

POST SECESSION ERA AND GEOPOLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. THE CASE OF SUDAN

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Abstract. Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in the year (2005) to end fifty years of civil war in Sudan, strained relations between the NCP and the SPLM, made it difficult to address and overcome post secession problems. Tensions, conflicts and lack of confidence have spread rapidly at the expense of political settlement and exchange of interests. What happened, and what is still happening in Sudan, due to a chain of troubles over secession of the South, is of particular importance to the interests of the two countries concerned, but also to the Arab world, the Horn of Africa and the Nile Basin states. The paper considers the North South conflict as a merely determinant factors in reshaping the North South bilateral relations. The paper also emphasized the geopolitical consequences resulting from the secession of the South Sudan, and concludes that the secession of the South brought about substantial changes that threaten peaceful coexistence and socioeconomic relations of the two states as well as the relations in the region in general.

Key words: Comprehensive Peace Agreement, secession, geopolitical consequences, bilateral relations

INTRODUCTION

In studying bilateral relations of any two countries around the world, it is generally agreed that realization of their mutual interests is mostly significant in this regard. Besides that, it also seems important to perceive much about the historical background of their ties. It is straightforward that to understand the present, we must first understand the past. Following this argument, Sudan before the date of secession in the year of 2011, is an exceptional case as it is a shouting symbol of a culturally pluralistic society. It is a very large country whose geographical position is strategic, connecting the Mediterranean in the North via Egypt, linking West and East Africa since ancient times – and central Africa in the modern times¹. So the geographic position of the country is between the worlds of the Mediterranean and the Middle East on the one hand and Central Africa on the other, coupled with the fact that the Nile and its tributaries run through Sudanese territory for hundreds of miles before they reach Egypt

¹ I.S. El Hassan, *Religion, Conflict and Peace in the Sudan*, “Journal of Middle East and Africa Studies (JMEAS)”, 2003, Vol. 2, p. 3.

and have always played an important part in determining the character and politics of the country from biblical times to the present day².

In addition to the above, we can strongly confirm that any attempt to truly understand the two countries relations requires an overall investigation of the roles and attitudes of ruling elites in both sides as well as the regional and international circumstances. Consistently, the focal point of the paper is to investigate the main factors behind the escalating tensions between the Northern and Southern Sudan. Without getting involved in numerous historical details, we need to explain why the North/South conflict became complicated to be tackled by mere national efforts, even before and after the successful referendum (January, 2011). Having noted the above, there is a special consideration to the shy role of the ruling elite as well as the actions of the regional key players. Anyway, the core question the paper seeks to answer is how to find and maximize a range of possibilities for stable and constructive relations between the two countries concerned and then to bring about an alternative perspective of their ties.

This paper assumes that the awareness of overcoming the challenges facing the relationship the two countries on a solely objective basis, contributes to the rebuilding of linkages between them. The paper also assumes that the development of socio-cultural relations between the North and South helps to cool down mutual reactions in due course, whatever the cause of mistrust. Recalling the fact that secession of the South has now become a reality, it is now high time now to redefine bilateral relations between the two countries. Moreover, secession of the South will be accompanied by serious geopolitical changes affecting the two countries and the region as well. So it is important not to simplify the secession of the South, but, on the contrary, to consider it with great concern. For that reason, the paper attempts to employ an analytical approach, and extensively elaborate the case study in a way to explain the geopolitical results following the secession of the South. The study benefited from a variety of data sources, that helped in studying the problem and draw conclusions.

The main objective of this paper is to make some contribution to the numerous discussions and studies regarding the geopolitical consequences resulting from the secession of South Sudan from the home country. The study also seeks to understand the new trends of bilateral relations in post secession era. This is why a considerable part of the study is devoted to answering the central question concerning the possibility of rebuilding constructive bilateral relations that match the popular desires and expectations of the people on the two sides. In this sense, the paper stated a core question: to what extent can the secession of South Sudan (July 9, 2011) end the conflict and tensions between the two countries, given the disputes over the area of Abyei, Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile, border disputes, and the export of Southern oil via the North. Considering all

² M. Abdel Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, Khartoum University Press, 1986, p. 13.

these issues, and in order to perceive the challenges of North South tensions, the paper has the following objectives:

- First, to highlight the need for frameworks to identify stable relations between the North and South Sudan, following the post secession era.
- Second, to present a range of options for political accommodation between North and South Sudan, following the present turmoil over oil and borders.
- Third, to highlight practical needs and regulations for sustainable political stability, matching with the renewable mutual interests.

Secession of South Sudan is an important stage in Sudanese politics, especially when considering that it occurred under a highly complex regional and international conditions. These conditions, and their expected repercussions on the relations of the two countries, draw the eyes of researchers to analyze and investigate the factors behind the failure of the two countries to build somehow stable relations that would assist them to realize their mutual interests. In this regard, the study seeks to discover the multidimensional implications following secession of the South, with special reference to the geopolitical consequences. To match the purposes stated, the paper is structured as follows: introduction, background to understand the North-South relations, determining factors and challenges of bilateral relations, geopolitical consequences following secession of the South, future prospects and concluding remarks.

