

A Comprehensive and Inclusive Peace Process for Chad

Recommendations to President Barack Obama for a new U.S. Government strategy in Chad ^[1]
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Recommendations to President Barack Obama for a new U.S. Government strategy in Chad:

- 1. Urge the GOC to implement a comprehensive and inclusive peace process to stabilize Chad**
- 2. Give MINURCAT a peace to keep**
- 3. Vigorously implement all U.S. Law with respect to military assistance to Chad**
- 4. Provide adequate and equitable funding within the context of an overarching Chadian development strategy**

A Regional Analysis: Chad's Role in Darfur

Analysts, policy makers and experts are now accepting that the conflicts in Chad and Sudan have mutually reinforcing dynamics. Chad's internal political instability is having devastating consequences on the peace processes in Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR). The U.N. Security Council Sanctions Committee Panel of Experts on Sudan stated that Chad supports Sudanese insurgent groups with arms, ammunition, vehicles, food, training and safe haven [2]. Violations of humanitarian law and international human rights continue unabated in the region and violators in eastern Chad operate in an environment of almost total impunity. A new U.S. Government strategy must be created to stabilize Chad and bring to an end the continued degradation of conditions in the region. This strategy must work in parallel with the peace process for Sudan and with the efforts led by the "Contact Group" [3] to normalize Chad-Sudan relations.

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The Root Causes of Instability in Chad

The current Chadian rebellion finds its genesis over concerns linked to governance. Unilateral changes to the constitution extending presidential term limits and the reallocation of oil revenues away from priority sectors (education, infrastructure and health) and towards

[2] Report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning Sudan (S/2008/647), 11 November 2008, paragraph 30, 31, and 151

[3] The Contact Group was created to monitor the implementation of the Dakar Agreement, signed on March 13, 2008 to put an end to the support by Chad and Sudan of each other's rebel groups. The Contact Group includes: Libya, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Gabon, Eritrea, Chad, Sudan, the Community of Sahel-Saharan states, the Economic Community of Central African States, and the African Union.

territorial defense and military expenditures precipitated the current upheaval. Widespread accusations of corruption, nepotism, electoral fraud, human rights abuses and unequal treatment of the population have plagued the current government.

The Response of the International Community

While the U.S. Government and the international community support a comprehensive peace process in Sudan, and the Contact Group is leading efforts to end the proxy-war between the two countries, no parallel political process exists for Chad's internal crisis that addresses the root causes of the conflict. Instead, the international community's focus has been on resolving the cross-border insecurity by authorizing the deployment of EUFOR/MINURCAT and UNAMID, which twice, U.N. Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, described as "insufficient" to achieve lasting peace and stability in the region [4].

France's desire to renegotiate its cooperation contracts with its old colony and its plans to eventually remove French troops from Chad and CAR [5] should be leveraged against the need to put additional pressure on the Government of Chad (GOC) to address internal drivers of conflict.

Facilitated by the European Union, the August 13 electoral reform agreement [6] between the GOC and the political opposition has shown little progress, spoiled by the activities of Chadian insurgent forces. Attempts to broaden this agreement to include all components of the Chadian crisis and to start an inclusive national dialogue to engender real political reforms have thus far not succeeded. If the international community fails to lay the foundation for a more inclusive and comprehensive strategy in Chad that targets root causes of conflict and engages all-actors into a peace process; lawlessness, banditry and impunity will continue to ravage eastern Chad and to impede progress in Sudan.

A New U.S. Government Strategy in Chad

The hard work of ending armed conflict and human rights violations in Chad and Sudan will continue to be undermined unless a coordinated and comprehensive U.S. Government policy is established to address the internal drivers of conflict within Chad.

A balanced U.S. strategy for the region that includes targeted interventions, international collaboration and preventative diplomacy can help stabilize Chad and bring progress in Darfur.

We therefore recommend that the Obama administration take decisive steps to mitigate the impact of spoilers in Darfur by implementing a new foreign policy agenda for Chad that includes the following steps:

[4] UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad," 1 April 2008, paragraph 38 (S/2008/215) and 8 July 2008, paragraph 52 (S/2008/444)

[5] "Sarko en Afrique" Antoine Glaser and Stephen Smith, Paris (Plon) 2008, pp. 51-74

[6] "Accord politique en vue du renforcement du processus démocratique," 13 August 2007, brokered by the European Union.

1. Urge the GOC to implement a comprehensive and inclusive peace process to stabilize Chad

The piece-meal approach to resolving conflict in Chad has thus far proven unsuccessful. Because Chad is one of the poorest countries in Africa and one of the top-ranking states in corruption indices (Fund for Peace 2008), organizing elections with the current regime controlling all governmental apparatus and national resources is unlikely to produce free and fair elections. Widespread accusations of fraud during the 1996 and 2001 elections, culminated in the boycott of the 2006 presidential elections by the majority of the political opposition.

The August 13 electoral reform agreement needs to be broadened to include civil society and political-military forces. Failing to engage spoilers in the process dooms the agreement to endless delays. **The new administration should follow the recommendations made by the members of the Committee on Foreign Relations to broaden the objectives of U.S. assistance to the country [7].** Only a process that includes all parties to the Chadian conflict (armed and un-armed), which works in parallel with the Chad-Sudan mediation and the internal Sudanese peace process, can resolve the regional crisis in all its complexities.

