

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

PROTECTING DARFUR'S INTERNALLY DISPLACED

Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, February 5, 2008

Featured Spaker:

GONZALO VARGAS-LLOSA
Senior Policy Adviser, UNHCR

Moderator:

ELIZABETH FERRIS
Senior Fellow and Co-Director
Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

COLIN THOMAS-JENSEN
Policy Adviser, ENOUGH Project

PAUL MILLER
Africa Adviser, Catholic Relief Services

* * * * *

PROCEEDINGS

MS. FERRIS: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Elizabeth Ferris. I'm a Senior Fellow at Brookings and Co-Director of the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement.

For many years, we've been working in issues of IDPs or internally displaced persons and, of course, Darfur is one of those areas where we've devoted a lot of attention over the years. If you look at the situation in Darfur, it's almost a classic textbook case of all the many things that can go wrong. The international humanitarian community was quite slow in responding adequately to the displacement in Darfur back in 2003. It seemed to take a long time to get agencies, whether the U.N. or nongovernmental organizations, to move quick enough to deploy experienced field workers to the region.

That situation was remedied by about 2004 and presently there are over 13,000 humanitarian workers in Darfur, though problems with getting access to people who have been displaced or other civilians in need, problems with security, and the number of hijackings and assaults that have gone on in the humanitarian community made it very difficult for them.

Then the African Union stepped up the plate when it looked like the United Nations wasn't able to respond by deploying forces to the region, sending some 7,000 troops to provide security to civilians and IDPs and

others and protect humanitarian work. Although initially they had some success, the fact that they were underresourced and had a difficult mandate to implement, and certainly once they experienced direct casualties on their own forces, made it difficult, impossible for them to provide the needed protections.

Then the U.N. spent a long time, the member-states of the U.N. and particularly the Security Council, in torturous negotiations to see what kind of international response could provide the protection, and we'll hear a little later about the hybrid force between the U.N. and the African Union, UNAMID, which is to have 26,000 troops. Only 9,000 are there now, and they are missing the 24 helicopters which they say are essential to provide the necessary protection in an extraordinarily complex environment for carrying out either humanitarian assistance or providing protection to people who are desperate and have lost almost everything.

And then there's a very slow process in peace negotiations. The situation in Darfur is extraordinarily complex. There isn't just one war. There are conflicts between rebel groups and the central government, and there are conflicts between different rebel groups, and there are conflicts between Sudan and Chad, almost a war by proxy. As we've seen so many times in these situations of violence, there's quite a lot of banditry, opportunism, struggles over land and resources and many different armed groups. The latest count from Amnesty International last week was over

50. How do you carry peace negotiations when you've got 50 armed groups on one side? So the political situation is certainly very complex and very difficult.

Then as if things couldn't get worse, in the last week, we've seen an explosion of violence in Chad, a country where those conflicts have been simmering for a long time. There are lots of Chadian IDPs as well and over 400,000 Darfurian refugees inside Chad, which is also a difficult environment for providing humanitarian assistance. Although it seems that the troops, the rebel troops are beginning to leave the capital of Chad, that violence, that conflict is, of yet, unresolved.

Unfortunately, when we sponsor events, they're almost always kind of depressing when you hear about the problems that go on, but I'm sure that we'll have some positive remarks from our three guests today.

I'm very pleased to introduce Gonzalo Vargas-Llosa from UNHCR. He's currently working on protection in Darfur. He's worked with UNHCR for 17 years in lots of different countries including Pakistan and Afghanistan and the really hardship post of Geneva, and so we're glad that he's with us. He will have to leave a little early, and so when we go for questions, I'm going to suggest that we begin with Gonzalo and then the others can stay a little longer.

He'll be followed by Colin Thomas-Jensen at the far right there, who works with the ENOUGH Project. He's also worked with a variety of

organizations such as the International Crisis Group and USAID. He was a Peace Corps volunteer as so many interesting people we've had on this stage before. He'll be talking some about the political security context, kind of the broader political issues, if you will.

He'll be followed by Paul Miller, who is the Africa Adviser for Catholic Relief Services in Baltimore. He has worked for over 20 years in different areas, in different positions with both Catholic Relief Services, the United Nations, USAID and several human rights organizations and served as Country Representative in Senegal and Brazil and, as we heard just a few minutes ago, speaks fluent Portuguese which is always a useful talent to have, although perhaps not directly relevant to the work in Darfur right now.

We'll begin with Gonzalo, followed by the other two, and then we'll have time for questions. Please, Gonzalo.

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: Okay, thank you very much, Beth, for that introduction. I'll try to be relatively short just to get the discussion going.

Yes, maybe just as a first remark, just to echo what you said about Chad, I know that the meeting is about Darfur and very often the attention is on Darfur, but clearly what we've been seeing in the past few days and we're still seeing today is a reminder that the problem is not only Darfur, but there's a regional problem. It's particularly sad that in a region, in a place, as you mentioned, where there's already so many IDPs and

refugees, just in the past, what, 48 hours we have 20,000 new refugees who have crossed from Chad into Cameroon, and I suppose there's always a possibility that that number increases -- so important always to keep the regional focus and not only on Darfur, though evidently all these conflicts and displacements are linked.

In terms of Darfur, I left there already quite a few weeks ago, just before Christmas. In the few words I'll say, I'll try to also say some positive things. I think all of us who are in the humanitarian world have to be eternal optimists. Otherwise, we would have quit. Personally, I've been 17 years, so somehow I've managed to maintain my optimism.

Unfortunately, often, the reality makes it difficult to remain optimistic. When I left there a few weeks ago, I was mentioning to some of the people I met earlier today, as I went around many IDP camps, yes, the situation was very, very hard, very difficult. But at least I could sense some, if not optimism, at least some expectation particularly linked to the possible arrival of UNAMID. Clearly, a lot of expectation among IDPs but also among aid workers who felt that evidently a much stronger peacekeeping presence, not the least coming after the shortcomings of late, that this would bring more security for the IDPs evidently but also for all of us working there.

I was commenting to Paul that I was very kindly hosted by Catholic Relief Services in Kulbus while I was in Darfur. This is in the northern part

of West Darfur. I spent two nights in their compound. The following day after I left, their compound was broke into in the middle of the night. The CRS staff was held at gunpoint the whole night while they looted, and I think also one of them, at least a guard, was injured.

This is a daily occurrence. I mean it happens before more on the roads, but as I think all of us try to decrease our movements on the roads, given the hijackings, now you see more and more the armed actors and common criminals coming into the centers to loot and steal, which is becoming more difficult to do on the roads. They are coming into the urban centers. Just while I was there in El Geneina, two of our guest houses were broken into to steal vehicles and money and so on, and one of our drivers was shot.

So, also among the community, there was a sense that with the arrival UNAMID, things would get better. Unfortunately, the reality has not followed. As we all know, that hasn't materialized yet. I think that evidently that is the main problem, first of all, for the IDPs, the insecurity, but also for all of us operating there.

As you know, in West Darfur, there are about 40 IDP sites, all of them quite some distance away from each other, with the total number of about 800,000 IDPs. It is a logistical nightmare for all of us working there to try to get to all these locations, not the least given the insecurity on the roads.

We increasingly have to rely on helicopters to try to get to all these locations, not all of the time but in many circumstances, but there again we're constrained. There are only two. I believe because of lack of funding, there are only two UNHAS helicopters that are servicing at least West Darfur to cover at least 40 locations and hundreds and hundreds of U.N. and NGO personnel.

