

**Press Briefing on Sudan**  
**Robert Zoellick, Deputy Secretary of State**

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**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Okay then. Well, the reason that I thought it might be useful to get together was that a lot -- a number of people came with the last time I went to Sudan. And since this is Congressional recess season, I wasn't able to get a trip -- or a plane that could take more people. So while I'm still collecting some of my thoughts for this trip, I thought I'd give you a little bit of an overview on this trip, which will be to a annual COMESA meeting which is in Rwanda. COMESA is a group of countries from eastern and southern Africa. And then I'll go on to Darfur and Khartoum.

Just a word on the COMESA piece. This is another element in the Secretary's and my effort, early on in our tenure, to try to touch base with a lot of different regions. So I was just in Southeast Asia. I was in South Asia and Northeast Asia and others. And so when I'm at COMESA, I'll be able to meet the Presidents of Rwanda, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia and also the Sudanese President, al-Bashir, who I haven't yet met.

Now, I thought I would -- it would be useful to bring people kind of up to date on the Sudan situation. And some of you heard me describe kind of our approach to the problem before, but just to recapitulate for those that are new. We are looking at this as two interconnected elements that could either work positively in an upward spiral or, if things don't go well, could lead to a downward spiral.

The first is the North-South Accord, the Comprehensive -- the CPA -- which, as I think all of you know, sort of ended a 21-year conflict. But there's a tremendous amount of implementation work that has to be done on this. And I'll come back to that in a moment. That agreement is important in its own right to end the strife between North and South. But it's also important towards the larger challenge in Sudan because it could possibly change the membership and, we hope, the policies of the Government of Sudan, because as part of it there's supposed to be the interim government stood up this summer, which would include John Garang, the southern leader, coming in as the First Vice President.

The CPA also changes the incentives of the key actors; so here for Khartoum, Garang and others in the conflict of Sudan. What do I mean by that? Well, for the Khartoum Government, if they want to get support and follow through for the North-South Accord, it will increase their incentive to end other strife elsewhere. For Garang, it also, in the long North-South struggle, these parties were in sense using multiple fronts at one another, so as opposed to encouraging rebels in the west or in Darfur, he now has an interest to try to support a peaceful reconciliation process.

And for others in Sudan -- because, as you know, you've got conflicts in other parts of Sudan as well -- it creates the opportunity that there can be a political reconciliation and to show that there could be benefits for people that come to some peaceful arrangement. And another aspect of the North-South Agreement is that because it changes the political constitution in Sudan, it also offers an avenue for political reconciliation, in particular opportunities for further degrees of autonomy and revenue sharing and power sharing.

Now, the second side is the Darfur, and indeed other conflicts. And here the first part is the humanitarian needs -- getting food and basic supplies. Related to that closely is the security, so, to protect people.

But third and the point that I just touched on, on the last trip, but I think will become increasingly important is increasing the prospects for political reconciliation. So it's not just a question of getting food for people, protecting their camps, but eventually you have to try to achieve some reconciliation on the political side between Khartoum and the various rebel groups.

This has other elements of complexities because you have a very complicated tribal situation in all of Sudan, but particularly in Darfur where you have some groups that are basically herding societies -- cattle -- others that are agriculturalists and so you've got violence but you also have conflict in those two groups, which has been acerbated at various points by drought.

So last time I went to Khartoum, but also Rumbek, which is where Garang was in the south, and then Darfur, and that came out after the trip that I had in Oslo as kind of a financial support conference for the North-South Accord. And also I wanted, when I was in Darfur, I met some of the AU military leaders. That was April 14th and 15th.

Okay. So let me give you the kind of the update as I see it now. On the food side for Darfur, there's been significant improvement in the pipeline. The reports that we have is that food is getting in -- and with a major effort by our AID people. As I mentioned to some of you, I also talked to the Khartoum Government about ways they could expedite this process. They've issued some regulations, which have some positive aspects, some that are still questionable, and we're continuing to focus on the implementation of those regulations. But the food is basically coming.

