referendum process – the Carter Center, the EU, the UN Panel and the AU – have declared their satisfaction with the referendum exercise and called it credible. According to the chairperson of the South Sudan Referendum Commission (SSRC) Mohamed Ibrahim Khalil, by January 14, 2011, a total of 3,135,000 voters out of 3,755,000 or 83 per cent of South Sudanese had cast their votes and 116,000 out of the 162,000 registered voters had voted.

Indeed the high voter turnout shows the importance of the occasion. A 91 per cent turnout was reported in the diaspora voting that took place in Australia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the U.S. As per reports until February 7, 2011, the voting figures are shown in the tables and graphs below.

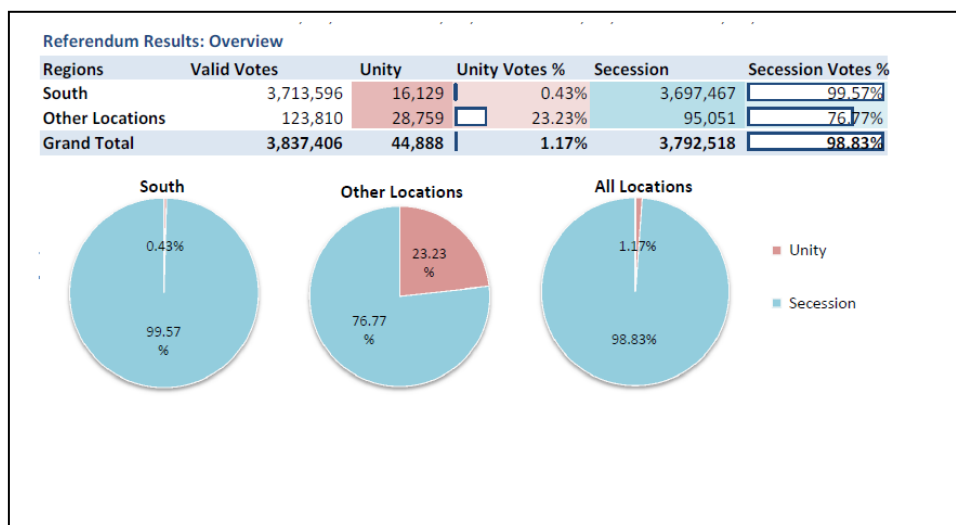


Source: Southern Sudan Referendum Results Final Results Report, 7/2/2011.
http://southernsudan2011.com/sites/default/files/Final_Results_Report_20110206_1512.pdf

Turnout: Southern Sudan States					
States	Registrants	Voters	Turnout %	Absentee	Absent %
Central Equatoria	469,987	457,439	97.33%	12,548	2.67%
Eastern Equatoria	468,499	463,706	98.98%	4,793	1.02%
Jonglei	436,304	430,056	98.57%	6,248	1.43%
Lakes	300,399	299,040	99.55%	1,359	0.45%
Northern Bahr El Ghazal	387,336	382,049	98.64%	5,287	1.36%
Unity	504,116	498,231	98.83%	5,885	1.17%
Upper Nile	352,601	347,390	98.52%	5,211	1.48%
Warrap	470,368	469,648	99.85%	720	0.15%
Western Bahr El Ghazal	165,492	162,594	98.25%	2,898	1.75%
Western Equatoria	215,498	214,041	99.32%	1,457	0.68%
Grand Total	3,770,600	3,724,194	98.77%	46,406	1.23%

Source: Southern Sudan Referendum Results Final Results Report, 7/2/2011.
http://southernsudan2011.com/sites/default/files/Final_Results_Report_20110206_1512.pdf

The independence referendum has gone exceedingly well, with a high and jubilant turnout and orderly voting process. The final results were announced in Khartoum on February 7 and exhibited remarkable homogeneity as 99 per cent of the voters were in favour of independence. This massive win, exuberantly greeted by the people of South Sudan, is detailed below:



Source: Southern Sudan Referendum Results Final Results Report, 7/2/2011.
http://southernsudan2011.com/sites/default/files/Final_Results_Report_20110206_1512.pdf

Parallels with India-Pakistan, 1947 and Pakistan-Bangladesh, 1971

Interest in the 1947 India-Pakistan and 1971 Pakistan-Bangladesh stories has been revived after the confirmation of the Sudanese breakup. We can see in it many facets of the India-Pakistan separation in 1947 since the Christian-led south has decided to secede from a Muslim-majority north, and southern Sudanese have played the religious card, accusing the northern Sudanese of intolerance. There was a similar situation in 1947 when Pakistan and India gained independence from the British India in circumstances where Hindu-Muslim tensions were in the air and Muslims demanded a separate state.