There is doubt that the year 2005 is a decisive moment in the history of Sudan, simply because it was the year that witnessed the signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the National Congress Party (NCP), the ruling party in the North, and the Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM), the ruling party in the South. The agreement sought mainly to put an end to the long-term civil war between the North and South, and hence, to pave the way for peaceful referendum and political reform. According to the Southern Sudan Referendum Act (2009), referendum means the process of taking the opinions of the people of Southern Sudan on self-determination in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and the act. The new state of South Sudan is now in the stage of conceptualizing its future situation and starting to start build a prosperous and developed country. Since the secession of the South (July 9, 2011), and immediately after the popular referendum, relations between the two countries have become degraded. In the meantime, four categories of options for political accommodation have been developed³.

These categories are presented here in order to estimate whether there is an increasing or decreasing political interaction between the two independent entities: a) mutual isolation, b) reciprocity between independent states, c) economic community of independent states, d) structured union of independent states.

³ G. Mc Hugh, *Envisioning the Future Options for political Accommodation between North and South Sudan Following the Referendum*, Governance and Peaceful Building Series, Briefing Paper 2010, No. 3, Conflicts Dynamics International, p. 1.

The emergence of two independent countries in Sudan is a drastic geographic makeover that would offer an opportunity for a fresh start⁴. But the tension and mistrust that characterized the relationship between the two partners (SPLM and NCP) during the transition period (2005–2011) had a direct impact on the likelihood of secession option. What needs to be noted is that there was no real plan to resolve the issues of post-secession. So, the relationship of the two countries after the ninth of July (2011), ran into a series of confrontations, and the adoption of unconstructive political discourse, hurting the possibility of convergence. Conflict was definitely rooted in decades, and can be traced back to the year of 1955 that witnessed the first rebellion since the condominium rule (1889–1956). During colonial rule, there were attempts to stabilize more or less the ethnic territories; one such attempt was the creation of the North-South divide through the establishment of the “closed district”, which was southern Sudan. The North was regarded as one cultural unit, being considered Arab and Muslim, while the South was predominantly Negroid and pagan with some Christianity⁵.

BACKGROUND TO UNDERSTAND CHANGING THE NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS

The focus in this part is on the package of different historical, geographical and social affinities that influenced the process of North-South relations. Initially, when considering the geographical location of the two countries, it is noteworthy that the South and the North (Republic of Sudan) are in the Northeast Africa bordering on Egypt, Red Sea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Congo, Central African Republic, Chad and Libya. The population was about 39 million inhabitants in January 2010, but on 9 July 2011, 9 million inhabitants will become part of the youngest country on the earth. The official language is Arabic and the largest part of the population is concentrated in the Central Plain and along the River Nile. It is also worth mentioning that the main religions in Sudan are Islam (70%), Christianity, especially Catholic (16,7%), and the Animism of the natives (11,9%). The climate is wet and tropical in the South becoming more arid in the North with large daily temperature oscillations⁶.

⁴ R. Kaplan, *Two Sudans are Better than One*, “The Weekly Standard” June 15, 2009, p. 12.

⁵ P.W. Gore, *Contemporary Issues in Ethnic Relations: Problems of National Integration in Sudan*”, in: S.H. Hurreiz, E. A. Abdelsalam (eds), *Ethnicity, Conflict and National Integration in the Sudan*, Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum, Sudan Library Series (16), 1989, p. 286.

⁶ I.S. Pirsu, M. Postolache, *The Rise of the New Country, the South Sudan and the Relation with the EU*, Paper presented to the Conference: European Integration Realities and Perspectives, <http://conferences.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/EIRP/EIRP2011/paper/view/410>.

At independence in 1956 the total population of Sudan was estimated at 10.3 million. The regional distribution of the population was such that the North and the central region accounted for 50.8% of the total, the Southern region alone accounted for 27.1%, the Western region (mainly Darfur) accounted for 12.9% of the total, and the Eastern region accounted for 9.2% of the total⁷.

Another important consideration is that the social formation of the Sudanese society (before secession) consists of more than 560 tribal groups with their own cultures, dialects, and life styles. Culturally, however, the country is far more homogeneous than it is racially. For although slightly more than one third of the total population claim Arab descent, over half speak Arabic as their mother tongue, while most of the rest, including the Southern Sudanese, use Arabic, or a pidgin form of it as a “lingua franca”⁸.

In a broad sense, there are no remarkable similarities between the South and the North. The North alone has an area of approximately 619,745 square km (excluding claims over other territories), and is bordered with Ethiopia in the East, Kenya, Uganda and Congo in the South and the Central African Republic in the West. The North is an Arab and Muslim region under the control of the central government of Sudan. South Sudan has a population about 9 million people. These are mainly people who are dedicated to rural life and are devoted to a subsistence economy. The autonomous region has been hit hard by the war since Sudan’s independence in 1956, with the exception of 10 years of calm. This resulted in a failure of infrastructure development, destruction and displacement⁹.