- **We urge the U.S. Government to put pressure on the Government of Chad and the country's political and armed opposition, to engage in an inclusive national dialogue aimed at resolving the root causes of Chad's internal crisis and to help foster the conditions necessary for the successful implementation of the August 13 agreement.** Without first removing the internal and regional drivers of conflict, violence will continue to be fueled by opportunistic governments taking advantage of people's discontent to advance their own agendas.
- This strategy would have to be implemented by providing the State Department Office of Central African Affairs and the U.S. Embassy in N'Djamena the required regional experts and high-level Foreign Service diplomats. At a minimum, two permanent political/military officers would be needed in the field to support full-time peace-building efforts and to monitor an eventual cease-fire. Reinstating an economic officer position at the Embassy would also allow for increased U.S. oversight over extractive industry expenditures in Chad.

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[7] "The Petroleum and Poverty Paradox: assessing U.S. and international community efforts to fight the resource curse." 16 October 2008, p. 31. Report to the members of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate

2. Give MINURCAT a peace to keep

MINURCAT (S/RES/1778) ^[8] does not have the political or geographical mandate to address the real causes of instability in Chad. We ask that the Obama administration, working at the level of the Security Council and in collaboration with other member countries:

- Stabilize Chad, by giving the U.N. a political mandate and thus broadening the role of the SRSG to facilitate, support and assist, in coordination with the Government of Chad and other relevant parties, the implementation of current internal and regional efforts towards stabilization, reconciliation and normalization of relations, as well as any future peace agreements needed to create the necessary conditions conducive to sustainable peace in Chad and the Central African Republic.
- Support a stronger, broader MINURCAT mandate that will encompass additional U.N. civilian police, Chadian justice sector reform and governance reform to help resolve the insecurity in and outside the camps.
- Push for MINURCAT's mandate to include Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programs to help mainstream former combatants back into society.
- Urge the U.N. to improve coordination between its various peace-keeping operations in the region and closely liaise with the Dakar Agreement "Contact Group", the African Union, the European Union and other stakeholders to ensure the complementary implementation of the various mandates.
- Enforce the protocol of agreement signed by the GOC with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on May 9, 2007 to ensure the release and re-integration of child soldiers ^[9]. **Urge the GOC to bring an end to the recruitment of children by both the Chadian National Army and the numerous rebel groups operating in eastern Chad.**
- Follow the recommendation of the U.N. Sanctions Committee Panel of Experts on Sudan and mainstream arms embargo monitoring within the operational structure of MINURCAT ^[10].

3. Vigorously implement all U.S. Law with respect to military assistance to Chad

The State Department, in its report on Human Rights Practices in Chad (2006) stated that *"despite the country's multiparty system of government, power remains concentrated in the hands of a northern oligarchy composed of the President's Zaghawa ethnic group and its allies, resulting in a culture of impunity for a ruling minority"*. Section 502 B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 limits security assistance to countries that engage in "a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights." ^[11]

^[8] S/RES/1778 mandated a multi-dimensional civilian protection force to create conditions necessary for the safe and voluntary return of refugees and IDPs in eastern Chad and north-eastern CAR

^[9] U.N. Security Council "Report of the Secretary-General on children in armed conflict" (S/2008/532), 7 August 2008, paragraph 12. According to this report Chad has yet to fully comply with the agreement signed with UNICEF. Most demobilization of children were associated with non-governmental armed groups and very few releases of children came from governmental forces (paragraph 32)

^[10] Report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning Sudan (S/2008/647), 11 November 2008, paragraph 349

^[11] Section 502 B(a) (1) and (3) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961

- The State Department must investigate whether the Government of Chad falls under this and other restrictions and must ensure that all U.S. assistance is granted in a manner which promotes internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. The United States must avoid identification with governments who deny such rights.

In a context characterized by fluid allegiances, today's Chadian military officers too often become tomorrow's rebel leaders. In fact, many members of President Déby's National Guard and several ex-Ministers of Defense are currently in rebellion.

- **An investigation by the U.S. Government Accountability Office into the cost-effectiveness of U.S. counter-terrorism spending in Chad is needed to measure the value of the intelligence gathered. The U.S. must ensure that its international military education and training assistance is used for its stated goals and is not inadvertently strengthening insurgent forces.**
- U.S. dollars in Chad may show more returns if invested in Governing Justly and Democracy programs with activities in such areas as Rule of Law, Human Rights, Governance and Civil Society.

4. Provide adequate and equitable funding within the context of an overarching Chadian development strategy

Inequalities in services between refugees, internally displaced, and host populations exacerbate the on-going conflict.

- The Obama administration, in collaboration with international donors, must identify opportunities to invest in durable solutions which will meet humanitarian needs and benefit the local population after the crisis. Immediate priorities include the establishment of primary and secondary schools, regular access to health services, access to water and sanitation services, and investment in income generating activities.
- The prevention of and support to victims of gender-based violence must be at the core of the international community's civilian protection response.

Conclusion

U.S. interests in the country will be strengthened by elaborating a broader agenda that looks at Chad not only through the lens of Darfur but as having its own internal political crisis less visible but as damaging to the region. If the international community does not elaborate a more comprehensive strategy to stabilize Chad, we are risking another change of power by arms, opening the door for massive casualties and national and regional disintegration. The U.S. can play a critical role in building strategic coalitions with vested stakeholders to ensure that 9 million Chadians are not sacrificed for access into Darfur and to avoid further intrusions into the peace process in Sudan.