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We can also see in the Sudanese breakup a reflection of the 1971 Pakistan-Bangladesh separation. This is because the southern part of Sudan has a poorer population that feels discriminated against and oppressed by the North. They have not been given their due rights and share from the resources present in their own region – issues that were prominent in the Pakistan-Bangladesh split as well. Bangladesh, or East Pakistan that time, felt exploited by West Pakistan, which dominated the central government. There were also linguistic, cultural, and ethnic differences just as there are in South and North Sudan.

International response to referendum results

A number of Sudan's neighbors, including Ethiopia, Kenya, and Chad, have hailed the referendum results and said that they would welcome a new state and independent African country in the south. Uganda and Kenya in particular will be economically important for the independent South as a good export market, while Kenya is also thinking of integrating South Sudan in East Africa.

In the Arab world, Qatar, which played a mediating role and was witness to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, has also welcomed the referendum results. Other countries in the Arab world though, are not very happy with the severance of a member country of the Arab League, have also acknowledged the referendum results. Egypt in

particular is concerned that southern Sudanese autonomy will strengthen the Nile Basin countries that are trying for a review of the outmoded Nile water agreements that give Egypt and Sudan much leverage. If reviews are pushed as South Sudan may desire to use the Nile waters for its economic development, then it would be a loss for Egypt.

Turkey, an important country in the Muslim world, is not happy with the results of the South Sudan referendum. The reason for Turkey's displeasure at the outcome is that Ankara has good relations with

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Khartoum and favours the continuation of Sudan's territorial integrity and political unity. However, the Turkish government has said that it respects the independence of South Sudan and would opt for good relations with the new country.

Iran, another vital country in the Muslim world, has also been disappointed by the results of the referendum. Iran, like Turkey, favours a united Sudan. However, the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Ramin Mehmanparasti, has stated that Iran would try to pursue balanced and respectful relations with both North and South Sudan after their separation. The reason Iran favours a united Sudan is its apprehensions that an independent South Sudan could become a stronghold for the US and Israel in Africa. According to Iran's conservative *Daily Keyhan*, South Sudan leaders have said that after independence, the South would establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

The paper added that Israel also had a plan to build dams on the rivers of South Sudan to gain control over 11 countries in northern and eastern Africa to accomplish its vision of Greater Israel.⁷

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Minister David Cameroon has also congratulated both North and South Sudan on holding a successful referendum and welcomed the results, commending in particular the maturity shown by Khartoum. He said that the United Kingdom would support and continue to work with both North and South Sudan as separate states.

Equally importantly, the United Nations, the African Union, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have accepted the legitimacy of the referendum results and recognized the independence of the region.

China has also said that it respects the voice of the southern people and the Chinese foreign ministry expressed the hope in a statement that both the north and south would resolve other disputed matters through dialogue and consultations.⁸ China is an important trading partner of Khartoum. It owns a large portion of state-run as also private oil concessions, and imports over 60 per cent of Sudanese oil for its domestic consumption. China also holds exclusive rights to nearly all of Sudan's known oil reserves; it explores them, pumps and refines them, and ships them with Chinese-made infrastructure and investment. Apart from this, China has been a supporter of the Bashir regime at international forums, especially the UN. Nonetheless, now after the split of Sudan, the question is how China would manage its relations with both North and South Sudan. It has good relations with Bashir's regime in the North and there is oil in the South which is very important for the economy of China. Therefore, China's engagement with the North and the South would remain important to be seen after separation.