Before discussing further developments related to the North-South relations, it is important here to give brief statement regarding the inherent tension between the two sides. The civil war that lasted for more than fifty years has had a profound impact on the two countries’ relations after the signing of Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. Following this event, one could mention the following points in discussing the reasoning for the civil war:

1. Uneven development that resulted in discontent and grievances of the people inhabiting the marginalized and peripheral areas.
2. The successive totalitarian regimes that governed the country (45 years out of 56) failed to develop a multicultural Sudan. This finally led to the creation of an environment that hampered the process of peaceful coexistence between the different social groups, in contrast to the idea of Unity in Diversity raised by early national liberators.

⁷ A. Abdel Gadir, A. Elbattahani, *Democratic Deficit and Development in a Poor Country: The Case of Sudan*, in: *Democracy in the Arab World*, The International Development Research Centre, 2008, p. 2.

⁸ M. Abdel Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁹ I.S. Pirsu, M. Postolache, *op. cit.*

3. Politicization of ethnic presence and mobilization of tribal symbols to serve political ends that are not conciliatory in manner.

4. Some of the disputed areas over the countries' borders are rich in oil, that is why we should reconsider the role of economic resources as most relevant in explaining the rising tensions of the two sides.

5. Sudan is not far away from conflicts of interest between the regional and international influence centers. So external interventions and pressures are also important when studying the effectiveness of foreign policy strategies adopted in the North and South Sudan or even to understand the nature of internal mobility.

DETERMINANT FACTORS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

Far greater attention was paid to different factors that affected the relations of the two countries. Generally speaking, when we deal with political situation of Sudan during the period of colonial rule (1889–1956), it was taken for granted that in the condominium government of Britain and Egypt over the Sudan, Britain, the stronger of the two partners, had the lion's share in shaping the future of the country. The establishment of such an administration marked the beginning of the effective impact of western ideas and practices, and the introduction of secular and missionary education in the Sudan¹⁰. These reshaped the perceptions of the relations between the two countries.

A civil war sponsored by western institutions, western imperialist states and others, allied with African reinforcements from neighboring countries broke out in 1956. These parties made every effort to give the impression that the war is religious-ethnic, and to deal with it as a struggle between Arabism and Islam against Africanism and Christianity. The evolution and the external feeding of the war created a southern political attitude that calls for a separate identity for the South characterized by a black African pattern and directed towards separation and independence¹¹.

This attitude has been described by Al Atabani¹² as having hostile orientations towards the North; for him this was the defining element of Sudanese politics from independence until secession.

The root causes of conflict in Sudan are not far away from the influence of regional and international pressures. In this sense, and particularly during the war, the Sudan's People Liberation Movement (SPLM) maintained strong ties

¹⁰ Y.F. Hasan, *Afro-Arab Relations*, Khartoum, Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum, 1978, p. 13.

¹¹ O. Muhajer, *Threats to National Identity and Problems of Unity and Development*, "Alrasid", (research journal focuses on African international relation, published by Alrasid Centre for Studies, Khartoum, Sudan), 2011, Issue No. 10, p. 24.

¹² G.S. Al Atabani, Lecture about: *Post-Secession Sudan: Challenges and Opportunities*, School of Oriented and African Studies (SOAS), London, 17 December, 2012.

with many African countries and received political, financial, and military assistance from some governments. In East Africa, for instance, the SPLM enjoys strong ties with the government of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Under successive governments, Ethiopia provided significant political and military support to the SPLM. Eritrea provided major military assistance in the 1990s, especially to SPLM and its allies in Eastern Sudan. The SPLM during the war and the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) over the last five years have maintained warm relations with the United States, Norway, South Africa, and a number of other countries in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Additionally, and to an important extent, relations between China and Southern Sudan have also improved in recent years¹³.

In light of those extensive ties, could one think that North Sudan may face difficulties in normalizing relations with the neighboring camp. But there are many cases where Sudan's relations with its neighbors, with the exception, for now, of Southern Sudan, have improved, with a noticeable shift towards economic integration. Such integration would not be based on nationalist or irredentist ideas, but rather it would be on an economic and security strategy. The success of such a small experiment would provide some compensation for the secession of Southern Sudan, create a more stable region, and present a model for other African countries to emulate¹⁴.

We find the states in the North and South need to intensify efforts to overcome conflicts over oil revenues and border demarcations to be able to normalize their relations. These conflicts may continue because there are disputed areas, and because of the reality of ethnic tensions. In the light of these considerations, and in order to ensure stable relations, we should be careful enough to threats following the mismanagement of tribal existence. Tribalism still remains the major decisive factor in that regard. And consequently, achieving national consensus will depend on the creation of a broad common political culture. To create such a culture, there is abundant evidence to suggest that the most useful effort the political parties can engage in is to address their own shortcomings. The adage: "There is no democracy without democrats" is true and the parties need to reevaluate their democratic mettle. In the majority of the political parties democratic traditions are fickle. Institutionalism is lacking and the parties rely almost exclusively on the genius and personal talents of their almost immortal leaders¹⁵.