Then there's the security side. And now the government does not have any helicopters or gun ships for offensive purposes. But you still have the problems of militia and Jingaweit. The big development, which some of you probably noticed yesterday, was sort of a fruition, or at least an interim step of fruition of a lot of the work that we started where there is a conference in Ethiopia - - Addis Ababa -- of the African Union, the UN, NATO and the European Union. And this is a complement to the efforts that the African Union have now agreed to increase their forces to roughly 7,700 and possibly up to 12,000.

The contributors are being lined up, particularly Rwanda, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa -- that's one reason, by the way, I wanted to go to Rwanda. The Rwandans have some of the best troops, the most reliable troops. I worked with Rwanda on a series of trade issues when I was USTR. So I wanted to help build those ties because they're going to be one of the major contributors.

And the very positive point is now we've got NATO and EU providing support in terms of logistics, transportation, communications. So yesterday, you had de Hoop Scheffer, the NATO Secretary General, but also General Jones the Supreme Commander, U.S. Supreme Commander NATO, at this conference. And I asked to distribute a statement so that would be --

**QUESTION:** Kind of like Charlie's statement?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Which is Charlie's statement, which you can see that in addition to taking \$50 million that we got out of the supplemental to support this force, the U.S. has committed to provide the airlift for the Rwandan contribution, as well as building the communications capabilities, offering to further train some of the AU forces in command-and-control. We have a few people there also as sort of an observer, sort of an advisor capacity.

Just again, so you have a little feel of the ongoing diplomacy, the Canadians have also made a good financial contribution and offered some troops as part of the NATO effort. That partly flowed out of when Prime Minister Martin met with President Bush at the ranch. Martin expressed general interest in being involved with Sudan, didn't really have a focus. Pierre Pettigrew, the Foreign Minister, is a good friend of mine. So I called Pierre and said, look, here's some of the

things we're trying to do, if you got forces that could play a role in the NATO structure, it would be very beneficial.

So -- and again, just to give you a little bit of the background. This effort to get NATO involved started on my first trip when I visited some of the 13 capitals and ended up in Brussels and the North Atlantic Council and basically gave them a briefing about issues, but started to try to sensitize them. And I talked with General Jones at the time about, you know, trying to get NATO to play this sort of role, so he could get the African Union forces in and back them sufficiently. So I'm very pleased with this development.

On the fighting side, again, I've had a series of contacts over the past five or six weeks since I got back, with Vice President Taha, Jan Pronk of the UN. And we've actually -- just again to give you a feel of this -- some of our intelligence revealed there were some potential massing of force, militias, around some rebel camps and we were able to intervene with the African Union and the government to basically sort of stand those down.

And there was a May report of the UN that basically said there's no large-scale attacks, but there is still violence going on and we tried to track this down. Some of this is related to the rebels actually seizing cattle herds, because they have their supplies. And so it just gives you a sense of some of the underlying strife in the area.

As I've mentioned, that the strategy, however, it has to go beyond trying to create or expand the basic security through the African Union forces and get food in to the political process. And this is going to remain very, very tough because the rebels are represented by different groups. There's not a lot of cohesion.

So one of the things that we've been trying to do and Mike's been trying to do is work with various parties, including an NGO, a sort of Catholic NGO called Sant'Egidio, to kind of bringing together the rebel groups in a more coherent fashion, so they can negotiate with the government. And as part of the meeting in Ethiopia yesterday, there was an announcement that the African Union is going to be convening the -- an effort to get the rebels together with their government in Abuja on June 10th.

But this is going to be an ongoing problem because there is some -- a line or story I saw yesterday that Jan Pronk, the UN Representative -- who I will see, by the way, in Sudan -- talked about the difficulty of getting the two rebel groups to cooperate with AU mediators by pinpointing their positions on the ground. You see, the government has told us what their positions are and the rebels haven't been able to explain their positions. So -- and then the other part that's related to Darfur is the implementation of the two UN resolutions, you know, the one with the International Criminal Court which is in its own process. And then the economic sanctions, and that is winding its way through the UN process.

Now, on the North-South side, the UN peacekeepers are starting to come in -- and you recall, that was the third UN resolution, UN peacekeepers -- on the implementation of the CPA. The Constitutional Review Commission did convene on April 30th. They are in the process of developing the interim constitution. The southern team is in Khartoum and the government has set up the account to chart the channel -- 50 percent of the oil revenues -- to the Government of Southern Sudan, so all that is moving in place.

