

RELEASED IN FULL

ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 SRPP-00 EUR-00 VC-00
 TEDE-00 INR-00 L-00 VCE-00 AC-00 NEA-00 NSAE-00
 NSCE-00 OMB-00 PA-00 PM-00 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00
 SP-00 SS-00 TRSE-00 T-00 USIE-00 PMB-00 DRL-00
 G-00 SAS-00 /000W

-----18F693 052049Z /62

P R 051217Z MAY 04
 FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0625
 INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
 AMEMBASSY ASMARA
 AMEMBASSY CAIRO
 AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
 AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
 AMEMBASSY LONDON
 AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
 AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
 AMEMBASSY OSLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000456

DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR AF/SPG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/5/2009
 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, SU
 SUBJECT: MEETING WITH RULING PARTY

CLASSIFIED BY: GERARD GALLUCCI, COM, EMBASSY KHARTOUM, DOS.
 REASON: 1.5 (B), (D)

1. (C) CHARGE MET WITH NATIONAL CONGRESS PARTY (NC) SECRETARY GENERAL IBRAHIM AHMED OMER ON MAY 3. THE TWO DISCUSSED US/SUDAN RELATIONS, THE IGAD PEACE PROCESS, DARFUR AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT, THE NC AND THE GOVERNMENT.

2. (C) CHARGE NOTED US SUPPORT FOR THE IGAD PEACE PROCESS AND READINESS TO NORMALIZE/IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH SUDAN -- GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE -- AFTER A PEACE AGREEMENT IS SIGNED. HE NOTED THAT THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN DARFUR HAS THE POTENTIAL TO LIMIT OUR ABILITY TO MOVE AHEAD AS QUICKLY ON NORMALIZATION AS WE HAVE BEEN HOPING. BUT CHARGE NOTED TOO THAT IF "NOTHING BUT GOOD NEWS" COMES OUT OF SUDAN ON DARFUR, BECAUSE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (INCLUDING THE U.S.) AND THE GOS ARE EFFECTIVE IN WORKING TOGETHER TO MEET THE CRISIS, PERCEPTIONS CAN TURN AROUND. CHARGE ASSURED OMER THAT THE U.S. APPRECIATES THE POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT POLITICAL PARTIES WILL MAKE IN THE NEXT PHASE OF THE PEACE PROCESS -- IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND SPLM -- AND LOOKS FOR THE NC TO PLAY ITS ROLE. FINALLY, CHARGE REAFFIRMED THAT THE U.S. RESPECTS THE FACT THAT SUDAN -- LIKE AMERICA -- IS A LAND OF DEEP RELIGIOUS FAITH AND DIVERSITY. WE HAVE NO ISSUE WITH ISLAM BUT WITH EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM. SIMILARLY, CHARGE EXPLAINED THAT WE HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH SHARIA. WE DO SHARE THE CONCERN OF

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Charles Daris, Senior Reviewer

SOME THAT SHARIA NOT APPLY TO NON-MOSLEMS BUT LOOK TO THE PARTIES TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUE THEMSELVES AT NAIVASHA.

3. (C) OMER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE U.S. SUPPORT FOR PEACE AND OUR REASSURANCE THAT WE SEEK BETTER RELATIONS WITH SUDAN AND RESPECT ISLAM. HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT THE ROLE OF THE RULING PARTY IS TO MAKE POLICY FOR SUDAN AND LET THE GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENT IT. THE PARTY ALSO VETS ALL APPOINTMENTS TO SENIOR GOVERNMENT POSITIONS AND ALLOWS THE GOVERNMENT TO DO THE SAME WITH THE PARTY. OMER DOWNPLAYED THE ROLE OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN GOVERNMENT. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE PARTY -- SINCE THE NIF BECAME THE NATIONAL CONGRESS -- NOW INCLUDES CHRISTIANS AND SOUTHERNERS. IT MAKES POLICY, NOT THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT. THE NC LOOKS FORWARD TO THE POST-AGREEMENT PHASE. OMER SAID THAT THE ONLY REAL POLITICAL FORCES IN THE NORTH ARE THE NC AND UMMA. BUT UMMA CANNOT EXPECT TO SIMPLY BE GIVEN THE ROLE IT HAD BEFORE THE COUP. IT WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT "THE CHANGED SITUATION" OF TODAY. IF UMMA IS READY TO BE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY, THEN IT CAN ENTER. IF NOT, "IT CAN BE THE OPPOSITION." CHARGE AGREED THAT IN THE POST-AGREEMENT PHASE, ALL PARTIES SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE PROCESS IN THE ROLE THEY ARE READY TO PLAY.

4. (C) COMMENT: OMER IS A OLD TIME HARDLINER CLOSE TO PRESIDENT BASHIR. HE SEEMED PLEASED THAT THE U.S. WAS REACHING OUT TO HIM AND THE NC AT THIS TIME. (HE MADE POSITIVE COMMENTS TO THE PRESS AFTER THE MEETING.) THIS IS PART OF OUR RECENT "CHARM OFFENSIVE" TO GET THE MESSAGE OUT THAT THE U.S. IS READY TO MOVE AHEAD IN RELATIONS WITH SUDAN AFTER PEACE AND IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINED POSITIVE GOS BEHAVIOR ON DARFUR. WE WANT THE SUDANESE TO UNDERSTAND THAT IF PROBLEMS DEVELOP IN THE RELATIONSHIP, IT WILL NOT BE BECAUSE THE U.S. WANTS BAD RELATIONS WITH THE SUDANESE PEOPLE. RATHER IT WILL BE BECAUSE THE GOS WILL NOT HAVE ACCEPTED OUR HELP IN MOVING SUDAN DOWN A NEW ROAD OF PEACEFUL CHANGE. END COMMENT.

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