

Al-Bashir Praises Military in Speech

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[Speech by Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, chairman of the Revolution Command Council for National Salvation, in Bahri, date not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful; prayers and peace be upon the last messenger, our lord Muhammad, and all his kith and kin and companions and all those who followed them.

Brother commanders, officers, NCO's, and soldiers of the Bahri military region, peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you. Today I am very pleased to visit you. I am very sorry for the delay, which was due to the circumstances and much work. I hope that you will forgive us for this delay. As a matter of fact the Bahri region played a pioneering and effective role in fulfilling the task of seizing power. [applause and cheers] I want to recall that all units of the capital—all the units inside the capital—effectively participated in seizing power. When I single out the northern region it is because the northern region is the only one among the three that totally carried out its task 100 percent. [applause and cheers]

The first task assigned to the northern region was to ensure the control on its barracks. Two hours after zero hour the barracks of the northern region were totally under control. The northern region was asked to sever contacts—electronic and microwave telecommunications and others—at 0205 hours I was informed that the task was successfully carried out. The northern region was then entrusted with the task of arresting some of the personalities who were in the area. All those personalities who were to be arrested in the northern region were arrested—100 percent. [applause and cheers]

For this reason I would like to congratulate the Khartoum north region in particular for their great and precise achievement. As a matter of fact, the situation that existed and the reasons we made our move are probably clear to you individually. Every soldier and every NCO who know me used to say to me when met: What are you waiting for? Naturally one could not answer that we were working for the change. That answer was not possible. We knew that everyone in the Armed Forces was totally convinced that that regime should be changed and removed. We did not say that we contacted NCO's and soldiers in order to tell them to come and join us in an organization. No. We were confident that when the zero hour came we would alert the soldiers to tell them we had decided to change the regime. Come with us. We were confident that the soldiers would move with us. In actual fact they did so at all barracks. [applause and cheers]

Naturally you all have lived together with the ruins, corruption, and irresponsibility of the previous responsible officials. In fact they do not deserve to be called responsible officials, because they were irresponsible people. They dealt with this country as if they were enemies and not rulers of this country. They ruined and plundered the country and have led it to a point where it would have been a crime for us to wait any longer. We, the Armed Forces, consider ourselves to be the safety valve for this country, and to sit as spectators watching such people ruin and plunder the country, starve the people and make them homeless while we are watching them with our arms unsheathed to protect them, by God this would have been a crime, a crime history would have never forgiven because had we waited a little more this country would have been divided [words indistinct] saying that if the country was ruined, reach and take what you can for yourself. All were working according to this concept. Therefore, we have moved and thanks to God our move was successful due to the support, and thanks to your stand by us and the stand of the Sudanese people and ultimately the success granted by God.

We in the Revolution Command Council pledge to you that all of your aspirations, hopes, and all you were looking for will be fulfilled, God willing. The point I would like to emphasize is that all your aspirations, hopes, and all the things you were hoping for we will seriously endeavor to accomplish. I would like to emphasize to you once more that we have neither a parliament nor a constituent assembly but the brother officers and the NCO's will be our parliament and our constituent assembly. We are going to come back to you for consultation in all our decisions. We are going to listen to all your views and suggestions and I hope that you will deal with us in total sincerity. We are confident; we are not in need of anybody to trumpet for us telling us that all what we have done is good. No, what we do cannot all be good. We are humans and every human is prone to mistakes and we need your views when we commit mistakes. When we do something good it will be because our intentions were good and we do not need any mention but when we make mistakes then we will be in need of warnings and reminders so we can reconsider our actions.

Previous officials did not take into account the views of the masses; they did not care about the masses' sufferings because they believed that they were masters [sadah] and the country belonged to them. Their motto was: The country is ours and we are the masters of the country. When the people spoke about compensations, Mubarak al-Fadil replied: [words indistinct] only 35 million; all the country is ours.