So a political vacuum, Beth, you mentioned it, a security vacuum, a logistical nightmare, but in this very grim scenario, here is the positive note, and I'm sure all will confirm. Somehow, miraculously, there is an aid operation going on. It has certainly shortcomings and failings and many things could be done better, but in all of the places I visited, there was some kind of international presence, particularly U.N., yes, but particularly from NGOs like CRS, even in the most remote locations. Somehow, aid is getting through, and I think this is something that often is not so much in the headlines. It's always the bad news, the failings of the peacekeeping or of the government and so on, but there is also a positive aspect that somehow aid is getting through.

There are things that I think could be done better. Clearly, there are needs, especially on the water side, in many of these places in spite of the fact that there is a U.N. and an NGO and a government and so on, but water, of course, is a problem that all people in Darfur face not just the IDPs.

But, clearly, the main shortcoming in camps and elsewhere is security. I think some people would argue that this is, to some extent, owed to lack of political will from the government to protect IDPs. My sense from all the places I visited is that, while I don't know, there may be some of that. I feel, at least from the places I visited, that in most cases it was simply lack of capacity, lack of capacity by the police.

Of course, there are some camps which are rather politicized and where IDPs and particularly IDP leaders don't want to see the police or the army anywhere near, but in the majority of places where I went -- I don't know what your feeling is -- in the majority of places, IDPs would be very happy to see more Sudanese, certainly at least police. But, in many cases, that capacity is simply not there.

To give an example, I was in one of the many, many IDP sites called SiSi that has a population of about 10,000 IDPs. There had been some incidents there, so we went. We found three policemen in a small tent under a tree. I felt that they were well meaning. They wanted to help, but they didn't have a vehicle. They didn't have any way of moving around. They were very honest and frank. They said, look, when there's a security incident, we have to chase the looters or the armed actors on foot. That, we simply can't do.

So, although there may, of course, be an issue of political will, I think it's also very much a matter of resources and capacity, and I wonder

whether all of us working there could do more on that side.

At the same time, there are some very, I think, positive and encouraging things happening, not the least in an area where CRS is very active -- we were just mentioning it before the meeting -- in the northern part of West Darfur, in the Kulbus area, there is some relative calm in spite of the incident I just mentioned.

There are even returns. The numbers, I think, vary a bit, but when I was in Kulbus they were talking about fifteen, even twenty thousand people who had returned home in that region. We went to many of the villages where there were returnees. There were projects going on. People had been able to resume their life. Now again, of course, that is a very small minority, but it is happening.

I also found some fascinating projects, projects which have been given very little visibility, maybe on purpose. I don't know. Maybe the idea is to try to keep them as low key as possible. I found them very interesting: Projects particularly away from the main kind of IDP camps and centers, in the kinds of villages where I saw CRS working. Projects which also UNHCR is funding and undertaking, for example, aimed at reconciliation.

I found these. Out of everything I saw in Darfur the three months that I was there, I found these projects to be the most fascinating: Very small, limited projects trying to bring together communities which until

recently were fighting each other. Projects, of course, mainly relating to water but also agriculture, even education.

I visited one, for example, in Foro Barunga where UNICEF has done a little school for the African children and a few hundred meters away UNHCR has done one for the Arab children. This has been replicated in a number of places. I saw it, and these projects are helping to bring some of these communities together again in a very modest and limited way, but for the time being they seem to be achieving more than the political side. So I think it's no small achievement.

I think with more funding, with more support, we could be doing a lot more of this type of activities at the community level to try to start bringing people together in the, I know, limited situations, but this can be done.

Maybe as a kind of introduction, I'll leave it there.

MS. FERRIS: Thank you, Gonzalo. I think it's always good to hear from people who have been on the ground in terms of what the actual situation is. [inaudible] --

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: -- [inaudible] of absolutely no political will in Khartoum to do so. Oil is at a hundred dollars a barrel. The Government of Sudan is making money hand over fist. The oil minister is buying condos in Dubai with briefcases full of cash that he smuggled out of the country. I think if they wanted to deploy more and better equipped police to Darfur to protect civilians, they probably would. They simply

don't want to. I think it's definitely a political will question.

Bigger picture, I think we've got sort of two processes going on right now, and both of them are not going very well. On the one hand, you have an attempt to deploy what will be the largest U.N.-led peacekeeping force in history, 26,000 troops. On the other hand, you have a peace process that's sort of sputtering along. I'll take those each in succession.

I think with the peacekeeping deployment, there are really two things going on or two aspects, shall I say, of peacekeeping that have to be there for any peacekeeping mission, whether it's Congo or Eritrea or Lebanon, to be effective.

First is operational capacity. If you don't have the numbers of troops, the logistics and there's been a lot of talk about the helicopters and the need for 24 helicopters. It's actually more like 72 or 96 because what the force is saying is they need 24 helicopters to operate 24 hours a day, and that means you need 3 helicopters, 3 to 4, to go on 8-hour shifts. Each of those helicopters requires a maintenance staff of about 30 people. So it isn't simply a question of oh, we just need 24 helicopters. It's a much bigger ask, and we're seeing a lot of resistance from troop contributors.

I think the second reason, the second thing that makes peacekeeping effective and that's political will. I think troop contributors are looking at this mission right now and seeing a mission that is headed quickly toward failure, and they're seeing that precisely because the

Government of Sudan is being allowed to dictate and to control how this mission functions, how it operates, who deploys, when they deploy, where they go, where they're allowed to fly.

If you're a country like in Uruguay or Brazil who might have some spare helicopters for a mission, are you really going to send that valuable hardware off on a peacekeeping mission that from 30,000 feet looks like it's going nowhere? I think we're seeing that that's a lot of what the resistance is about.

If the Security Council were to stand up or to have a little bit of backbone, which they've demonstrated none so far, and start to impose a cost on Khartoum for restricting deployment of the force, I think troop contributors would be more forthcoming in contributions and we would see the force go up. Either way, we're certainly not going to see the full deployment in 2008, and my personal opinion is I don't think we're ever going to see 26,000 troops on the ground. We might get up to some level, but it seems very unlikely at this point that it's going to there.

The peace process: The peace process, as I said, I think it's sputtering along and I think that's largely because right now there's really no strategy for how you would actually secure a peace deal. The problem of the Abuja agreement and the Abuja negotiations and the Darfur peace agreement is really repeated.

I think the central problem. I mean I was in Abuja. There were a lot

of problems with the process, but their main problem was that this deal, this process was essentially set up as men forgiving other men for committing crimes against women and children. If that's how you set up a peace process, it's not going to stick on the ground because there's absolutely no buy-in from anyone who stands to benefit from peace.

I think there's a recognition among the mediation team -- and right now it's a joint U.N.-A.U. team -- that there does need to be much more ownership on the ground of the process, but still we're not seeing what that looks like. I think there is a number of ideas how would you give the victims of this conflict, IDPs who are overwhelmingly women, refugees, people that have been displaced out of the country, civil society groups that have a stake in where Darfur is going. What kind of mechanism has to be there in the process to give people some ownership?

I think the second thing is we're stuck on this idea that somehow we're going to unify the Darfur rebels. It's not going to happen. The Darfur rebels split almost on day one, and they've been splintering and fracturing ever since. I mean Humpty Dumpty is destroyed. It's in a million pieces. Internationals who drop in to Tripoli every few days and spend a few weeks on the ground are not going to be able to resolve those differences.

I think the way you overcome that is rather than focusing on getting them to agree on what their negotiating stance is, and the reality is they're

not that far apart -- they just all hate each other -- is that you have to put something on the table that is a start of negotiations. I think the mediation team working with experts who do this, who have worked on peace processes before, have to put together some sort of a framework agreement as a starting point for talks and get them talking about something other than whether or not they can unify and join the process.