And there's been some -- the southerners have released some of their prisoners of war. And there at least is a reasonable opportunity that they will stay on target for completing that interim constitutional process and setting up the Government of National Unity by July 9th, which isn't too far away. And that, you see, fits into the strategy because we're trying to influence the nature of the overall Government of Sudan.

Where the challenge in that process is, is that while the southern Sudanese and the Khartoum Government have been working relatively well, they still need to draw on other parts throughout the country, some in the north and others. And so while they've both reached out to kind of increase the inclusiveness, that's still an open issue in this process of bringing more Sudanese parties in.

For Jonathan and others who are with us, remember the CPMT team that we visited in Darfur, the guys that were flying over to -- just to give you a little sense of how these trips matter -- that was supposed to end and they -- when we were there, they approached me and said, "Look, we're starting to lose people. We're worried the UN forces won't be there," you know, "We'd be willing to extend, if you can extend it." So we scraped up a couple million dollars and I talked to Jan Pronk and the UN Representative, who at first we thought wouldn't want them there, but we've now extended them for a number of months, too, because they play an oversight role in terms of identifying possible violence.

We're trying to encourage some South-South dialogues -- this is militia with some of the southern forces. And we have to build up the capabilities of the Government of Southern Sudan and so we've had a security sector reform team actually in the south from May 18th to May 23rd, trying to strengthen the southern capabilities.

There's a food issue in the south, too, though, which we're working on with AID so that -- this is not Darfur, this is the south, -- because as you get a number of these returnees coming back, you actually have groups of people that don't yet have livelihoods and so one of the areas we have to pay more attention to is the food for some of the returnees.

John Garang will be coming to Washington on June 6-8 and I'll be seeing him. And just to give you a little sense of what this southern process -- southern implementation process resolved is -- (*turning charts*) -- I'm, unfortunately, a person of words, not of -- but this is something that our team put together that is kind of the implementation plan. You see all these items? How many items do we have here?

**STAFFER:** Eleven hundred items.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Eleven hundred items. This gives you a little sense of the tracking system. So when you have one of these accords put together, and it's all sort of color-coded with processes. This is actually what's involved trying to get this process -- so I have truly scratched the surface of this process. (Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** Is diplomacy 3-12 or 4-19? (Laughter.) Where do you learn this?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Yeah, it's just -- what I'm partly trying to give you a flavor of is, you know, there's certain levels of dealing with this, but there's the nature of the implementation to make this stuff fall in place. But there's also some ongoing problems. For example, one issue that arose that I'll be discussing in Khartoum is there are internally displaced people, as you know, refugees and when you cross the border, so then you have IDPs, so most of what we visited in Darfur are IDPs. There was an IDP camp near Sudan -- near Khartoum. And the government is rather breaking some of these up roughly and these are often southern Sudanese and so you've got some violence related to that.

And one of the other issues that we've been trying to work on, as I've alluded to, you have other conflicts in Sudan, this is -- some near Eritrea that also we have to try to see whether we can fold into this process.

So coming back to the trip, part of it will be COMESA, where COMESA is a lot often involved with sort of trade and economic development, and that's why I've worked a lot with the COMESA people before. So that is -- will be part of the discussions. But it also allows me to meet six or seven African heads of government. And part of my focus is also on the Rwanda element because this, again, gives you a little feel on the diplomatic side. The Rwandans are playing a big role in this. My experience is they've been very serious forces so I'm partly going then to show respect and try to develop the personal contact as we get their help in the Darfur side.

Then I'm going to a different camp in Darfur, a camp called Kutum, which is in the far north, and I'll visit the AU forces there. It's K-u-t-u-m. And I'm going to see some tribal leaders and I'll see the governor of north Darfur. And then I'll come back to Khartoum and I'll see Jan Pronk, the UN representative, and then have some additional meetings with Taha and probably the Foreign Minister, and then I'll be back.