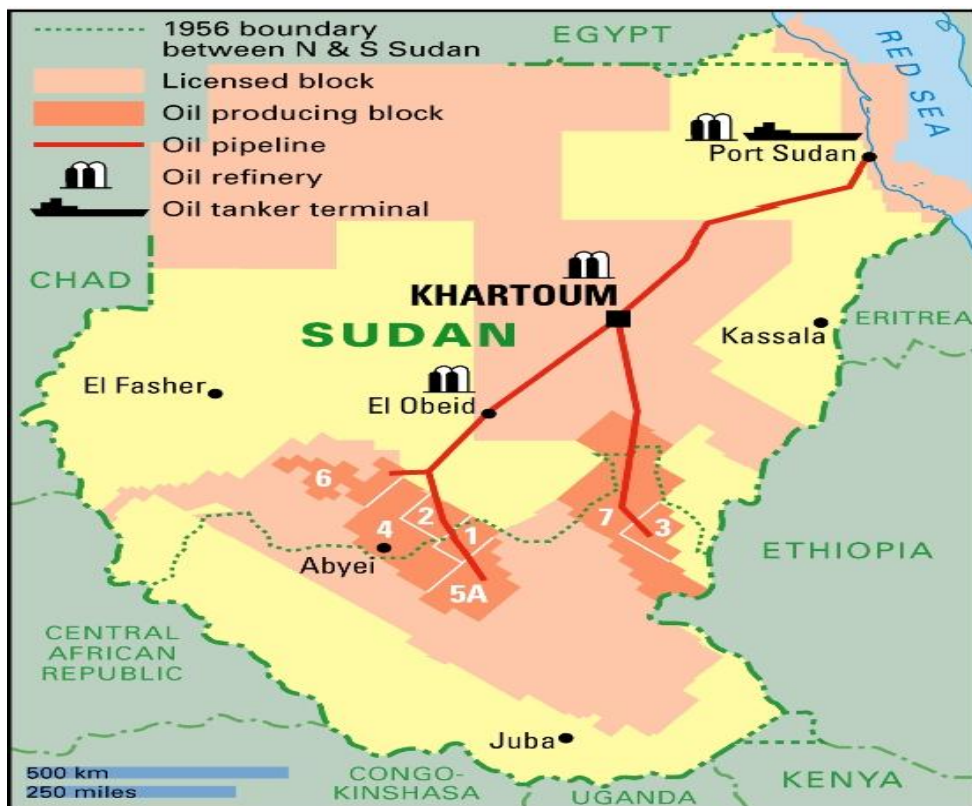
Challenges for the North and South

While the prospect of independence for South Sudan on July 9, 2011 is bringing smiles on the faces of the region's people, it is also bringing some serious challenges for the two sides - particularly for the South - to deal with.

Oil issue

Oil is a very critical issue between the North and South as the economies of both sides rely heavily on this natural resource, and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement defined a definitive framework for sharing the wealth from South Sudan's oil resources during the interim period. According to article 5.6 in Chapter III of the CPA, "After the payment to the Oil Revenue Stabilization Account and to the oil producing

states/regions, fifty per cent (50 %) of net oil revenue derived from oil producing wells in Southern Sudan shall be allocated to the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) as of the beginning of the Pre-interim Period and the remaining fifty per cent (50 %) to the National Government and States in Northern Sudan.” However, as North and South are now going to be independent states in July 2011, the CPA and its detailed provisions for oil revenues will expire. Thus, there is a need to renegotiate this crucial oil factor since both sides are mutually dependent as far as this issue is concerned; most of the oil producing regions are in south, while the north has the infrastructure, as shown below in a map depicting the oil regions and refineries in south and north Sudan.