Okay, so you've got peace process sputtering, deployment not looking so good, hoping it's going to turn around. What's the catalyst that I think could really change the equation? I think my colleagues and I have been sort of beating our heads against the wall on this one for quite a while, but I think it's accountability in this case.

Consistently, the international community totally underestimates the lengths to which Khartoum will go to maintain power. I mean we're seeing it right now in Chad. Chad has its own problems. Chad has an internal conflict, but those rebels would not have gotten to N'Djamena without a serious amount of support from Khartoum, which they got.

This timed attack in Chad, it was timed directly to disrupt the deployment of the E.U. force. It was pretty obvious. The one thing that the Sudanese Government has given in the past several weeks, the one concession they've made in negotiating the deployment of UNAMID, the signing of the status of forces agreement, happened right before the Chad attack. So it was sort of like okay, we'll give you a little bit of this, but

we're going to take N'Djamena for ourselves.

Until there is some sort of a cost imposed on senior officials in Khartoum so that they understand that they simply can't act with total impunity, which is what they're doing now, I don't think we're going to see the deployment of UNAMID in any serious capacity and I don't think we'll see any progress on the peace front because there's really no will to negotiate in Khartoum.

What does that look like? I think a start would be targeted sanctions. One, they've got to be effective and, for that, you need some sort of unanimity on the Security Council for implementation. Here's where we run into, and maybe I'll close with another point, the problem of unity.

Why is the Security Council so feckless at this point? I think it's because they're not decided on what is the end state for Sudan and what steps are needed to get there. I think the Chinese and the Russians are fundamentally opposed to sanctions in any form, but as time goes on I think there's a fair amount of convincing that could be done to make the case that look, we either start setting benchmarks and putting measures in place on all sides to get met or we face the real possibility of not only the continued chaos in the Chad basin and Darfur but also a collapse of the comprehensive peace agreement and what that would mean not only for Sudan but for the sub region.

I mean if you look at what's happening in Kenya, what's happening on the border with Ethiopia and Eritrea and now we've got refugees spilling into Cameroon, I've been working on this region for quite a while, and I've never seen it this bad.

The prospect of the CPA collapsing is something that I think Security Council members have to really start thinking about and have to really start crystallizing their thought on accountability, and that's all got to be tied, and Darfur has to be tied directly to that.

Maybe in the Q and A, we can talk a little bit more about that, but I've taken my time.

MS. FERRIS: Thank you very much, Colin.

I'll turn now to Paul Miler from Catholic Relief Services, please.

MR. MILLER: Thank you.

Perhaps at the risk of giving the audience a little whiplash, going from the macro picture back down to even more micro than what Gonzalo did, I think of one of my mentors in peacebuilding, John Paul Latterack. He says, embrace the complexity. I guess that applies here, though I would add be careful of who or what you're hugging in this particular case.

But what I'd like to do is really get into the word is called granularity, getting into some of the specifics. CRS has a middling, a medium-size relief operation in the northern corridor of West Darfur as Gonzalo has said. I appreciate your giving some plugs to CRS instead of calling us bad

host because of the security incident that you experienced. But I will say that there are many other international groups and, of course, many heroic Darfurees and Sudanese who are really the humanitarian champions in this situation.

So I'm not trying to present CRS as particularly innovative or particularly successful in what is an extremely challenging environment, but I would like to talk a little bit about, at least from again channeling my own country program staff and some of our local communities that we work with, talk about some of the elements which indeed might give us some hope for the future if the political elements can be reversed.

Indeed, as we look at the challenges but also some of the opportunities, the conversation I was having yesterday about the situation in Kenya, how can humanitarian groups use aid and relief in order to bring communities together and not further divide them, not doing further harm but trying to build local capacities for peace? If that is the challenge and indeed particularly difficult, then how can CRS and other groups on the ground do that?

Again, as I said, it's a medium operation. We serve about 160,000 people not only in some of the camps around El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur but in particular the northern corridor, the Kulbus-Seleah-Sirba area, and it's smack against the Chadian border which brings the host of elements that Colin and others have talked about, linked conflicts.

So how do we manage? We're coming to call it hit and run humanitarianism because we don't drive up there. In fact, even around El Geneina, we don't drive our own cars. We have to rent cars lest they're hijacked and on the road somewhere in Chad in a matter of hours. But we depend on the U.N. helicopters as well as the generous support of WFP and other sources. Things are being able to usually get up to that area by convoy in rented cars, though in the past month we've had a no-go zone. So we have about 150,000 people waiting for the food rations and waiting for other services, and again much of it depends on some of the political as well as some of the other developments that are going on in the region right now.

Over the past year and a half, we have been able to do some things. One of them, as I said, is to adjust and to cope with the security situation and, obviously, keep direct communication with the communities. We have food relief committees, locals who are empowered when we can't get up there, to receive the commodities, to make sure that the people who are the neediest receive it and also that there is a way of understanding within the community about sharing the resources.

CRS' program is not only about food distribution but also shelter with local materials, education, supporting construction of schools, school materials, supporting teachers. Water and sanitation, as Gonzalo has said, is among the most important.

Indeed, this humanitarian space which is so cramped, when our folks can get up there, they are finding enough room to talk. Yes, these communities are very diverse, and CRS as well as other groups in Darfur, when they can, have made a commitment to work with a variety of groups.

We talked about the camps being very politicized, but just to give you a sense of whom CRS and other groups are serving, let's say in the northern corridor in the Sirba cluster, to name some of the ethnicities or some of the groups: Erenga, Tama, different pastoralists, Arab pastoralists, Masalit, Gimr, Zagahwa, all these different groups -- again, groups which the past have lived together, others who have had various kinds of conflicts over resources and other situations. So, again, what are the mechanisms that we can try to think of to not further exacerbate the conflict but try to bring these groups together?

One of the approaches that we've used in other situation is what we're calling the seed or livelihood fairs in which farmers, traders, and others who have access to local and adapted seed varieties come together in a market setting, and people who need access to that get the vouchers in order to buy them. This is one of the incidents, again, tentative at a micro scale perhaps but a situation in which people of different groups can come together in a market setting and to talk about and to trade in order to improve their situation and perhaps improve their livelihood and reduce their dependency on aid. That would be a couple of

the examples I would give.

But, again, we are talking about communities, as Gonzalo has mentioned, in which there are residents, people who never left these communities. We are talking about communities also which have accepted internally displaced people into their midst and are supporting them, and so those people obviously need particular support. We're also talking about returnees, people who have left to avoid conflict and now have come back, and again people who are moving through, as both part of their pastoralist practice and because of the winds of war and some of the situations that we've heard about.

So, in all of this, are there any seeds of hope? Is there any glimmer? I would say that the political obstacles and some of the challenges that Colin has mentioned as well as the humanitarian security challenges that Gonzalo has said, they really do create almost insurmountable obstacles to creating either the kind of reconciliation or even the participation in the process of reconstruction or return.

But I would say that even now as we talk about how we need to address the political problems, we need to also get high level diplomatic pressure including continued pressure from our own U.S. Government on these linked conflicts. I think, as Colin said, these are linked all the way from Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, all the way over now to Chad and Cameroon.

We need all of that, but we also need to work, those of us on the ground as well as working closely with Darfuree communities and indeed other communities in Sudan and to think about the when of the return, about the how of reconstruction and to make sure that these people who really need to have the ownership in the peace negotiations and the dialogues, how they will also be able to participate in what we hope will be a self-sustaining peace and indeed improved livelihoods for the future. Again, that hope, I think that's what keeps us there, and we're looking to the future, and we're also looking for that enabling environment which to date has not been there.

