

**Sudanese Official Reiterates Rejection of International Force Presence in Darfur
Interview with Ibrahim Ahmad Umar, deputy leader of the ruling National
Congress Party in Sudan, by Muhammad Sa'id Muhammad al-Hasan in
Khartoum -- date not given**

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(Introduction)

Professor Ibrahim Ahmad Umar, deputy leader of the ruling National Congress Party in Sudan, has reiterated his country's rejection of the entry of international forces into Darfur Province, saying Sudan will be in a state of war with any country that joins these forces.

In an interview with Al-Sharq al-Awsat, Umar announced that security, economic, and political measures have been taken to deal with the situation, along with efforts to unify the domestic front. He said: "If invading forces enter Sudan and the (Sudan's) Popular (Liberation) Movement (SPLM), the partner in government, welcomes them, there will be no national unity government and the Naivasha agreements will cease to exist." He added: "The majority is against international intervention, except the SPLM, the People's Congress, the Communist Party, and part of the National Ummah Party. Some of these parties have an agenda to bring the government down." He said: "The agreement for security arrangements in east Sudan will lead to stability and pave the way for the success of negotiations over the wealth and power."

He revealed that his talks with Muhammad Uthman al-Mirghani, leader of the opposition Democratic Union Party, in Cairo aimed at reaching a common vision vis-a-vis the foreign interference, not a political partnership between the two parties. He talked about domestic political activities, efforts by the Arab League and the African Union, and the role Egypt is playing concerning the crisis.

Following is the text of the interview:

(Al-Hasan) What is your position toward the latest developments concerning Resolution 1706 and the entry of the international forces into the western Sudanese Province of Darfur?

(Umar) First of all, Resolution 1706 was met with a wide and principled opposition by the government and people. It is true that there are some who welcomed the entry of

foreign forces, but it is clear that this matter is taking place because of foreign pressures or political partisan rivalries. It is, however, clear that a considerable segment of the opposition rejects it. It is not only Al-Bashir and Al-Mirghani (who rejected it), but there also Khalil Ibrahim and Hajj Madwi. Certainly, only a minority in the government and people support this matter.

(Al-Hasan) What do you mean?

(Umar) In the government, the SPLM represents 28 percent. In people, there are the People's Congress, the Communist Party, and part of the National Ummah Party. I would also like to note that the position by some African countries toward this resolution turned from a lack of interest or from approval into support for Sudan's rejection of it, that is, the rejection of Resolution 1706. This happened after President Al-Bashir explained to them the details of this resolution in the Havana and New York meetings. A large number of presidents had thought that the international resolution is meant only to help Sudan and protect its citizens, but they were surprised that the resolution entails a serious violation of Sudan's sovereignty because it gives these forces the right to fully control Darfur. (The resolution provides for) training the police, rehabilitating the judiciary, and guarding the borders. There is also the military intervention, which is not only meant for self-defense, but is also meant to arrange the security situation, as they see it. Therefore, the approval by the African leaders of this resolution has become weak. Add to this the fact the way in which the United States and Britain adopted the presentation of this resolution to the Security Council, the threats made against Sudan and its government, what the US and British associations did, which, it became clear, are Zionist leaderships; all these elements (when they were revealed to people) lent credence to the concerns of the Sudanese Government and tilted the balance in favor of the government's opposition to the entry of the foreign forces.

(Al-Hasan) Do you not think that the US escalation will lead to the implementation of Resolution 1706?

(Umar) It is now clear that this resolution will not find its way toward implementation because the countries the US secretary of state asked to support the formation of international forces all refused to commit any troops.

(Al-Hasan) What is Sudan's position toward the countries that join the international forces?

(Umar) Sudan announced that any country that sends troops to Sudan will be in a state of war with Sudan.

(Al-Hasan) Do the latest efforts in European, African, and Arab capitals open the door to another option?