Source: www.google.com.pk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.africa-confidential.com/uploads/documents/sudan_oil_COL_09.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/3222/Khartoum-pressures-Southern-Sudan-over-oil&h=686&w=554&sz=213&tbnid=kIknsjve65VeM:&tbnh=139&tbnw=112&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dsudan%2Boil%2Bmaps&zoom=1&q=sudan+oil+maps&hl=en&usg=__ZRqU1x94x14UI9vK5dhd-SJI-TY=&sa=X&ei=PEZrTdWvF83rrQeQ3ojDCw&ved=0CD0Q9QEwBA

While there are signs those alternatives solutions will be sought since the North is looking for new oil discoveries in its own areas and the South could build a pipeline through Kenya, these are long-term projects and not feasible for a cash-strapped North and a new independent South. Yet, the southern leadership is ruling out sharing revenues emanating from oil with the North after independence. On February 16, 2011, the Secretary General of the SPLM, Pagan Amum, asserted that the “South will only pay a fee for using the pipelines that transport the oil to Port Sudan. The notion of sharing wealth will not be there. There is no continuation, whether 50 per cent or anything.’ Oil is a significant portion of the North’s revenue and the South is completely dependent on oil revenues. Thus, with such intentions from the South, oil has the potential to threaten regional peace and create much ill-will.

Water

Water is a vital issue, especially in the long run. Surface water in Sudan comprises the Nile river system and other non-nilotic streams and 64 per cent of the Nile Basin lies within the country, with the ‘White Nile’ that comes from Uganda and crosses southern Sudan and the ‘Blue Nile’ that comes from Ethiopia but does not cross the south. The crossroads of the White and Blue Niles is in Khartoum.

The worrying factor for the South is that much of the water that comes into Khartoum is from the Blue Nile and its tributaries, as a large quantity of the water in the White Nile that crosses the South fades away in a vast wetland in the south known as the Sudd.⁹ And with progress and more water usage in Ethiopia, there could be several repercussions for Sudan and Egypt as water flow will decrease. Moreover, the scouring of the Sudd would further increase water availability to the North but have a negative impact on the local population, making North-South relations difficult.

South Sudan as a new state will also face a tough time with Egypt due to the Nile water issue. Egypt relies on the Nile for 95 per cent of its water needs. Though the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was formed in 1999 by the water ministers of nine countries to ensure equitable allocation of the river’s water, it will need some rethinking. South Sudan as a new state will need the Nile for its agriculture, industry and hydro-electricity, and on joining the NBI as expected, it could potentially shift the balance in the Nile Basin, cause further pressure on the river and give eastern and central African countries another ally, challenging Egypt’s control of the Nile through the current frameworks.

Abyei province and other border issues

The Abyei province is also another flashpoint between North and South Sudan. Indeed, it is Sudan's Kashmir; just as both India and Pakistan claim Kashmir, the Sudans claim Abyei - and in both cases, there appears to be no solution. During recent talks facilitated by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on November 7-13, 2010, the parties failed to reach an agreement on Abyei.

Since both regions claim the oil-rich and fertile Abyei area as their own, the ensuing complexity over voting eligibility has resulted in the referendum in Abyei being delayed indefinitely. The North maintains that the cattle-herding Arab Messiryia tribe should be allowed to vote, whereas the South's view is that the only people who have a right to vote are the area's indigenous ethnic group, the Dinka Ngok, who regard themselves as southerners. This disagreement forced both sides to approach the Hague-based permanent Court of Arbitration, which gave a verdict to redraw the region's boundaries, giving key oilfields to North Sudan and awarding South Sudan with the land comprising the Abyei town, large areas of fertile land and one critical oilfield. While the ruling gives other oilfields to the North, it redefines the region's boundaries in a way that benefits the South politically.¹⁰

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The North has consequently not accepted the verdict of the Court of Arbitration, while some southern politicians are also calling for the integration of the entire province with the South. Moreover, both sides continue to accuse each other of blocking progress in holding the referendum in the Abyei area. President Bashir, in his address in the opening session of the NCP's consultative Council on December 2, 2010, asserted that, "North Sudan will not accept a referendum in Abyei without the participation of Al-Messiryia tribe."

On February 27 and 28, 2011, there were reports of a sub-clan of the Messiryia tribe attacking a police check post and civil settlements and killing 15 people while injuring four others in the Todach area. However, the SPLM is blaming the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) that are participating in the fight between rival tribes of the Dinka Ngok and Messiryia tribe in the Todach region of Abyei.¹¹ Thus, Abyei is a worrisome issue that needs to be sorted out, and it is not the only border conflict.