¹³ T. Dange, *The Republic of South Sudan: Opportunities and Challenges for Africa's Newest country*, CRS Report for Congress Prepared for Member and Committees of Congress, September 16, 2011, p. 7.

¹⁴ G.S. Al Atabani, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ *Ibidem.*

CHALLENGES OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

There are many challenges facing the bilateral relations of the North and South Sudan. These challenges are supposed to represent a framework for the policies governing mutual relations of the two countries. North and South Sudan like the northern and southern regions of the chain of African states that runs from the Red Sea to the Atlantic have on many occasions tended to show signs of estrangement and difference rather than harmony and unity¹⁶. On the basis of discussing the internal situation of South Sudan, the concern here is on the real threats. The forces that South Sudanese often say will threaten the transformation to nationhood are tribalism, nepotism, corruption, exclusion on ethnic, age or gender bases, lack of meritocracy in hiring, and lack of a respectable constitution that spells out a clear social contract between government and citizens¹⁷.

In this respect, one cannot be astonished to discover that an extensive and generally convincing literature suggests that social, political and economic factors are mainly responsible for the deterioration of North-South relations.

First, considering the package of social challenges, our particular concern here is to indicate clashes of tribes across the borders of the two countries (i.e. Misariyya in Abyai, Ingasana and Funj in the Blue Nile area). In trying to justify this point, it is argued that the historical process of social mobility over the disputed area has been overshadowed by the tribal clashes that took place around the border of the town of Abyai and its border regions (people of the area are the ones that must decide whether it will unite with North or South¹⁸). In addition, clashes are escalating among the southern tribes themselves, creating problems of displacement and influx of refugees across the borders with the State of South Sudan. Even from a historical point of view, and given the strong ethnic loyalties within South Sudan, the most significant enemy of the country's cohesion, national loyalties, and citizen pride will be the currently widespread suspicion of ethnicity – based exclusion from the national platform and other aspects of South Sudanese national life¹⁹. Given the prevailing political atmosphere in the South, argue that, while the North-South fault line is deep and antagonisms are intense, the South itself may balkanize among competing ethnic groups. Opportunistic politicians in both North and South have grown adept at fanning tensions for their own gain. Tribal fighting has occurred with depressing regularity since the end of the war²⁰.

¹⁶ M. Abdel Rahim, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁷ M.J. Jok, *Diversity, Unity, and Nation Building in South Sudan (Special Report)*, 287, October 2011, United States Institute of Peace.

¹⁸ I.S. Pirsu, M. Postolache, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ M.J. Jok, *op. cit.*

²⁰ T. Mc Connell, *Sudan Prepares to Break Apart*, "The Nation" (Weekly Journal of Opinion), Issue No. January 3, 2011, p. 24.

Comparisons of ethnic groups may identify many other inequalities in addition to income²¹. At the moment, South Sudan is only slightly more than a geographical expression. It contains more than sixty cultural and linguistic groups, each of which possesses a stronger sense of citizenship in their tribes than in their nation. For Jok²², the main glue that binds the country's multiple ethnicities together is the history of their struggle for freedom and collective opposition to the North. Table 1 indicates that the large number southern tribal groups and shows location.

Table 1. Southern tribal groups and their geographical locations

Tribal group	Examples	Location
Sudanic tribes	Azande Moru Madi	West of Nile
Nilotic tribes	Dinka Nuer Shilluk Asholi	River valley and swamps
Nile-Hamitic tribes	Bari Latuka	Southern Nile Valley

Source: unic.un.org/imucms/khartoum/36/499/sudanese-tribes.aspx

Another important consideration is the political challenge of North-South relations. The first step in discussing these challenges is to shed light on the six year interim period following the signing of CPA. During the Interim Period (2005–2011), relations between the SPLM and the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) were miserable at times, but the two sides managed to implement key provisions of the CPA and avoid an all-out war²³. Moreover, the ruling party in the North (NCP) and its counterpart in the South (SPLM) were not heavily supported by the masses, because both were facing the challenge of mistrust from opposition groups and civil society organizations. The interim period witnessed a partnership relations between the NCP and the SPLM. But the partnership was not constructive in manner, and became more antagonistic in the years of the post-secession era. Also, there are many difficulties related to federal system and constitutional relations functioning in the North and South that will definitely create a negative impact upon future foreign relations. It is also fair to say that the federal system which was applied in Sudan helped to strengthen the separatism of the people of the South. The rationale behind mentioning this point is that decentralization throughout the country allows all regions of the

²¹ Gurdon Ostby, *Horizontal inequalities and civil conflicts*. Version 23 February 2005, Department of Political Science, University of Oslo, CSCW&IPRI, p. 9.