Following the uprising [against Numayri]—and you yourselves carried out the uprising, for if you had stood with Numayri the uprising would not have taken place at all [applause and cheers]—the uprising did not bring Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi to power as he did not have any role in it. We used to contact him so that he would preach at the Friday prayers to the Ansar [Al-Mahdi's supporters] and incite them, but he refused. That was until he heard at night that we had decided to seize power. He spoke then after the last evening prayers and made himself appear as a hero and leader; he reaped the fruit of the uprising which was carried out by the Sudanese people and their Armed Forces for the sake of the prosperity of the Sudanese people. He [applause and cheers] thought, Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi thought that the uprising was staged to compensate him for the 16 years when he was not in power. Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and his [?followers] are malevolent toward the Sudanese people because the latter supported Numayri and ask: Why didn't the Sudanese people topple Numayri and bring us to power? Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi was full of rancor toward the Armed Forces because he thought that the Armed Forces brought Numayri in and protected him. He thought the Armed Forces deprived him of 16 years of ruling Sudan.

That is why Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi—after having assumed power—considered the Armed Forces as his number one enemy. He believed that the Armed Forces had deprived him of authority and that they would remove him from power once more if he let them. For this reason he worked to destroy the Armed Forces. You all lived through the previous periods and saw what the soldiers had to put up with. [passage omitted]

Despite the misdeeds of Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi the Armed Forces remained steadfast; they remained in position defending Sudan and Sudanese soil and made every sacrifice possible. There were a large number of martyrs, from all ranks. Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi used to enjoy himself doing that. He used to feel happy on receiving news that this place had fallen or that the Army at this or that location was hit and gave so many martyrs. He used to think that his aspirations would be realized—the Armed Forces would be destroyed and then he would bring the militias to rule Sudan by them forever. [applause]

But God is greater than him. God enabled us—and with your support—to remove this nightmare. He thought that he would intimidate us. We did not fear him. We challenged him and challenged his militias. [applause and cheers] If he can with the help of his militias occupy a post which has three soldiers on patrol then I will hand

over authority to him. [applause and cheers] God willing, we will capture Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and put him on trial. We will—God willing—mercilessly stride all those who supported Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi on corruption—those whom Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi protected, those who corrupted and sucked the blood of the Sudanese people—the men of the black market, the smugglers, the corrupt, the traitors, and the lackeys. [applause and cheers]

We are confident that if we do not strike at the corruption in this country we will have offered nothing to this country, and will not be able to offer anything. Any person who committed a crime and corrupted against Sudan will receive his just punishment. We will not forgive them and will not turn over a page and say let bygones be bygones—we have no such policy. [applause and cheers] We are confident and our confidence is in the Sudanese people and in God—it is a great confidence. We will take the Sudanese people to the shores of safety. Then we, the members of the council, will give up authority and hand it over to the people—and not to the parties. We will then return to our barracks or to our homes satisfied with the achievement we have accomplished. As soon as your revolution broke out all the Armed Forces—and as I said at the beginning of my speech, all the units of the capital without exception—met and participated in the seizure of the authority. We did not need to move forces from one barracks to another in order to control the latter. [applause and cheers]

There was no unit that needed reinforcement. Maybe some deployments took place after the barracks were brought under control. Controlling the strategic installations needed redeployment of forces. We began to move forces from the areas where many forces were present to these installations. The operation was carried out successfully without losses thanks to God. We lost only two martyrs—one a doctor with the rank of major and the other a naval rating. [passage omitted]

All the Arab states have supported the blessed revolution. Their envoys and ambassadors arrived to express congratulations and best wishes. They asked us to inform them of our urgent needs so that they could meet them. Some states took it upon themselves to send assistance which we urgently need without us asking them—before we had asked them for it. An oil tanker is on its way to Port Sudan from Egypt—it is expected to arrive tonight at Port Sudan; this is even before we talked to them about it and before we asked them. We have not bought it. They loaded the tanker and sent it. [applause]

Tonight there will be a bridge from the Arab Republic of Egypt airlifting medicine. There are ships at anchor in the port of Jeddah being loaded with wheat. We have a delegation currently in Saudi Arabia—at the request of the latter—to negotiate how oil can be loaded and delivered to us—free of charge. [applause and cheers]

Brothers in the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Qatar are insisting on giving us aid; each one of them wants to be the first to render aid to the Sudan. [applause and cheers]