Many oil fields lie close to the border in such a way that could help the North to preserve its power in that area. There are people who live in the North along the boundary in the Nuba Mountains, South Kordofan, and in the southern part of Blue Nile, but prefer to be part of South Sudan. There are also people who regularly travel between the North and South and their very real issues also need to be resolved. During talks facilitated by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel in November 2010, the parties identified five contested areas along the 1-1-56 border and agreed that physical demarcation could start immediately in other areas, with the technical and logistical UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS).¹² However, it remains to be seen how this will happen and whether the North and South stick to their word in the AU High-Level implementation Panel.

Development issues for the North and South

After partition, the North will face a quandary in revenue generation as oil income makes up around half the government revenue and more or less all oil producing areas lie in South. On the other hand, the South lacks the infrastructure for exporting its oil as all pipelines lie in the North. The state of infrastructure in South is abysmal; it has less than 50km of paved roads and the worst economic and social indicators in the world. Over 70 per cent of its population is illiterate and more than 90 per cent lives on less than \$1 per day.¹³ Consequently, both regions face economic and social development issues that will need to be targeted as a priority.

Governance issues for the SPLM and NCP

Bringing together all ethnic tribal groups will be a major challenge for South Sudan, which comprises over 200 ethnic tribes, with the Dinkas in majority followed by Nuer. Contemporarily, the Dinkas dominate most of the ruling class and the civil service and this narrow power-base could create troubles similar to Kenya where violence after December 2007 elections left 1,500 people dead and many other displaced.¹⁴ The threat of

ethnic violence in the South remains very real, and with a scrappy army that includes former rebel groups and leaders with a potential to create mayhem, the SPLM will have to be very wise in putting up a South Sudan government to achieve sustainable peace after independence and will have to ensure that all the 200 or more tribes are accounted for.

In the North, the NCP's position after secession has become weaker due to political infighting and its members engaging in a blame-game over 'who lost south'. And now as Sudan's National Assembly will have to be reconstituted, it will lead to a further crisis of competing for the erstwhile 28 per cent seats occupied by the SPLM. How the NCP manages this crisis, seeing off competition from opposition parties and Darfur rebel movements, is its major test in the coming days.

Reconciliation with rebel groups

There are reports that the peaceful referendum was only made possible in conflict-prone regions due to intensive efforts of the southern government to reconcile with breakaway militia leaders. However, the outbreak of fighting in Jonglei on February 9 and 10, 2011 that left hundreds dead, demonstrates that tensions still remain. Though almost all militia groups have accepted the peace offered by President Kiir's official pardon in October 2010, it is difficult to trust paper contracts and the reconciliation pledges remain fragile.

Many militia leaders see themselves playing major roles either in the southern government or in the armed forces, while others are thinking of selling loyalties. Moreover, the North's association with southern militias is another disturbing factor; most militia leaders reside in Khartoum and enjoy its patronage and security, and if unchanged, the situation could create mistrust between the North and South. This is because of incidents such as the following that show the gravity of the problem and the need to see the challenge as a serious one:

"In September 2010, a Sudanese helicopter carrying arms and supplies landed to refuel in Paloich, Upper Nile, on one of PetroDar's airstrips. The Pilot and the Captain claimed that they were headed to Pagak, another district. The helicopter was allowed to refuel and take off. In the pro tem, SPLA officers in Paloich received intelligence that the helicopter was delivering supplies to Athor's forces. Phone calls made to relevant airport authorities revealed that the helicopter in fact never landed in Pagak, but rather rerouted to Athor's hideout. When the helicopter returned to

PetroDar's airbase, officers found seven of Athor's men inside, who were being transported to Khartoum."¹⁵

Debt

The \$38 billion debt problem is also another major challenge for the North and South to deal with. The latter asserts that the former has frittered cash on buying arms during the 1983-2005 civil war and is now trying to share debt unfairly.¹⁶ The North is also trying for international debt forgiveness and although the U.S. and the United Kingdom have hinted at this being a possibility, this is not likely to be an easy or an immediate solution.