²² M.J. Jok, *op. cit.*

²³ T. Dange, *op. cit.*, p. 3

country, North and South, enjoy self-rule similar to the system accorded the South, short of the right to secede²⁴.

Concerning the application of federalism, some politicians say that the relationship between the periphery and the centre will continue to dominate the political debate. Many see such a relationship as critical to the maintenance of justice and therefore political stability. The political scene will witness an active interplay between the centripetal forces, favoring the integration of the country and the centrifugal forces favoring disintegration. Some critics are already pointing to the shortcomings of decentralization that were first ushered in by president Ja'afar Numeiri (1969–1985), arguing that a more centralized state would be more accountable²⁵. It has also been pointed out that, in the absence of successful federalism, strategies of bilateral relations and mutual reactions may be subject to failure. Similarly, the North-South relations will potentially witness more complications as a result of the failure of the demarcation of the borders and of the support provided to the armed opposing movements in both countries. It worth mentioning that the lines between Sudan's North and South and the nature of that boundary remain undefined. This has hindered CPA implementation, fuelled mistrust between the two signatory parties of the peace agreement, and most recently contributed to heightened anxiety along the border²⁶. It is now quite clear that the government in the South gives huge support to the rebellious groups in Darfur. And in the mean time SPLM blames the government of the North for its support of Southern rebellions.

On an economic level, there are also a number of challenges that deserve attention. Initially, the Darfur conflict, the civil war in the South, the lack of basic infrastructure in large areas, and the reliance by much of the population on subsistence agriculture, ensured that much of the populations would remain at or below the poverty line²⁷. In the Southern Sudan, the food insecure population is mainly concentrated in Jonglei, Warrap, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, and Eastern Equatorial states. Most food insecure conditions at this time are associated with lean season shortage, exacerbated by insecurity and displacements²⁸. Besides that, the United Nations has received alarming reports of malnutrition in two Sudanese border states where the army is fighting insurgents. It is known that the fighting broke out in June 2011 between the Sudanese army and SPLM-North rebels in South Kordofan and spread in September to the State of Blue

²⁴ F. Deng, *Prospects for Reconciling Self-Determination with Unity in Sudan*, "Journal of Future Studies" (JFS), No. 2, Volume 4, 2010, p. 9, published by Future Studies Centre, Khartoum, Sudan.

²⁵ G.S. Al Atabani, *op. cit.*

²⁶ International Crisis Group, Policy Briefing, Africa Briefing No. 75, 2 September 2010.

²⁷ I.S. Pirsu, M. Postolache, *op. cit.*

²⁸ USAID Report, Sudan Food Security Outlook, July to September 2010.

Nile²⁹. Under these circumstances, the two countries' relations will witness further deterioration.

Additionally, the war between the North and South has developed, to a great extent, into a resource war. The two resources at the hub of the grievances are water and oil. The primary motivations of this war are simply the control of oil reserves and the access to water resources. There is also a significant link between the map of the Sudanese conflict and the map of the country's water and oil resources³⁰. Despite the fact that price of oil rises amid unrest in the country, it worth mentioning that eighty percent of Sudanese oil comes from the South, while the infrastructure for exporting the oil is located in the North. This includes refineries, pipelines, export terminals, and so forth. Many observers view this integration and interaction in the oil economy in Sudan as an element of unification rather than separation³¹. But all real indicators nowadays point to opposite, to the extent that nobody can feel optimistic about the future of North-South relations. If we shift our attention away from the suspicious relations of the two countries to the fact that one third of Sudanese live in poverty, this situation necessitates a considerable level of cooperation between the two sides. Particularly when considering the fact that South Sudan is almost the size of Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi combined, the extended years of war have left the country with a legacy of destruction that manifests itself in some of the worst human development indicators in the world³². Following the secession, North Sudan will witness a 10% decline in non-oil GDP to reflect the share of the South in total non-oil economic activity as well as a decline in oil related services, and simultaneously, the North will lose 36.5% of its income. For example, the North threatens to shut down the pipe lines that transfer oil from landlocked South to Port Sudan on the Red Sea in the eastern part of the country, unless a revenue sharing deal is reached³³. Perhaps, the most serious consequence to the CPA is the economic difficulty facing Sudan after it has lost at least on third of its revenue. And how this will affect the economic performance of the newly – formed broad – based government?³⁴ This why the Northern government managed to keep oil issue weak in conflicts.

To sum up these points, we can say that preliminary indications suggest that there are social and cultural changes occurring today with a speed that was

²⁹ U.N. Report Alarming Malnutrition in Sudan Conflict Zones, www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/04/us-sudan-fighting-idUSTRE80312W20120104.

³⁰ H.J. Poshoff, *Sudan's Old and New Conflicts: A Comparative Study*, Master of Philosophy, Political Management, University of Stellenbosch, 2005, p. 22.