But I think the experience that we've had and many other groups in Darfur have had show that the resilience is there. I think now there is getting to be a sense from many of the groups there, who may have taken one side or another in the war, that they've had enough and they're looking for some alternatives. So maybe there's a glimmer of hope there as well.

Let me stop, and we'll go to the questions, Beth.

MS. FERRIS: Well, thanks to all three of you for your thought-provoking comments.

(Applause)

MS. FERRIS: I thought it was quite interesting that the two people speaking directly from the humanitarian experience in the camps were a

bit more optimistic than you were, Colin, in looking at the larger political picture.

We have time for questions. As I mentioned, Gonzalo will have to leave here at about 3:15 or 3:20, so if you want to direct your questions to him first.

Yes, please. Someone will bring you a mic and, if you could, identify yourself.

QUESTIONER: I'm Susan Cornwell with Reuters.

Mr. Vargas-Llosa, I was wondering what you think, what's the fate of the refugees in Darfur now following the events in Chad? How do you think they are affected by the events in Chad a little more specifically?

Also, do you agree with I think it was something that Colin referred to and there's a lot of talk about that the Chad rebels were put up to it by Sudan to try to stymie the E.U. deployment. Is that, in fact, your assessment?

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: Well, on the second question, if you forgive me, I think I will pass. Those kinds of political speculations, I think are probably --

MS. FERRIS: There are limits to the humanitarian organizations.

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: Yes. I think that one I'll skip if you don't mind.

On the first one, yes, unfortunately, there is evidently an impact. As

I think Beth mentioned, in eastern Chad, there's about 250,000 refugees from Darfur, another 180,000 IDPs from Chad and, of course, also some refugees, I think 50,000 if I'm not wrong, from CAR.

Because of the situation over the past few days, UNHCR and I believe many of our partners had to leave Guereda. At least most of the staff had to leave Guereda. There was also a relocation, not complete but substantive relocation from Abeche which is the main field office from where we manage the aid to the refugees and the IDPs and, of course, in the capital, there's been a very large evacuation of aid personnel.

I believe UNHCR itself, I think it's only our representative. So, not everybody, not the whole aid community has evidently left. Many of our courageous local staff have stayed in order to maintain at least some level of assistance to the refugees and IDPs. But evidently if you have many, many of the internationals leaving the east and you have a big vacuum in the capital where many things are directed and guided from, this evidently has an impact.

We, obviously, don't know what will happen in the next few days. Should this situation continue, the longer it takes for our staff to go back to the east, the more difficult it will be for the refugees and for the IDPs. So I think our hope is that the situation gets back to normal as soon as possible.

In the meantime, we have another 20,000 refugees in Cameroon,

as I mentioned. UNHCR and our NGO partners and some of our sister agencies, fortunately, have been able to get to Kousseri very quickly. Already, there is staff there. There are convoys on the way. Ourselves, we'll also be airlifting supplies from Dubai in the next two or three days, and then I understand that the idea is to move the refugees from the border, about 30 kilometers inland, for safety reasons but also because there's apparently a large campsite about 30 kilometers away from the border which has a good capacity.

So we'll have to see what happen in the next few days but just to answer your question in short, yes, it has. The fighting has had a negative impact on the refugees and IDPs in eastern Chad and has created 20,000 new refugees.

MS. FERRIS: Thank you, Gonzalo.

Yes.

QUESTIONER: Hi. I'm Kathy Stottaker from the International Fund for Agricultural Development. This really is for any of the panelists.

Regarding food security and the future of building up this region, what are -- I mean, obviously, it's difficult to think about really rebuilding right now when there are so many humanitarian problems in the moment, but what are really going to be maybe the top three, if you can narrow it down, three things that are really going to be integral for rebuilding this region?

MS. FERRIS: Thank you.

Panelists, top three things that would help food security in the longer term? Peace, obviously, but.

MR. MILLER: I'll kick it off. I think number one -- and I think this is true and this would be true in many parts of Africa -- would be a very serious and well funded program to deal with the collapse of pastoral livelihood systems. There are a number of fault lines in Darfur that Khartoum has exploited in this conflict, but I think none bigger than the fault line between settled farmers and pastoralists.

We are seeing pastoralists' livelihoods collapsing in Ethiopia. The Ogaden, that is what that's about. We're seeing it happen in Niger. That's why there is a civil war in Niger because the Tuareg can't practice their livelihoods. Until that's dealt with on a much grander scale, yes, it's happening in Chad, and in 2008 the U.S. Government allocated \$200,000 in development assistance for Chad -- not going to get it done.

So if we're serious about dealing with root causes, I think looking at pastoral livelihoods is top of the list.

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: I would really second that. I think it's critical. I think also whether it's climate change, whether it's too many cattle or too many animals in certain cases or the disposition of bore holes or others, it is a neglected area and also the intersection of sedentarians or agriculturalists and the ways in which those different communities in the

past have worked out some of their conflicts. I think those are certainly key elements to this part of Africa.

I would also say that, again, the way in which peace negotiations and the way in which different communities can participate in planning for reconstruction, the transparency of the resources that go into aid projects are also going to be critical elements for those food security projects to succeed. We've seen many times, many of us who have worked in Africa or anywhere else where there is a lack of ownership, where it isn't clear who is participating in planning the project as well as who benefits, that those projects will be destined for failure.

But I would, again, underline that both the pastoralist systems themselves, which are under stress because of various reasons including perhaps climate change, as well as the way in which those systems intersect with people who farm for a living, those would be a critical elements. I would also say that it's not just about donor coordination. It's also about rethinking some of the ways in which we go about providing technical assistance.

MS. FERRIS: Thank you.

Other questions? Yes, please.

QUESTIONER: Good afternoon. My name is Charles Fornier. I am the representative of the Sudanese Liberation Movement in Washington, D.C. I'm working for Hadul Wiedanul. I have a question,

actually, to Mr. Gonzalo Vargos-Llosa.

Is your call for a large involvement of the Sudanese police, an implicit recognition of the future failure of UNAMID?

Thank you.

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: I'm sorry.

MS. FERRIS: Could you repeat your question, please.

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: I'm terribly sorry.

QUESTIONER: Is your call for larger involvement of the Sudanese Government in a situation they helped to create an implicit recognition of the future failure of UNAMID?

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: No, not at all. You know when you operate on the ground, when you have a humanitarian operation, you have to be very practical. You have to be principled, but I think you have to be practical.

All of us who are operating in Sudan are doing it with the consent of the Sudanese Government. Some people may not like the Sudanese Government, but it is a government. It's a recognized government, and we have to work with it. We're there, if not at their invitation, certainly with their consent.

The Government of Sudan is our major counterpart. It's not our only counterpart. We work with NGOs. We work with donors. We work with a whole range of partners, but our main partner in Sudan is the

Sudanese Government.

The primary responsibility for managing the aid operation is not with us. It's with the Sudanese Government whether we like it or not. So we have to work with them. It's not always an easy relationship. I think that's no secret.

I would say that my own experience from the three months that I spent there and where I visited, many, many communities and many, many IDP sites is that while I think at the central level the messages from the government and the positions taken by the government can often be perceived as being rather confrontational and difficult vis-à-vis the aid actors, I found personally that at least at the grassroots level -- especially the further away you get from the center -- I met many, many government officials and officials specifically dealing with the humanitarian side from the Humanitarian Aid Commission. The sense I got and I think the sense that my colleagues have is that in most cases, they are well meaning and they would like to help.

Why? Because they are not so much in the political game. The HAC officials who are in the deep field, they face the same problems that we do. They're in the middle of a community. The community comes to them all the time, saying: I have a water problem. I have an education problem. I have a sanitation problem.