As is customary, the Libyan brothers are friends of the Sudanese people—they have actually proved that they are friends of the Sudanese people and not friends of the Sudanese regimes. They gave us their support right from the very 1st day. Their delegation arrived on the 2d day. We sat for long hours discussing our problems and our needs. They spoke as if they were each one of us—we did not feel that they were strangers as far as our problems are concerned. They spoke about the problems of the Sudanese people as if they were us who were doing the talking. The brothers in Libya totally stood by us; they totally supported us, and will give us all necessary assistance. Their assistance in the past is well-known to all. We in the Armed Forces for months during the past year have totally depended on Libyan support. They supported us with aircraft—of various types—transport and fighter aircraft, military equipment, weapons, ammunition—they supported us with strategic aircraft. We thank the brothers in Libya for their past assistance, and will continue to thank them for the support of the Libyan people. They too are already prepared and, God willing, will give us all our needs and requirements without any hesitation. We feel that we are in a position acceptable to all the Arab states.

Before we came to power Sudan was totally isolated. All the Arab states grouped with each other—the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] member states, the member states of the Arab Cooperation Council, and the Arab Maghreb Union [UMA]—all the Arab states are members in this or that group, except Sudan. All these groups have opened their doors for Sudan. Tonight we are able to join any one of these federations—the Arab cooperation federation [as heard] or the UMA, or to establish a new unit—we are able to establish a tripartite unity with Libya and Egypt, we can establish a unity with Egypt, as the unity of the Nile Valley. All these choices are open to us. We will see what is suitable for the Sudanese people and which one the Sudanese people aspire for and do it. We are sure that we will receive acceptance for any request that we make. [passage omitted]

Our problems are two-fold: The problem of security and the economic problem. The security problem is manifested in the war in the south. We have a declaration about the problem of the south, and God willing this declaration will receive acceptance from the popular movement. This declaration will be the beginning of a serious solution for the problem of the south. We know the south correctly because we lived in the south. We fight and we pay the real price for the war of the south. The politicians used to trade with the war in the south. They sought gains. We fought and died. Each one of us used to live in trenches full of water; we were under fire. If your brother next to you was killed you could not bury him; if he was wounded you could not treat his wound.

All these circumstances we witnessed; we lived them. The politicians used to sit in air-conditioned offices and used to trade with the issue. [applause and cheers]

Our main choice with regard to the problem of the south is to arrive at a solution to the problem through negotiations. We as Sudanese should sit and negotiate with each other and find out the appropriate solution and agree on it and then implement it. We have no enmity toward southerners. We are sure that southerners do not harbor enmity toward northerners. Proof of this lies in the fact that the southerners who were made homeless as a result of the war did not go to other countries; they came north. This indicates that they have no enmity toward the north. [passage omitted]

Most of our southern brothers who are in the movement used to be officers with us in the Army. We know them personally. Those who were not in the Army we fought in the jungles. We know them, too. I used to be commander of a region and used to know the commander of the region opposing me. I knew what his qualifications were and he knew who I was. We knew each other. We can sit and reach understanding. [passage omitted]

Tonight we will submit our (?declaration); we will outline our program tonight. We are sure that it will receive the acceptance of the movement. The declaration will constitute a firm ground for the solution or the basis on which we can build the solution. We want to arrive at a final solution—a final and fundamental solution for the problem of the south—not a temporary one. [applause and cheers]

The other problems—those in Darfur and in southern Kordofan—these are the legacies of the parties. The interparty struggle and the struggle for party gains detonated the situation in Darfur and Kordofan. As soon as the parties were finished, the reasons behind the feud were removed. We will only need to exert a simple effort to remove the feelings left as a result of the struggle during the past period, but the causes of the struggle have ended. [passage omitted]

As for the economic problem, the country has vast resources. I said so during the uprising. Sudan resembles a cow that gives milk. We in the Army were holding the cow by the horns while the thieving politicians were milking it and drinking the milk. [cheers and applause] The country has many resources and the Sudanese people are a great people with vast energies. [passage omitted]

We will fight corruption; we will defeat corruption. Fighting corruption will raise the morale of the Sudanese people. We will create the atmosphere and climate for the Sudanese citizen to produce. We are confident that the Sudanese people will produce. [passage omitted]

The final point I want to stress is that for this country to continue to exist and for the program we hope for to be realized, we need only rely on the comprehensive unity of the Armed Forces. The unity of the Armed Forces is very important. [passage omitted]