³¹ A. Al Kabashi, *Sudan Post-Referendum Issues under Serious Discussion*. Report prepared by the Director of Aljazeera Office in Sudan, September 29, 2010, p. 4.

³² M.J. Jok, *op. cit.*

³³ "Sudan Tribune Newspaper" www.sudantribune.com/Sudan-s-Bashir-threatens-to-turn,39299; 22 June, 2011.

³⁴ G.S. Al Atabani, *op. cit.*

unimaginable a few decades ago. In addition, it has been pointed out that many of the tribes in the South have more or less close affinities with the tribes found in Abyssinia, Kenya, Uganda and Congo. There is also a widespread sense of worry about the viability of South Sudan as a nation due to insecurity, especially insecurity rooted in the current ethnic conflicts occurring in seven out of the ten Southern districts³⁵. And in spite of the fact that discussion of post-referendum issues prepared the people in South psychologically for the possibility of secession, it nevertheless has been revealed that there is a such a high level of interaction and dependency between the North and South, that it is difficult to contemplate how a Southern State could possess the required components of a viable state that could survive independently of the its neighbor North Sudan³⁶.

GEOPOLITICAL CONSEQUENCES FOLLOWING SECESSION

Regarding the geopolitical consequences of the South's secession, an essential link between past and present is indicative. Soon afterwards, however, and despite the tension accompanying the final stage of the CPA, some are leading efforts to turn attention to the benefits of future North-South cooperation and peaceful co-existence. For example, promising initiatives have developed in the form of regular meetings that are supposed to bring together leaders of each of the Sudan's North-South border states as well as the special administrative area of Abyei to work toward greater economic, social, security and development integration³⁷.

The physical absence of the South has, however, produced new circumstances allowing for a fresh approach to deal with the problems facing the North. Although the issue of the South would no longer dominate the political stage, the quest for state – building will continue³⁸. Simultaneously, talking about the South state, and in order to fulfill internal obligations, a number of conditions must be satisfied. One fairly clear condition is the tendency towards nation building. By the way, here one can mention public discourse and debate even in the North, which might help Southerners to rebuild their nation. Once again nation building is not just about physical reconstruction, service provision, or material wealth. It is also about using the country's shared customs to prevent further escalation of conflict as well as upholding values, customs, and national practices that can be enshrined in common national identity³⁹. In the meantime, raising the motto of mutual coordination between the two states is an urgent task. i.e. working with all concerned figures, institutions and key players to pre-

³⁵ M.J. Jok, *op. cit.*

³⁶ A. Al Kabashi, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

³⁷ International Crisis Group, *op. cit.*

³⁸ G.S. Al Atabani, *op. cit.*

³⁹ M.J. Jok, *op. cit.*

pare to counter the negative consequences of secession and to promote peaceful coexistence and cooperation between the North and the independent South⁴⁰.

It worth mentioning that the roots of Sudanese state formation (before secession) trace back hundreds of years and even under the best circumstances, the geographical features of the State of South Sudan as a landlocked country require it to rely on neighboring countries with a strategic location on the sea, especially the state of Kenya in the east or the state of North Sudan. Moreover, the multi-tribal and ethnic and social heterogeneity are factors that lead to conflicts of wealth and power within the newly independent state. Considering these facts, what is dangerous is that secession of the South will lead to a dramatic change in the geo-strategic nature of the region of the Horn of Africa in Eastern Africa. Ethiopia is expected to become the most prominent regional power. This will encourage the newly independent state of South Sudan to ally itself with the mass of East Africa, particularly given its strained relations with the state of North Sudan. These new regional alliances might represent an unpredictable threat to the security and interests of the neighboring Arab states particularly Egypt. Yet, the regional distinction between North and South may encourage Egypt and the Arab world to work hard, using their soft power, to attract the Northern Sudan to the Arab side. This is because of their belief in the distinctive geostrategic features of North Sudan that make it an effective part of Arab Regional Security. All this is unsurprising, given that the development of the modern nation-state of the South is still taking place.

Much becomes obvious from the foregoing analysis. For example, there are a number of considerations governing the new strategic trend of the new South State, including the historical ties that connect the Sudanese people in South Sudan with the African nations of the neighboring countries, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. On the other way round, if the two states joined the growing East African Alliance, whether voluntarily or in response to intensive pressure from international and domestic forces, this will be considered a great strategic loss to the Egyptians who are looking for strong partnership with Northern Sudan. In this context, some analysts point to the possibility of establishing a trilateral economic partnership based on oil, water and food production, between the three states of North Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Since the Ja'afar Numeiri Regime (1969–1985) and the uprising that toppled him from power (1985), Sudanese political thought focused on seeking an indigenous solution for the North South conflict, that developed into regular civil war. In reaction, critics of the war raise important theoretical issues and findings.