They are there alone. Very often, it's just one HAC official. They're

facing this huge crowd which is demanding things from them, and they are desperate to be able to respond in some way. In many cases, of course, these officials come from those communities. They're not all being dispatched from Khartoum.

So the level of cooperation from the government, certainly at the grassroots level, it's certainly not perfect. It's difficult, but it is not, I would certainly not describe it as purely negative. In any case, they have the main responsibility, and so we have to work with them.

On the specific question of the police, security is, of course, predominantly a state responsibility. Whether there's not enough police because the Sudanese Government is spending the money on something else or has another priority, again, that's not certainly for us to speculate.

But what I can say, as I said in the beginning, is that it's obvious that there is not enough security. There is not enough police, and the police that are there do not have vehicles, do not even have motorcycles. They don't even have, in many cases, bicycles. Some of them, they ask you, can you at least buy me bicycles?

Now whether the Government of Sudan should be doing more, we do, we constantly advocate that they should be doing more. They should be putting in more police and more security, but again that's also not mutually exclusive to UNAMID. I mean let's remember that UNAMID is not there to replace the Government of Sudan. It's there to fill a gap that

exists but certainly not to replace the government. So, a strengthening of the police presence in IDP camps is perfectly compatible with a UNAMID presence.

We're certainly not, by calling for a strengthening of the police in the IDP camps, we're not suggesting that we think UNAMID will never arrive. Yes, there is a delay. Yes, it's very unfortunate. I think something which I'm not sure if Colin mentioned. I think that there is a serious risk because of the inability of UNAMID to get there on time and to get there in the numbers that it should, that when it arrives it could face a serious backlash from the population in general.

I think all of us who have been in Darfur have seen it in the case of AMIS. I mean a very difficult situation. You go around some of the IDP camps, and AMIS has been chased out from many IDP camps. Even in many cases, they've had their posts there burnt and they've had to flee and escape because of the frustration of the IDPs who feel that AMIS has not fulfilled this mandate, has not been able to protect them. Therefore, they are attacked. They are not trusted.

If UNAMID takes much longer to arrive and doesn't arrive in the numbers that it should, we could see the same effect which I think would be disastrous for all of us.

MS. FERRIS: Thank you.

Yes, please.

QUESTIONER: Hi. I'm Scott Staten from Oxfam.

Gonzalo, I have a question. You mentioned that there were fifteen to twenty thousand returnees in West Darfur. I wonder if you could tell us why they have returned because when you read the news about West Darfur, you hear it's the most volatile area?

You hear about Jamaron, Geneina, the bombings of the Government of Chad outside Geneina, but then you're not hearing that there are fifteen to twenty thousand people returning in West Darfur. I was in Darfur in December as well, and there was no talk of returns at all where I was in the north and in the south. I'm wondering can you explain the phenomenon on why they've returned?

When I was there, people would return for a day or two to check the crops after the end of the rainy season.

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: Seasonal return.

QUESTIONER: But they would come back. Also, I heard in West Darfur, there was a growing food gap because of locust infestation. So I'm confused on why fifteen to twenty thousand people would come back.

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: First of all, I mean just to clarify, at this stage, none of us are promoting or encouraging return. It's obvious that the timing has not come. Hopefully, it will come one day and not in the too distant future, but that is not the case today. So, we are not encouraging or even facilitating return, and we're certainly not providing any kind of

incentives in the camps for people to go back and the overwhelming majority clearly don't want to go back.

But it is true that there are very small numbers, if you consider that in West Darfur you have 750,000, maybe 800,000 IDPs. If 20,000 or so have come back, it is still a very small number.

From the communities that I visited, most of those who had gone back had done it in a relatively, and I don't know what your experience is. The ones that I met, most of them had returned in a very specific timeframe which was in 2004, most of them. Then returns after that, I think that there's been certainly the experience, I mean in the service that we've done, then a major, major drop in the returns.

So the returns that have happened in most cases, there was fighting broke out in 2003. Then some people went back, and then that return movement has gone down considerably.

In the case -- Paul, correct me if I'm wrong -- in the communities around Kulbus that I visited, it was also a matter of the communities which had returned were not communities that had opposed the government. So there was, obviously, also some kind of whether you call it political or ethnic link. They felt safe, returning to the areas that they were returning. So that's also very specific.

But I don't know. Paul, what is your thought?

MR. MILLER: I don't have specific information about the time,

Scott. It's an excellent question.

Certainly over the past several months -- I'm not sure whether that would be the time -- the numbers I do have from our country program is at least in Sirba about 10,000 of the people that we're serving are classified as returns, but I think it wasn't in the past four or five months, certainly.

In terms of whether these returnees were from a particular political side, again, I'm not sure. I wouldn't say it would necessarily only be that the returnees are only those who might be from one side. That's not our information, but it's a complex situation. It varies from village from village as well as sometimes from cluster to cluster.

MS. FERRIS: Yes, please.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. I'm from the Embassy of Sudan.

Thank you very much. I really do appreciate the working of the humanitarian organizations in Sudan. We know they are working in very difficult circumstances, especially in Darfur. We do appreciate that, and we are ready to express our readiness to facilitate or to give any facilities you might need there. This is on the part of the Sudanese Government.

I think now there are around 14,000 U.N. and NGOs, in Sudan. They might correct me on the numbers. But they are doing a very, very tremendous job there. They are where they are needed.

I think the other vision from ENOUGH and the other activism is just easy to blame the government. It's very, very easy to do that. Sometimes

it's correct, but many times it's not because in Darfur we are serving a counterinsurgency and this is very difficult to deal with. Speaking of lack of political will is none, there is the political will to solve the problem, and we know the difficult circumstances of counterinsurgencies.

The United States, with all its might and its political will and they are not dealing properly with counterinsurgency.

I assure we are doing our best, but these are the circumstances. Sanctions and outside solutions are not going to work. They never work, and they are not going to work in Sudan. Outside solutions, when you are proposing that we come up with a solution to the problem, I assure you the problem is very complex. Speaking at the same time with ownership of the political process and imposing solutions from outside, they are not going to work.

We know that there are problems. We are ready to deal with them. We express our will, political will and security will to deal with the crisis in Darfur.

We just need from the activism here. We do see them in Darfur on the ground. They are all there. They are complicating the situation. We just need them to concentrate more on the political process. Just imposing outside solutions are not going to work.

Thank you.

MS. FERRIS: Thank you very much.

Next question? Yes.

QUESTIONER: Actually, I have two questions for Colin.

MS. FERRIS: Could you identify yourself?

QUESTIONER: Oh, sorry. I'm John Boonstra from the Better World Campaign.

My first question is whether you think there's any possibility that the Sudanese-supported Chadian rebel attacks on N'Djamena could possibly backfire and galvanize the Security Council and France to deploy the E.U. force more rapidly and possibly even UNAMID? I'm not hopeful, but I'm wondering what you think.

And my second question is how to resolve what seems like a catch-22 in that troop-contributing countries are reluctant to contribute logistics and troops when the mission seems doomed to failure because of intransigence and manipulation by the Sudanese government, but in order for the Sudanese government to take UNAMID seriously, we need to have troop contributing countries demonstrating that it's a credible threat. Thank you.

MS. FERRIS: Colin, I think that's probably for you.

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: Yeah, well both very good questions.

MS. FERRIS: And then I'd like to ask those of you who have specific questions for Gonzalo, if we could take those as he does have to leave shortly.