(Umar) The latest signs at the United Nations show that another path, other than this resolution, is being pursued.

(Al-Hasan) Will Sudan accept another resolution?

(Umar) Sudan's position is clear, and the other path is for the African Union forces to remain in charge of Darfur. There is no harm in the United Nations assisting these forces technically and financially and with other expertise. This is the path.

(Al-Hasan) Will the mandate of the African Union forces be extended again?

(Umar) The government is seeking to make the situation in Darfur normal, and therefore it accepts that these forces continue to be there until the required normalization (of the situation) is achieved.

(Al-Hasan) Did you say that the Naivasha peace agreements would collapse if the SPLM agreed to the entry of foreign forces into Darfur?

(Umar) I said that if the SPLM's talk about accepting the entry of international forces remains within a hypothetical and political context -- meaning conditions under which no invading forces would enter Sudan -- this will neither affect the partnership nor the Naivasha agreement. But in the event of the entry of enemy forces, and when President Al-Bashir and the armed forces are engaged in a real war with these forces, I do not believe that a group will say it is not concerned with what is happening there, let alone welcome the invading forces.

In my estimation, such a position means that there is no national unity government. If the national unity government collapses because of this position, how will the Naivasha (agreements) survive?

(Al-Hasan) How far have regional efforts, especially those of the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), regarding the international intervention in Darfur gone?

(Umar) The African Union is fully aware of the problem; it has increased its forces in Darfur and extended its mandate there until the end of the year. The Arab League pledged to fulfill its obligation of contributing funds to the African forces and for the sake of development in Darfur. Arab League Secretary General Amr Musa holds meetings and contacts with the Arab leaders and foreign ministers to contain the

situation in Darfur in accordance with the Arab summit resolution. For its part, the OIC offers moral support to the issue of Darfur.

(Al-Hasan) What about the domestic front?

(Umar) Unifying the domestic front is a priority. President Al-Bashir underlined the need to unify the domestic front because the issue is no longer a government issue, but rather the issue of the homeland. Consultations and contacts are being led to have citizens agree on a unified vision, but within the context of rejecting the resolution. There is a national committee, chaired by Field Marshal Abd-al-Rahman Siwar al-Dhahab, which acts within the framework of efforts to unify the domestic front under these critical conditions.

(Al-Hasan) What about some forces that support the entry of the international forces?

(Umar) The government is keen to unify the domestic front to protect the homeland from external threats. However, there is another side, which is politically opposed to the government, whose agenda is to bring down the government and which is not concerned about unifying the national ranks.

(Al-Hasan) What does reaching an agreement between the government and the Eastern Front on security arrangements in Asmara mean?

(Umar) Reaching an agreement between the delegations of the government and the Eastern Front on the security arrangements in the east helps to achieve stability, and it acquires special importance, because it means paving the way for the success of negotiations over the wealth and power in the short run, God willing.

(Al-Hasan) What is the Egyptian stand on the successive developments regarding the international forces and Darfur?

(Umar) I attended the meetings of the ruling (Democratic) National Party. President Mubarak said that Egypt rejects the entry of international forces into Sudan, and so did Safwat Al-Sharif, secretary general of the National (Democratic) Party, and the People's Assembly. There is an intensive Egyptian effort concerning the Darfur issue. The Egyptian position is therefore supportive of the Sudanese Government regarding the foreign interference.

(Al-Hasan) Did the meetings with Muhammad Uthman al-Mirghani, secretary general of the Democratic Union Party, in Cairo deal with the issue of the political partnership between the National Congress and his party?

(Umar) We talked about a joint vision regarding the foreign forces, not about a political partnership.

(Al-Hasan) Will the political mobilization against the foreign intervention stop the political process and democratic change?

(Umar) All the arrangements and steps related to the general elections, the laws, and the democratic change will continue as long as there is no actual interference. This, however, does not mean that the government will not take security, economic, and political measures that would enable it to deal with the challenges.

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