And so if you -- just to give you a little sense of what I feel we've been able to sort of accomplish over the past, say, two months or so, one is the three UN resolutions which give the overall sort of framework for this. Second, I do feel better about the food getting in because there's a rainy season there and we've had to get the food in. Third, the commitment by the African Union to expand their forces substantially, which is important in the security in Darfur. Fourth, getting NATO and the EU to back this. And if you actually think about the history of NATO, this is actually a rather significant sort of step and would actually work fine from my perspective because the European Union then got a little competitive, and that's fine because my interest is trying to get more support on this.

Fourth, on the -- or that was the fourth. On the fifth is the violence. You know, they have stood down the helicopters and the gunships, they've stopped their offensives, but you still do have some of the friction with the militias and the Jingaweit.

And then on the North-South track, sixth, that, I think, is relatively on track with the Oslo support and then -- but and then as part of that we also just maintenance of the CPMT mission.

So that's a little bit of the context as we see it and I'm happy to take your questions.

**QUESTION:** Do you know anything on the timing on the ICC? Are there any smoke signals coming out of the stacks or anything about how far away they may be from --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** No. As you know, it's a separate legal process and so -- and I asked about this this morning -- or this week -- because I, you know, came back from Iraq and Jordan, and we don't even have a sense of who the names are yet.

**QUESTION:** The prosecutor, the ICC prosecutor, has gone down to Sudan to do the preliminary work (inaudible). What do we think the next step is? Announcing indictments, putting a list of names out there, or is it -- I mean, I understand that they've collected some of the material from the African Union monitors. They've, you know, gotten --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** I don't know the -- I would presume they'd start with investigations (inaudible)?

**STAFF:** Yes, sir. We estimate the investigations will probably take some months before (inaudible).

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Here's, gentlemen, how I would -- how at least I would think about this. This is a -- this is an important sort of diplomatic dimension. In other words, it hangs

over people, as a sense of the United Nations, countries around the world, were sending a signal about accountability for these actions. And so in a way, even though it hasn't proceeded to the investigation or sort of trial stage, it's a useful deterrence against others and allows us to emphasize a tool about the need to stop the violence from, you know, local militias to in-between government officials to high-level government officials. There will be a whole other stage when it actually starts to proceed. But it's -- you know, so, for example, I think I might have mentioned this, when I was on the last trip when I was meeting the governor in Darfur, you know, I would reference the accountability process and so on and so forth. So that's how it at least fits into the sort of the diplomatic context.

**QUESTION:** It took months and months and, you know, more to get the 2,500 or 2,400 AU troops in. Now you're going to put more than double that number in. How long do you think it will take you to do that and what capabilities are you lending to it? In part, I mean, it just seemed painfully slow to get the 2,400.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Yeah, it did. And that's one reason why from the start of this process I was trying to work on two fronts: get the numbers up, but get the support. Okay? And my sense is you now have a much more concrete NATO-EU support than you did before. What was going on in Addis Ababa was not only kind of a pledging, but starting a planning process, so we were getting sort of NATO planning cells in to work with the AU to bring the forces in. And I think they're going to start to try to bring them in June or July.

**MR. RANNENBERGER:** June.

**QUESTION:** June?

**MR. RANNENBERGER:** I think realistically it will be June, yes.

**QUESTION:** And until you get up to 7,000, what do you estimate?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** I just -- I don't want to mislead you. My sense is that a good -- here's what I have a sense of. Four countries are well on their way to sort of serious battalion size so this is kind of a thousand people. Okay? The Rwandans probably will have more. And so that's roughly an extra four to five thousand, on top of the two to three thousand you have here. So you have countries that have made the primary commitment and there was a couple of others that I saw on the list, too.

**MR. RANNENBERGER:** There were a couple others, besides which we've already started to expand the base camps and I think the difference here is the logistics trail is sort of there and NATO logistics problems have been resolved, so I think the -- with the NATO support.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** So, for example, I was going to check these numbers, but if you see the paper that I shared with you guys, you'll see they're talking about -- this shows you the degree of work, and -- is that at a point here we're talking about, if you look on page three and it talks about the --

**QUESTION:** We only have two pages.

**MR. RANNENBERGER:** Go by the paragraphs.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Okay. Do you see a paragraph that says, "Additional Support" as the heading?