MR. THOMAS-JENSON: First question, the possibility that the attacks could backfire and sort of galvanize the international community. Given what we've seen so far, I'm not hopeful. You know, the scenario plays out one way or the other, either, you know, Deby with I think now much more help from the French now that they have the Security Council behind them and the AU. Deby and the French and the Sudanese rebels who are also helping Deby drive these guys back, you know, they regroup, and the cycle of violence continues in Chad again, and maybe at that point Deby says, okay, you know, you come on in.

I think Europeans are thinking -- they're already not happy about EUFOR. The European Union, this was crammed politically down their throats by the French, and then they realized what they had swallowed only after -- and so you've seen the slowness with which the contributions have come from countries other than France.

I mean France was trying to get other countries to donate the helicopters, and finally they were like, okay, we'll just do it ourselves. So I'm not hopeful that -- I mean I think -- the other scenario is, Deby gets knocked off, and then you've got three guys sitting in N'Djamena who hate each other, who don't agree on anything, and who have said publicly that they would actually attack French troops that got in their way, and I don't think they're likely to then invite in UNAMID. And with the Security Council, I mean if you just look at the extremely weak language that was in the

Presidential statement, I mean, they refused to even identify Sudan of having any sort of hand in this. And I mean I've seen pictures of crates of weapons that have come, you know, from Sudan, I mean it's pretty obvious. Okay. So I'm not confident unfortunately.

I do think, you know, I think it's looking better for Deby, though, and I, you know, to be in a very awkward position of actually rooting for Idriss Deby, when he's one of the world's worst dictators, but in this case, I think him staying around is the best case scenario and a couple of bad ones, the least worst option, it's a catch-22.

The catch-22. I think, you know, it is a catch-22. And there are a lot of concerns with the amount of time that the UN is out there without having either the capacity or the will, I mean they've already been attacked. Like the AU, they're incapable of basic force protection, much less protecting civilians, and until they have that, they won't be taken seriously by anyone, even, a couple of guys with kalashnikovs, it doesn't even have to be the government. So I think in this case, my stop gap measure is if the United Nations Security Council is serious about UN peacekeeping, not just in Sudan, but writ large, member states, and I would exclude the U.S. from this, but I would say the French, the Brits, we know the Brits don't have many helicopters but they have got other stuff-- certainly the Chinese, if they're serious about it because they've got a ton of helicopters, should start

thinking about getting those assets on the ground very quickly, because a failure in Darfur is a much broader failure for UN peacekeeping in general.

I think it really is, because this mission is so high profile, and because the expectations are so high, and because this is a different kind of mission, I mean this isn't a peacekeeping mission in the sense that there's a peace agreement. The DPA was still born, the cease fire was violated by all sides since day one, I mean even MONUC in Congo is dealing with conflict, they're in a hot zone, but there's still a peace agreement, and they just had democratic elections, Sudan's something entirely different, and it's a test case for responsibility to protect, and there's a lot of sort of weight on this thing. And I think, you're right, it's a catch-22. The catch-22 is solved if the Security Council -- if the perm five really put their heads together and says we either do this or we deal with the inability to do -- the credibility of the UN is on the line, a watershed moment I think.

SPEAKER: So that basically means Great Britain and France?

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: No, I think the Chinese -- I don't think the Chinese are going to put combat helicopters in there, but it's not just combat helicopters, it's also tactical and strategic lift.

When the AU got attacked in Huscanita they had to wait 12 hours to get evacuated, by, wait for it, the government of Sudan. This is the capacity on the ground right now, and so if they don't at least reach sort of basic operational capacity in the next few months, I think we're dealing with a real

crisis for UN peacekeeping in general, and a real tragedy, not just for Darfur, but for anyone who has expectations that they can be protected in these types of situations.

MS. FERRIS: Thank you. Are there particular questions for Gonzalo, who may have to leave? Yes.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Matthew Ploker I'm with the Leadership Council for Human Rights. And this can really go to any of you, but you, as well, with the most recent ground experience. You spoke, in part, about the importance of making sure ownership of the reconciliation and peace process goes to the right people, goes to the victims of a lot of the crisis, and most of the victims, as several of you have mentioned, happen to be women. I was wondering if any of you can speak to any programs right now that are -- that you really either believe in or want to see further enacted that are sort of hoping to help or solve or alleviate any of the problems that specifically women in the Sudan and the Darfur are suffering?

The Leadership Council specifically is working on a program to alleviate the need of women to go out and sort of the wilderness, or to the less protected areas, although I know protection is scarce everywhere, in efforts to gather firewood, and I was wondering if you could speak to any programs, anything related to that. Thank you.

MS. FERRIS: Programs for women, and particularly around firewood collection.

MR. MILLER: Well, just the one thing I would say is, again, in a very difficult environment to carry out protection, one of the things that CRS and other organizations are doing is the kinds of cook stoves that require less firewood, so that's one very practical thing. Obviously, the kind of civilian protection that Colin just referred to and other kinds of protection are also, you know, really things that haven't happened yet. But let me hand this over to Gonzalo, as he may have some other ways of addressing the question.

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: Well, one of the initiatives that was launched, I mean -- it's not there, although it's certainly had a very limited impact. And again, because of resource constraints, I mean in a number of IDP sites there were initiatives launched working together both with the police and with AMIS to provide -- to activate some kind of patrol on certain days and at certain times, exactly to try to provide some kind of protection for women going out to find firewood.

In some of the places that I visited, it had helped to reduce some of the violence; in many others, unfortunately not, because simply the police, you know, had not sustained, had not been able to sustain for lack of resources the patrols.

I arrived one week after Haskanita, where the AMIS patrols had not stopped completely but certainly had decreased significantly. It was clear that they didn't want to take risk, they wanted to minimize the possibility of further casualties, but also apart from that, as you know, they were broke.

They don't have resources in many cases to pay their soldiers. Because of a combination of factors, in many of places I visited, the AMIS patrols had really decreased very much, and some of it, you know, very worthwhile initiatives to have these patrols to protect women have unfortunately not been sustained.

There are, Paul mentioned mentioned of looking for alternative ways so that women have to go out less, UNHCR together with a number of NGO's have also set up quite a few women centers, what they call women centers. Unfortunately, again, for lack of funding not all over the place.

But I visited quite a number of them, for example, some run by the US and by Save the Children children, which provide a space for women to be together, to have some kind of, again, relative protection, because those women centers are not guarded -- not guarded by us, but they do provide at least some kind of space for women to come to us, it's much more difficult, as you know, for cultural reasons and so on, for us to walk into houses and find out about issues of domestic violence. So these centers I think are very interesting. They also combine income generation activities. I found them quite interesting, although there are not enough of them because of a lack of funding. But also at the end of the day, they can only have a relative impact I mean there is no overall security in the region, in the rural villages, or in the IDP camps, what we can do as humanitarians is, unfortunately, very limited. Another part of course is advocacy I think that if there is one issue that has

got quite a lot of exposure, it's certainly the violence against women. I think all of us have been talking about this quite loudly.

MS. FERRIS: And next I think is the experiences within Darfur have led many organizations to make the priority of firewood collection, fuel collection. So the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which is all the UN agencies working on humanitarian issues have set up a special high powered task force to say how can we make this easy so that women don't get raped when they go out to collect wood for their stoves. Final question for Gonzalo.

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: Can I add one thing just on including women in the bigger process? I mean just in terms of work that's being done, I would look at the Initiative for Inclusive Security, which is the former Women Waging Peace-- which is inclusive security, Swanee Hunt's shop. They've done a lot of work on how to incorporate women into not just peace process in Sudan, but more broadly. You know, I think, when you're thinking about a peace process and what it would look like for Darfur, I think, you know, you've got to expand the pool of stakeholders at the table, and then within that pool, I mean to me, it doesn't, you know, it doesn't make sense to just have women at the table. You want to have women as part of, you know, groups of stakeholders.