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Impact on the Darfur issue

The troubled Darfur region is a major concern for Khartoum after the referendum as relations with the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawai (SLA-MM), signatories to the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, have become worse in the last few months.¹⁷ Also, there are reports of increased clashes between the Sudan Armed Force (SAF) and the armed movements in the region. There are concerns and apprehensions that independence may reinvigorate the rebels in Darfur and they could put more pressure on Khartoum for their demands and Khartoum fears, despite assurances to the contrary, that the SPLM could support the Darfur armed movements as well. Until the Darfur issue is resolved completely, the situation between the North and South would remain volatile.

Recommendations

- Abyei is a critical issue on which both sides need to show some flexibility. The best solution should lead to a referendum in the region with the possibility of the Messiryia tribe-dominated area going to the North and the Dinka Ngok tribe-dominated areas to the South. However, for that to be plausible, both governments would first need to have comprehensive negotiations or else, be prepared for continued fighting for a long time.

- A progressive economy will play an important role in bringing peace to the region after separation. It will be mutually beneficial if both the North and South cooperate with each other in rebuilding the economy after secession instead of looking to help from international donors. In the beginning, the South's economy will be totally dependent on oil revenues, and in turn, on the North for exporting its resource. The North, too, is dependent on the South for oil production and hence cooperation becomes a necessity. International donors often fail to deliver on their promises. Economic cooperation within the region will facilitate both new states in overcoming their grievances.
- Good governance by the NCP and SPLM in the North and South respectively is also a must. We have already witnessed youth-led peaceful protests triggered by economic and political frustrations in the North. Moreover, President Omar al-Bashir's oft-stated desire for Sudan to be a 'Sharia-based' Islamic state is also contentious as this decision could be rejected by dissident northerners and by moderate political forces, and thus add to protests against his government. Apart from the dissidents, many NCP strategists also got upset when the president called for strict imposition of Sharia in the North on December 19, 2010. South Sudan also needs to establish democratic institutions and a legitimate government to evenly distribute resources to all ethnic tribes or face the threat of ethnic violence and political rivalry.
- The North and South leaderships need to learn lessons from Pakistan-India relations, where both adopted a hostile approach and aggressive policies, resulting in tremendous economic and social losses as well as inconclusive wars. Thus, the North and South governments must rethink their strategies, and authorities on both sides should try to overcome their past antagonism and build a peaceful future.
- The role of the international community will be important in pressing for peace after partition. The U.S. and the U.K. have already given some positive signals for writing off debt owed to them and lifting some sanctions over the North. Sudan has been under U.S. sanctions since 1997 due to alleged support for terrorism and over the situation in Darfur. China has some \$15 billion stakes in the Sudanese oil sector and can also play an important part by urging both sides to remain friendly after secession.

- South Sudan is rich in natural resources apart from oil. It has large deposits of minerals including gold, copper, iron ore and zinc chromium, as well as game parks with diverse flora and fauna for tourism. Nature has also blessed the new state with a wealth of forest reserves and fertile land watered by the Nile River. The government in the South needs to take advantage of these natural reserves and invite international investors for long-term economic and hence social growth.

Conclusion

The South Sudan referendum has set the stage for the world's newest country to be officially born in July 2011. Regrettably, the breakup does not appear to lead to peace. Relations between the North and South are deteriorating with every passing day and they have failed to make progress on many disputed issues. Recent fighting in the Malakal town in the Upper Nile state and the accusation by the South that the North is planning to overthrow its government has further worsened relations and the South has suspended talks with the NCP on post-referendum and independence issues.

Nonetheless, both regions should realize that these accusations will only create more problems and violence instead of rebuilding relations and focusing on cooperation. An independent South Sudan will offer a huge test to the SPLM leadership and how it governs and rules a new state, and manages a relationship with the North, will be matters of great interest. At present, it is difficult to predict the North's strategy towards the South, and both governments will need to work together as even a little slip-up can return Sudan to violence and civil war.

Notes & References

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