**QUESTION:** Yeah. No.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Okay.

**QUESTION:** Uh-uh. Sorry.

**QUESTION:** We just have Charlie's remarks. The statement.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** "As part of the additional funds appropriated," do you have a paragraph that --

**QUESTION:** Oh, yes. Yeah.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Okay. Do you see this has got the 50 million --

**MR. RANNENBERGER:** Second paragraph.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** -- and then it says, "To help build," it says, 12 camps and expand three existing camps?

**QUESTION:** Mm-hmm.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Okay. So this gives you a sense of rather practical --

**QUESTION:** Well, it doesn't give me -- 12 camps, provide an additional 50 million to help build additional camps.

**MR. RANNEBERGER:** (Inaudible.) Sorry about that. They statement they have omits the numbers.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Okay. Well --

**QUESTION:** Well, anyway, we know that --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Anyway, the unclassified, cleared statement referred to 12 camps and three existing camps, okay? (Laughter.) And then I don't know, does it have on that -- it says what we plan to do -- airlift a Rwandan contingent of (inaudible) deployment, build communications capacity, train AU personnel.

**QUESTION:** Mm-hmm.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** So my best estimate is that, you know, this will be well on its way this summer so, you know, it's not waiting months and months and months.

**QUESTION:** And once again, the four: the Rwandans, the Senegalese --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** South Africans and Nigerians. And that's important because, in part, each of them were able -- these are not just bits and pieces but sort of significant sort of battalion-size troop commands.

**QUESTION:** When you say "play a significant role," how many U.S. forces are involved in this? And from what I understood at the time of the trip, the Pentagon hadn't even filled all the slots that were there for advisory roles. There were like five or six slots where they weren't even filled.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** No, but these are two different things. These are people on the ground for either inspecting purposes or liaison. What the additional -- the commitment you have here will be -- he'll be flying C-130s in to get these guys in over the course of a month. And as part of that, there are people that will be U.S. and others that are part of the planning cell to help deal with the logistics stream and the communications stream. But they're not going to be in there for long periods of time.

**QUESTION:** So do you have a sense --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** But you're not talking about large amounts of U.S. troops. Okay? But, you know, I mean, I don't know -- I guess I've done a C-130. I mean, there's five or six guys on a plane. But, I mean, you know, so you're not talking about a large U.S. footprint on the ground. The Canadians were putting in over a hundred people and that's good because they're NATO-trained people. And remember, the other balance here is -- and this is part of the sensitivity -- the Africans really want to be in the lead. Okay? It's an African Union operation and this is not a Western operation. But we have come to a good understanding about the types of support, the logistics planning, communications, transportation nature, that NATO and, to a certain degree the EU, can provide. And those NATO forces -- this is the benefit of the integrated NATO, sort of integrated military command, are, you know, relatively interchangeable pieces on this.

**QUESTION:** Sorry, I just want to follow up. Is that part of the problem that it was so slow to begin with is the Africans wanted to lead but weren't fully capable of it? Or was it just --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Well, I don't want to judge what happened in sort of prior years but I think there is -- my guess is a combination. You have to (a) get the commitment, then you have to get the troops, then you have to get them in. Okay? Then you have to build the base camps, which involve -- one of the other things that I talked with the Khartoum government about was sort of expediting the movement from the contractors that come in.

So my assessment from the past experience is that we should have the elements much better in play so as to be able -- again, your question goes at the core theme which I've been focusing on, which is how do I -- how do we expand the AU force in a significant way, you know, as quickly as we can. And so, you know, as I said, I think, you know, we're now well on our way to starting to get people in, you know, by the end of June and I hope we'll get, you know, sort of, at least double the numbers pretty shortly there afterwards.

**QUESTION:** Could you talk a bit more about the intelligence that we're seeing of the militias or the militia massing around the camp and what intervention took place to stop it?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Yeah. I'm trying to remember the nature of the reports because we --

**MR. RANNEBERGER:** The reports came from the fact that we were out there. We had actually had people go up there. They had heard what the African Union -- it was primarily coming from the African Union.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** From people in African Union forces. There was a village. The name was -- wait, wait, wait

**QUESTION:** Muhajiriya

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Muhajiriya, M-u-h-a-j-i-r-i-y-a. Close?