And so whether it's civil society groups, IDP's, I mean the amazing thing about these IDP communities which my colleagues and I'm sure can

expand upon greatly if we had time, was the degree to which they have developed leadership structures within IDP camps and organizations, and the degree with which those organizations are largely headed by women.

And so, you know, bringing a group like that as a party to peace talks, when it's really their future that we're discussing, is critical. But I would look at the work that they've done. They've done quite a bit.

MS. FERRIS: Thank you. Gonzalo is now going to discreetly slip out from the front of the room, but thank you very much, Gonzalo, and good luck with your work.

MR. VARGAS-LLOSA: Thank you.

MS. FERRIS: You're encouraged to remain. We still have two speakers who can answer any question that you'd like to direct at them. Yes, please.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Caitlin (inaudible) and I'm from USA for UNHCR, and my question relates to you. You were talking about the need to make the Khartoum government understand that it cannot act with impunity, that the international government really needs to act on that. And you mentioned sanctions as one of the ways in which to do that. And I was wondering what the possible effect would be of sanctions on the Khartoum government as far as the aid operations within the country go, because we are there with their, for lack of a better word, blessing, you know, so how would that effect that operation?

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: You know, it's a very good question, and sanctions are tricky because you want to maximize impact and minimize the difficulties that you're going to cause for the objective that you're trying to obtain.

I think with Sudan it's pretty clear, I mean essentially the regime is controlled by a small cabal in Khartoum. We know who they are, we know what they're responsible for in large part. The U.S. certainly has a lot of information on what various Sudanese officials are responsible for in Darfur. And so I think building a case for targeted sanctions against individuals, not the government of Sudan, but individuals who have overseas accounts, who have children that study abroad who can be shipped back, who like to go to Harrod's on occasion, I mean it's, you know, who get medical treatment in Europe, who shop in Dubai, so you can start to put the squeeze and make life uncomfortable for people that, until now, are very comfortable and see no reason to stop doing what they're doing.

So I think it's the difference between -- I mean and that said, I mean, you know, the U.S. government has, you know, tighter sanctions on Sudan than it does on Iran, so there's very little more the U.S. unilaterally can do at this point.

It really comes down to multi lateral sanctions, getting other countries to start thinking about some of the measures that the U.S. has taken. And it was interesting, the point came up about supporting police. I think if the U.S.

couldn't do that, it would be a violation of U.S. sanctions if the U.S. reported to the like police training, it would be an OFAC violation, and some USAID official would be summoned to Treasury to pay a million dollar fine. --

MR. MILLER: We can't buy a cup of coffee for Sudanese officials.

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: Yeah; so I mean it's a tricky, sanctions do effect operations on the ground in a very profound way, but I think with Khartoum because of the nature of the regime we're dealing with, it's so tightly controlled by people, we can start to, you know, really put the squeeze on individuals.

MS. FERRIS: Next question, yes. The microphone is coming.

MS. ROBINETTE: Katie Robinette Council on Foreign Relations. I was wondering if you could say a little bit more about how a peace agreement in Darfur can and should be tied to the CPA in the north/south peace agreement? I've actually heard some Darfurians saying that the two should be completely not tied to each other and it would be a disservice to Darfurians if they were, it was brought up in that whole discussion.

MS. FERRIS: Thank you.

Mr. THOMAS-JENSEN: Big question, okay. No, it's a big question and I think it's, in many ways, it's the \$64,000 question, you know, because you can't -- how do you have a peace agreement that's going to fit in with the CPA? Basically the aspects of the deal that are really going to be scrutinized with respect of the CPA are the power sharing piece. And I think

what has to be made clear in power sharing negotiations is that the north/south, the numbers that were set was 27 percent in the south and 51 in the north, 52. The south numbers, that's sacrosanct we're not playing with that, we're playing with the numbers in the north. And the idea is that if you - - the CPA -- the idea of the CPA was that you resolve the conflict in Sudan by creating the sort of democratic -- by creating a partnership between the NCP in the north and the SPLA in the south, and then through a transition, through elections, you eventually get a more representative central government.

But I think the problem -- and the CPA is, you know, a landmark deal and I think it has to be what anything is measured against. But what the CPA did is, it essentially looked at Sudan through a north/south lens as opposed to a center/periphery lens, and that's why Darfur is still a problem, and why the east is a problem, and even Nubia is, you know, why there's active conflict there.

So it's dealing with the power sharing and the wealth sharing in the north that I think is, you know, that's what they have to work, and that's where you're going to have to get concessions from the National Congress Party that's the bottom line. And what else? I mean I think the other issues on the table really are compensation questions. Again, you know, southerners are going to have a stake in that because I think money for compensation is certainly going to come out of central government coffers

but in this, you know, relative to the type of oil revenues that are coming in, it's not -- the Darfurians are not really asking for a whole lot of money.

And then the other issues are, you know, really disarmament and demobilization. I mean I think those are independent. The other thing I would add is, on the question of, you know, returning to one region, which is a demand that most of the rebel groups share, they want to eliminate the three states and go back to a single region.

You know, it was something that, in Abuja the SPLA, SPLN, excuse me, representatives there were opposed to that on the notion that, you know, Sudan is -- we are where we are, let's sort of move on and not go back to old ways.

I think that might be one in which the SPLN might have to budge a little bit, because I think most Darfurians that I've spoken with really want that single region. The three states didn't do anything for anybody and really I think complicated matters now in terms of putting a peace agreement together on the power-sharing side, so a rambling answer to a very difficult question.

MS. FERRIS: Yes, please, sir.

SPEAKER: My name is (inaudible) China has been blamed for their rule in the Sudan human rights crisis, but they have been trying to do something to improve their image so I want to know how you comment on

China's new effort and any suggestion to the Chinese government to help solve this problem. Thank you.

Mr. THOMAS-JENSEN: I think we've seen a shift in China, but a slight shift, and it's a result principally of the public relations mess that the Olympics could be if activists had their way and turn it into the genocide Olympics. I mean the Olympics, the 2008 Olympics are the international coming out party for China, and I think they're very sensitive about any disruption about anything that would taint that, and so we're seeing the sort of pressures, resulting in appointing an envoy.

I think there was some quiet discussion behind the scenes that led to the Sudanese acquiescence on the hybrid. But we haven't seen the type of shift I think that's really going to create a change in behavior in Khartoum and it's going to, you know, allow a settlement to the conflict. I mean my suggestions would be for the Chinese, I think they really need to start thinking about kind of longer term interests in Sudan, because the Sudanese government plays a very tactical game, it's about survival and staying in power. And China has very long term interest in Sudan. And it's getting now I believe seven percent of its oil from Sudan. That's expected to grow as more of the fields come online. And instability and the possible resumption of hostilities between north and south, you know, is something that I think the Chinese have to think very seriously about how that will effect their interests.

What they should be specifically, I think one I mentioned that I think they should really support the hybrid as much as possible with military assets, even if it's just supplying the air frames, the helicopters, and we can contract out the crews to run them or find, you know, find qualified crews from other countries, but the actual hardware is one.

I think, two, on the peace process, you know, I think this is an area where I think many of us would very much like to see more Chinese involvement. This was, you know, in Abuja, I mean Abuja was a disaster for a lot of reasons, but, you know, one of them was, you know, you had so many international observers there that it was this sort of cacophony of voices that resulted in really nothing, no leverage being used on either the rebels or the government. The rebels at the end, the U.S. did go over and twist Minni's arm and threatened them with the ICC and get them to sign the deal, but to actually have a dedicated team of diplomats from countries like China, like the U.S., and we have a new envoy, which I think is good, the French who have leverage, the UK and others, to actually have a real field-based small cohesive team working on the peace process and doing the shuttle diplomacy in the trenches, the type of diplomacy, frankly, that just led to a peace deal in the Congo, which, you know, that's how it's done, folks, you go out and you talk to people that are really nasty and unsavory and you go where they are and you stick stuff in front of their face and then, voila, you get a deal, I think that's part of it.