⁴⁰ F. Deng, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

One of the major results of the war, particularly on the eve of signing the CPA, is the escalating tensions between the North and South that transformed into antagonistic trends in post secession era. In this sense, the secession of the South means not only that Sudan lost one fifth of its land mass and one third of its population, but also that its geopolitics has changed. Despite these sacrifices the most important goal, i.e. peace, has not been achieved and the two nations created by partition are teetering on the verge of war. However, there is still hope among Sudanese that the future will witness an end to the civil-military cycle (vicious circle) that has dominated politics since independence, that the issues of governance, power-sharing and socio-economic development will be addressed with a more consensual attitude, and that a new and more enduring constitution will be in place⁴¹.

One of the most significant effects of the post-civil war tensions has been to redefine the idea of peaceful North South bilateral relations. A lot has been done recently to support this sort of argument, in terms of negotiations, mediations and efforts of standing committees. To avoid potential collapse in relations between the two countries, it is now time to adopt as an initial option an effective and future policy to counter the complex situation of the two sides. The two countries should affirm their willingness to resolve the dispute through a platform for national dialogue. Otherwise, serious consequences are going to take place throughout the region, particularly when considering issues like water security, border trade and regional cooperation. This fact requires that the central authority pay attention to the fact that forty five percent of the resources of the Nile Basin lie in the South, and ninety percent of the South lies in this River Basin, while twenty eight percent of the Nile waters cross the border from the South to the North and then to Egypt. The total water extracted from the South marshes and added to the totality of the Nile is about twenty cubic meters⁴².

Throughout history, the central question for the relationship between North and South Sudan is highly affected by the status of Sudan in the African continent. Sudan has often been described as a microcosm of Africa, implying that developments in Sudan have a tendency to echo in the rest of Africa. The impact of secession on Africa is yet to be seen, but it is prudent to assume that it will have a lasting impact. Sudan, which in the past have served as an important nexus with sub Saharan Africa, appears destined to continue being an agent in the continent, even after secession of the South⁴³. Modern Afro-Arab relations and cooperation began developing in the context of inevitable Third World solidarity in challenging the prevailing core to periphery geopolitics⁴⁴. This is why

⁴¹ G.S. Al Atabani, *op. cit.*

⁴² A. Al Kabashi, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁴³ G.S. Al Atabani, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ M. Kamal, *Some Aspects of the Writing of History in Modern Sudan*, Policy Monograph Series No. 3, 2007, p. 1, Khartoum, Future Trends Foundation for Strategic Studies and Dialogue.

a considerable part of this study has been devoted to explain the factors behind the failure of relations between the North and South after the rebirth of the new state. One clear indication following this statement that it is not enough to ascribe the failure of relations merely to the present, but to the troubles related to building social consciousness over the question of identity and the rise of modern Sudan. So, still the challenge remains for Sudan is to create a new consciousness of common identity and a new meaning of belonging that grants peace, dignity, development and fundamental human rights. The main conclusion one can draw from this chaos, is somehow the domination of instable situation. This can only be achieved through political restructuring based on equality as well as viewing the peace process in terms of the whole country, and moving beyond the North-South paradigm. Otherwise, Sudan will yet again, fall victim to regional rebellions, and the devastating violence will continue⁴⁵. Moreover, it is clear that political instability also manifested itself in Sudan's failed efforts to establish a functioning constitution or to hold regular and consequential elections. Besides that, and the almost seven years since the signing of the CPA in (2005), the development of press in Sudan was upset by financial and technical problems. These problems, to a great extent, belong to the nature of the underdevelopment that characterized all developing countries⁴⁶. In the end, the media could not play a positive role in sustaining North South relation, as well as the civil society institutions.

Several factors derived from the political climate governing the North South bilateral relations have been intensely examined by the study to measure the post secession geopolitical consequences. In this respect, the study analyzed and summarized the probable effect of two packages of factors affecting the North-South relations. The first consists of the most influential factors. And comparatively, the other is the package of factors classified as less influential factors (See Appendices 1 and 2).

The concern here, then, is to identify certain perspectives about the future of relations. A number of possibilities are expected to take place in the context of relations between North and South Sudan:

1. The two countries may be engaged in war, if we consider the tension across the borders, or the lack of consensus and coordination on their common interests. Moreover, war between two sides is highly expected on the ground that the two governments differ largely in their ideological orientations (Islam in the North Vs. Secularism in the South).

⁴⁵ H.J. Poshoff, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁴⁶ A. Mukhtar, *The Press and Politics in the Sudan*, "Alrasid" Issue No. 2 , 2006, p. 39 (research journal focuses on African international relation, published by Alrasid Centre for Studies, Khartoum, Sudan).