**QUESTION:** Mm-hmm.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Okay. That's what it said on my paper. It depends if it's accented in the south, because sometimes they -- and there were sort of rebel forces there and so, this was part of the problem with this conflict is that. And so you had militia that were massing around and so what we -- I called Taha and emphasized that, you know, violence, large-scale violence, would certainly set back our efforts and then I urged him to do whatever he could.

We separately contacted the African Union and tried to get the African Union to expand their forces in the area, because that's the role that they were playing -- blocking -- and I think Jan Pronk was involved with this too, or the UN representative.

**MR. RANNEBERGER:** Pronk played in as well.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** And so -- and, you know, it's partly a sense of in some ways the unusual nature of this, that, you know, we have a sense of, you know, what could be massing in a village in a rather distant place through the network of contacts and try to act in realtime to be able to head it off, but that doesn't happen every time.

**QUESTION:** Just a quick follow-up. Do you have any indication that Taha actually acted and asserted some influence there?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** He said he would. No, I mean, I don't -- and look, I mean, I don't want the violence to occur. However it doesn't occur, that's -- the militias that you're dealing with still -- they undoubtedly had ties originally with the government. Okay? You know, and the degree to which they are influenced and autonomous is still a question mark to me today. I mean, you know. But again, from a policy perspective, it doesn't change what I do because my point of view is: it's your country, you've got to be responsible for it. That was an analogy to the Syrians.

**QUESTION:** Can I follow up on that? Yes, that was going to be my question. When you say that you're certain now that the helicopter attacks have stopped, the government never admitted openly that they were providing these helicopters, even though it was obvious from villagers saying they saw, you know, government planes.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** And gun ships, too.

**QUESTION:** Right, and gun ships. Did they physically go and confiscate these? And how are you -- what other methods --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** How do we know?

**QUESTION:** Sorry?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** How do we know?

**QUESTION:** Yeah, how do you know -- well, you can see that there aren't helicopters, but do you know that they went and took them back? And can you talk about other methods that they were supporting --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Because they're government -- they're government helicopters and gun ships, so they're just not flying. You know that they're not moving off the air fields.

**QUESTION:** Right. I understand that. But what other methods are -- could the government still be supporting them that you couldn't see, and have -- did they then acknowledge --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** The militia and Jingaweit --

**QUESTION:** But financially -- I mean, are they still financially -- there were also government arms. I mean, even the small arms were government supplied.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Or, frankly, the militia could already be armed and sort of capable --

**QUESTION:** Well, by now --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** -- and the government doesn't have to give them further support. So I'm not trying to absolve the government. What I'm trying to say is that the current situation is one where we're trying to do everything we can to end or limit the violence. And so that means you start out by saying government forces, okay? And then you try to do everything you can to stop the militias.

But the other side of it is you've got rebels here. Okay? So there was another news story I had recently, a wire where you had the rebels who actually took some of the AU forces and held them hostage for a while. And some of the problems, at least the best I've been able to track down, is some of the attacks on some of the aid workers are from the rebels, because they're also trying to get food. Okay? And some of the attacks on the cattle are people trying to get food. Okay?

And so the -- in looking at the issue, what I guess I'm trying to emphasize is that, you know, the government was responsible for egregious actions. Okay? At the same time, one should not assume that the rebels are a noble force without their own dangerous elements. Okay? And you've got to basically try to do what you can to keep the peace among them, which is primarily the African Union element. Okay?

And then the part, as I said, that is the most challenging to me going forward is, okay, let's say we can get the food in and let's say we can expand the African Union force and let's say we expand the African Union police so that women aren't in danger of being raped at night in the camps. That just maintains and stabilizes a terrible humanitarian situation. Then the next step is, how do you try to move this back to some peaceful reconciliation so that, at some point, people can go back to their lands?