The last piece I think is that China has to start thinking seriously about what kind of punitive action would it support through the Security Council, what type of targeted sanctions. I mean this is not something that the Chinese usually go for. But when weighed against longer term interests, I mean, look, you know, these guys are not going to be around forever, and if, you know, a little tough love from the Security Council to get the Sudanese government to start living up to its obligations, I think is in China's interest, it's in their interest, it's in their long term interest. So those would be the three things I think that force the process and pushing on the sanctions.

MR. MILLER: I won't comment on China and Sudan, but I will say that the emergence or the revelation, maybe it's not a revelation to many that China is increasing its interest in Africa has been greeted by some as something that would be entirely negative in terms of human rights or good governance.

And I think the picture that's emerging is a little bit more nuanced, and frankly, I think the Chinese are in Africa for the long term. Whether they're seeing their long term interest or not is a question David Shinn at George Washington University, just down the street here, he had a recent trip to Africa with a Mandarin speaking colleague and started to speak with some Chinese expatriate communities, and again, a different image emerges of China in Africa.

So I think many of us are looking at this, whether it's Zambia, Angola, or many other places, so again, I think we often joke, a question asked to me in a class I was teaching, you know, why doesn't the international community ask, and I always answer, well, what's the phone number for the international community, and again, there isn't one, but if there's a conference call, then I think Beijing has to be on it, and I think, in many ways, there is a process of nuancing of the position and both in Sudan and other places, and I think the other envoys not only have to recognize this, but they're looking for ways to be more inclusive, and that's not just about Sudan.

SPEAKER: I mean it's interesting, because I think just -- I mean Africa is on -- it's certainly getting on the U.S./China bilateral agenda, it's not at the top, but I think those discussions are often occurring in New York, at the Security Council.

I don't see, certainly when I was at AID, and that was a few years ago, but, you know, when we started, you know, we talked a lot about China, and, you know, we wouldn't even know who to call. I mean who do you call in Beijing to talk about, we want to build a dam in Uganda and we want to collaborate on a funding opportunity? I don't think we're there yet in terms of having created those ties, you know. You could do it with the Dutch, and you could do it with the Germans, but I think there's a lot of kind of bureaucratic sort of hand holding that has to take place in order to kind of

bring China into the fold in terms of how we sort of collaborate and cooperate more on kind of the constructive work that China is doing, because some of it is very constructive.

I mean they're doing a lot of things that, frankly, you know, the U.S. and the Europeans and other donors have been incapable of doing for the past four years, so I mean how do you leverage that into something positive.

SPEAKER: Like what, can you give an example?

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: Like very quickly building roads in places that need them. I mean the one they built in the Great Lakes -- not in Sudan, I'm thinking Africa at large. I mean Sudan I think is a different story.

But they've certainly -- the capacities they have -- I mean it's the efficiency they have in moving money I think is something that many Africans are finding, you know, dramatically different from dealing with USAID or DfID or these other donors who constantly make demands, and the Chinese just write a check, and, you know, it's just a different, you know, things get done more quickly.

MS. FERRIS: Burning final questions? Yes, please.

SPEAKER: (inaudible), GOSS Mission Office. I have a comment and then a question about you characterizing the CPA. I think you correctly characterized it as a solution that would focus more on north/south. But just my comment about that is, it did not begin that way, it began as the center/periphery.

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: Absolutely.

SPEAKER: But Khartoum basically pushed during negotiations to make it a north/south deal.

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: Yeah.

SPEAKER: What you said about the solution for or finding peace process or a solution for Darfur, a political solution for Darfur will mean the power sharing and the concession. But in the absence of that, what do you think is the role of the elections in terms of being a tool for democratizing Sudan and for changing that, you know, power sharing formula, what is the role of the election now?

And secondly, you know, we are looking at stopping Darfur but there is no focus on what's happening -- focus on the election or preparing for the elections. It is set for July 2009. So could we, in terms of seeking for a solution, could we kind of shift from just focusing on, okay, well, we want a peace process, it's not happening, we're trying to twist arms, but how about using and utilizing this process that is in the Constitution, that is in the CPA that could possibly be, you know, a way forward?

Mr. THOMAS-JENSEN: Yeah; I mean it's a great point, and I think it's -- I mean we're getting to the point in time at which a power sharing deal for Darfur just doesn't make any sense, you just say, okay, you want power sharing, run in the election and focus on that.

I mean -- and I think again, the notion that we're going to be able to get the rebels together, have them negotiate a deal with Khartoum that plays out -- and then they take their places, and then -- I mean I think we've seen how little progress there's been on implementation of the CPA across the board, and it's a combination of a lot of factors, not least of which is that a lot of the energies that would have gone toward CPA implementation have been focused on Darfur.

And we're seeing I think now certainly that's shifting a bit. On the peace front, I think it's -- perhaps it's just that, it's that the message now from the mediation team and from donors needs to be, okay, you know, guys, we've waited for you to get your act together long enough, we're not working on power sharing anymore, get ready to run for the election, we'll focus on compensation, this, that, and the other, and it does -- that would do a couple of things. I mean it would eliminate or at least reduce the grip that the armed groups have over the peace talks, because if you're, you know, if you actually then say, you know, power sharing, you know, we have elections, get ready for those, suddenly I think it does -- it probably would open up more space for other stakeholders to come in, so I mean it might be something to consider, you know, just taking that off the table now. What do you think? You're the GOSS let's hear it.

SPEAKER: Well, I personally think that it just -- we have a lot of focus on how we could change the situation from the outside.

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: Yeah.

SPEAKER: And there is not -- knowing that any solution that is imposed, you know, doesn't have root, it's not taking root, so how about supporting elements of change or utilizing some tools that are already there, like the election.

Mr. THOMAS-JENSEN: Yeah.

SPEAKER: So, to me, we need to kind of find a way to shift some of the support. Humanitarian aid is necessary. We need -- what's happening in Darfur is bad, but also, we need to be visionaries and see how we could, you know, shift the support in a way to get us towards a solution, and I think that -- my appeal is to the international community, to the activists, to bring this up instead of, you know, focusing on the doom and gloom, to focus somehow on the, you know, what is the solution, or what -- how could we support this process.

MR. THOMAS-JENSEN: Yeah, I strongly agree. I mean the war in the south, the scale of the devastation dwarfs what we've seen so far in Darfur. And, you know, there's a need for a real, you know, coming together, both, you know, in Sudan and externally to think about, you know, what is the end state now and what are the, you know, given the weak, you know, the international community and the Sudanese, you know, haven't moved the ball along very far yet on the CPA, what, you know, we've got 60 commissions or something, what are the five that have to get up and

running, and what are the benchmarks that we need to set, and what are the penalties if those aren't met, and for who, and when did they get lifted?

Because I think until you start sort of -- I mean the CPA is a very -- it's great, it's very complex, but I think that it's now -- we're stuck now in this sort of -- and getting to the sort of, okay, what are the five things that have to happen, I think that's critical that that's lined up with Darfur.

MS. FERRIS: I want to thank our panelists and all of you, it's Super Tuesday, and I think that one of the candidates when elected president will still be dealing with Darfur and the CPA, so perhaps this can be of assistance. Thank you all very much.

* * * * *