Appendix 1. The most influential factors affecting North-South relations

Mutual interests	They mainly include oil and border trade. It is noted that the North needs oil from the South. Meanwhile, the South needs food, different agricultural products and other important commodities from the North.
Internal political stability	Escalation of internal pressures on the government in North and South, will definitely draw the attention of both governments to focus on securing their political regimes rather than addressing the problems of bilateral relations.
Support of opposition	Providing support of the armed movements from the South against the North and vice versa will bring about an insecure environment.
Impact imposed by ruling elites in both countries	This impact shows somehow negative and extremist vision espoused by some Southerners towards the North and vice versa, to the extent of shaping the bilateral relations of the two countries.
Lack of mutual trust	Mutual suspicion between the NCP and the SPLM since the date of the signing of CPA, negatively affected the North-South relations. Unless suspicions tackled, we expect more negative potential impacts.
Failure to resolve post-referendum issues	These issues refer to the conflict over demarcation of borders, disputed area of Abyie, loans and failure to reach an agreement for the exportation of the oil produced in the South via the pipe lines in the North.

Appendix 2. The less influential factors affecting North-South relations

Regional impact	There is a limited impact imposed by the neighboring countries on the North and South Sudan.
International influence	The U.S. role for example, tends to support the state of South Sudan to solve its internal problems more than encouraging it to play regional or neighboring roles at the moment.
Role of civil society organizations	Civil society organizations are no longer effective tools to influence foreign policy, as they do not have a clear view with regard to the bilateral relations of the two countries.
Planning of foreign policy	It is obvious that there is no strategic plan of bilateral relations between the two countries to be adopted in post-secession era, in addition to the absence of real institutional efforts to evaluate and reorganize these relations.
Political apathy	There is a lack of positive political initiatives, as well as lack of mutually constructive political attitudes of officials of the two sides, which may enhance possibilities of inevitable deterioration of the bilateral relations of the two countries.
Human potential	The role assigned to the spirit of innovation and creativity is low, so the relationship of the two countries is not capable to come out of the cycle of confrontation and complexity.

2. Both states in North and South might form or even join new alliances. The State in the North may unite with the Arab Gathering, especially after the rise of Islamic movements to power, as a result of the Arab democratic wave started from Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and yet Syria and Yemen. In turn, the State of South seeks to intensify cooperative ties with the countries of East Africa, as well as the group of the Upstream Region of the Nile Basin.

3. The prevailing disastrous political climate surrounding North-South relations gives a favorable opportunity for foreign intervention under the pretext of humanitarian assistance as well as justifying foreign military presence to keep the peace for both sides, threatening its stability throughout the region.

4. The deep conflict between the two countries could be responsible for absence of any type of cooperation between the North and South, particularly in the meantime. This will lead to weaken any possibility for future reunification, unlike what happened to Germany and Yemen.

5. The two countries now to provide the minimum level of basic services and social care, as they are preparing themselves for more tensions and conflicts. Hereby we can say that the two countries may face unpredictable increase of people's suffering. Meanwhile, poverty rates rise because of the use of financial resources for war. Hence new pessimistic stage of bilateral relations will take place immediately and extend its echo to cover all the region.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As a result of the foregoing analysis, a lot becomes obvious. Given the course of events, there is no doubt that secession of the South is a pivotal stage in the history of post-independence Sudan. Some believe that secession is the inevitable result of the failure of co-existence between northerners and southerners. Others view secession as an expression of pressures imposed by external factors. Whatever the cause, North and South Sudan now need more than ever to review their bilateral relations and to think of re-building these relations with a new vision.

The study raised the question about the significance of elite's contribution in strengthening the ties of North and South. In this respect, the data examined recognized some limitations of that role to the extent that it seemingly disturbed smooth mutual interactions. There is also broad agreement that officials, civil society organizations and decision making bodies on both sides, did not react adequately to counter the cost of the ongoing deterioration of bilateral relation after the signing of the CPA (2005). This will definitely minimize possibilities for stable and constructive relations between the two countries.

As far as the North-South relations are concerned, different geopolitical consequences have taken place due to the political atmosphere that accompanied secession. In this sense, secession has succeeded in changing the political, demographic and geographical map of the two countries. Consequently, North South mutual economic and commercial cooperation was negatively affected by troubles and tensions over the secession of the South. Another important consideration is that regional security in the Horn of Africa and Nile Basin will be disturbed by North South tensions.

In addition, Western countries and global influence centers started to plan their strategies toward the region in the light of the new reality. It could be pointed out that the Western countries and the other influential international powers will seek to realize their interests in the South regardless of the North. And simultaneously the Arab countries will also seek to strengthen their interests with the North regardless to the interests of the South. In contrast, relations among the Nile Basin countries and water relations will be affected by the secession of the South Sudan, especially due to fact that the South is doing its best to join the upstream block that competes the downstream block, particularly Egypt and North Sudan.

Finally, using the language of recommendations, much should be done to support the tendency of normalizing North-South relations. One important way to promote such constructive roles is for the political elites, popular initiatives, political parties, public opinion and media to strengthen successful bilateral relations. Following the same logic, there is great need to control the political discourse and move away from the track of antagonism and hostility using mutual visits, popular diplomacy and any other possible means.