**QUESTION:** Do you believe the government is genuinely trying to -- doing all it can now to pull it back?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** I don't know that I would say doing all they can. I would say - - I believe that the government is working towards trying to find that political solution, okay? And I think it's -- they see it as in their interest to do so because they see that the North-South accord offers a prospect for international aid and support, recognition, and look to add to the sort of further dimension, you'll find some people that will say the rebels have been pretty badly beaten. Okay? So, in other words, as the government stands down its forces --

**QUESTION:** When they've accomplished what they --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Yeah, yeah. I mean, but so, you know, that very well could be part of it. Okay? And so I'm not saying that because they're reaching out, that this is a great, you know, turn towards light and truth. It's that the situation is one where, you know, the rebels, whatever their position, are in a weak condition. Okay? So -- but at the same time, there's still a large potential for conflict here, you know, and so, you know, you've got dangerous villages and the effect of this on the overall population in more -- whatever it is, whether it's rebels, militia, bandits, it's not safe enough for people to go back to their homes. Okay? So that's the overall goal, is to try to --

**QUESTION:** Just to follow up on this, on an overall basis, how do you assess the level of threat and violence right now in Darfur, as opposed to several months ago? Is this still going on, what you call genocide? Has this death toll -- monthly death toll -- abated in any way?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** The UN issued a report in May that basically said in the first months of the year that you haven't had large-scale violence, but you still have incidents of banditry, rapes and, you know, other attacks. But you have to correct me on this, Mike, because I saw a summary, but I don't want to say the words -- I thought it said that the violence had been lessened.

**MR. RANNEBERGER:** Substantially reduced since February.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** But is that what their words are?

**MR. RANNEBERGER:** I don't have the exact quote but that was --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** It was the direction of the report?

**MR. RANNEBERGER:** That's exactly it.

**QUESTION:** So you've said that one of the greatest challenges for you is to sort out the political solution. How are you working with the government, who is also now trying for a peaceful solution?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Well, it's not just the government. There are really multiple players. One is to, when I'm there, I want to continue to stress to the government about not supporting the Jingaweit, being responsible for the violence, making sure that the food supply is coming in. Oh, and by the way, this was interesting and I forgot to mention this one. We got the government to make a statement supportive of the AU expansion, including NATO's involvement. Sort of a small thing. So continue that process and to continue to push them to engage the rebels. Okay?

But as I said, the hard part is getting the rebels to get cohesion and engage, but this is where yesterday -- and I think this is right -- the AU said we're bringing people together on June 10th, in part, to push them to a conference. But there's a third element and that's why it's important when I see Garang shortly after I get back here, which is that Garang has ties with some of the rebel groups, not all the rebel groups. And so last time I urged him to -- and I will urge him (inaudible) -- to play a constructive role in urging the rebel groups to engage.

And again, this is why it comes back to the political primer. You see, what they now see -- and this is why I know most of the focus of the world's on Darfur, but the reason I keep trying to bring it back to the North-South is -- if you make the North-South process work, these people are all in contact with one another and they then start to see, oh, well, you know, the South is actually

getting what Khartoum said it would and they're going to get their oil revenues and they're standing up the government and so on and so forth.

And so, obviously, at least one rebel aim would be to try to work out a deal similar to the South got. Now, they may not get the exact terms of the deal. And the signs that this is actually filtering through is that we've had some signs that some of the rebels kind of in the east of the North have also been looking towards engaging in a political reconciliation process.

So it's working all three of those and, again, the multilateral nature of this is, you know, we're working through the AU. The African Union is the prime mediator of this process. When it comes time to the troops, you know, they've got the troops on the ground, we've got to sort of support them. And then as I said, the UN plays a role in this, too.

**QUESTION:** There seems to be a pretty stunning change in the U.S. position on this issue. Maybe it's because there's been a stunning change in the Government of Sudan on this. But it was just last fall Powell talking about the Sudanese Government being complicit in a genocidal campaign and now you say they're working very hard for a political solution. Is this why the administration asked Congress, congressional leaders, to pull the Darfur Accountability Act? And what is --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Well, first, I want to deal with your presumptions. I don't want to get -- I don't want to leave the impression that, you know, the Khartoum government is -- that the Khartoum government, you know, is one that has necessarily turned a page and that, you know, is all sweetness and light. I mean, these are extremely tough people who, you know, some of them have been associated with, you know, terrible actions. So one isn't blind to the past.

What we're trying to do is, as the government has changed its policies in terms of the North-South accord, which has come in its place during this time period, since October -- and secondly, if they're willing to cooperate in terms of first getting humanitarian supplies in Darfur; second, improving the security situation through their actions and getting the African Union forces -- those are important steps. But then we still have to push the political reconciliation process. Okay?

So I'm engaged in this with very eyes open about the nature of the people with which we're dealing. Okay? But if we want to try to give a chance to improve the situation in Darfur, you know, we need to work with the multiple parties, including the government, and make it very clear to the government that if they don't cooperate -- this is from the trip you were on before -- that they run the risk of losing the types of things that they've started to create. And indeed, this is where it's a 'carrots and sticks' -- is that you also have, you know, the UN resolutions showing the danger.

So I didn't necessarily subscribe to your sort of summary that you began with. What I said is that that they've -- I think you had asked a question about this -- is that they've been trying to work cooperatively in terms of with the rebels, okay? But also from a context where, you know, the rebels had been pretty badly beaten, too.

**QUESTION:** Well, you said, "I believe the government is working hard to try to find a political solution." That's a dramatically different statement than Colin Powell coming out and essentially accusing them of genocide just --

**QUESTION:** Well, maybe because they killed off all the rebels.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Well, I think the genocide is not just a case of rebels. I think the genocide is the case of large-scale population. And so working hard for a political solution doesn't mean that all problems have been solved, but I think that that's what they've been trying to do. But, you know, there still are tests ahead.

**QUESTION:** So what --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** But again, you know --

**QUESTION:** But on the question of the Darfur Accountability Act --

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Just -- yeah, okay. Just to come back, you know, it's not only my statements, it's the statements of the UN Special Representative, too.

Darfur Accountability Act. There are a number of provisions of the Darfur Accountability Act. Some of them involve rather detailed requirements for the Executive Branch in terms of reporting, as I recall, on sort of individuals and time frames and various actions. What I actually told both Senators Corzine and Brownback is that I, at least, was comfortable working with them on some such legislation, but from an Executive Branch point of view I didn't want something that tied my hands or, frankly, became a series of bureaucratic reports as we're trying to do this. Okay?

So it is -- and I understand this. For an issue of great emotional and policy sensitivity like Sudan and Darfur, Congress wants to be engaged in the process. Okay? And so it will -- wants to support us, as it's done in term of the aid and the context. Sometimes it wants to pass legislation. Sometimes legislation is a rather blunt tool in terms of trying to deal with it. So, you know, as I've said to them and other congressional leaders, I'd be pleased to try to work with them to craft something that would, you know, engage them in the process, but I've also briefed them on the things that we're trying to do.

Oh, and then on your point about sort of the difference with the past. You know, because of the concerns about genocide in the past, we're trying to deal with the problem by, you know, getting security for the people, get food in and tell the government you've got to stand down. And so we're making progress but there's a lot to do.

**QUESTION:** Do they acknowledge -- I mean, do they admit what they -- because I'm not -- you know, I interviewed the interior minister. He said that basically, you know, the whole problem has been radically overstated, that there hadn't been hardly any people killed, there were a lot of refugees primarily because people were going to these camps so they could get free food. You know, I mean on and on and on.

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** I made very clear in the discussions that we and the world believe that terrible things have happened in Sudan and that they need to stop and that they need to get on a path to try to help solve the problems. My conversations are focused most on what we need to try to do to solve the problems and to make clear that if I can't help show progress, then the things that they would like to achieve with us or others in the world, you know, will slip downhill very quickly.

**QUESTION:** Will you seek a larger troop commitment beyond this June 7,000 number?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** The African Union has suggested that they could go -- could consider going to 12,000.

**QUESTION:** I mean, that's something that the United States (inaudible) support and provide troop support along with NATO and the EU as well?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY ZOELLICK:** Well, you know, we're supportive if they believe they need to go to 12,000. And in terms of the logistical support, we'll have to sort of deal with that at the

appropriate time. But at least what our policy has been so far has been very supportive of the African Union.

**MR. ERELI:** Thanks, everybody.

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