

## Iranian mission to Africa is bad news for the British

by Hussein al-Nadeem

Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's tour of Africa this month is turning the tables on British geopolitics in the region. Following on Turkish Prime Minister Ecmettin Erbakan's visit to Iran in August, during which he called for starting "a new era of regional relations" based on economic cooperation, Rafsanjani's diplomacy could go a long way toward ending the myriad British-instigated insurgencies and wars that have kept east Africa in turmoil. Rafsanjani and the moderate faction inside Iran realize that the only way Iran can survive as a modern nation-state, is to build economic relations based on major infrastructure projects and trade with the nations of the world, especially the Third World.

Most significant, from a strategic standpoint, was Iran's role in mediating a peace settlement, signed on Sept. 9, between Sudan and Uganda.

Rafsanjani was accompanied by a huge entourage of officials from three ministries and 300 businessmen. His itinerary included Sudan, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.

He started his tour in Kenya on Sept. 3. During the visit, Iranian and Kenyan officials signed a number of economic development agreements related to Iran's participation in infrastructural projects in Kenya, such as dam building, power plant development, building of new oil refineries, and rehabilitation of an old oil refinery in Mombasa, building petrochemical industries, and repairing roads. Iran will build a storage station for liquefied petroleum gas in the port of Mombasa. According to the agreements, Kenya is also to buy such Iranian products as tractors, agricultural machinery, telecommunication products, and minerals. Rafsanjani said in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi that "Iran is ready to establish transport and cultural links between the African nations and the newly independent republics of Central Asia."

During one of the last stops on his trip, in Zimbabwe, the Iranian President called for a new world order based on

justice, equality, national interests, independence, and safeguarding territorial integrity, the official Iranian daily *Ettela* reported on Sept. 12. Rafsanjani was speaking at a dinner hosted in his honor by Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe. He said that Iran stands ready to assist countries of the South in development and reconstruction projects.

### Breakthrough in Uganda-Sudan relations

Rafsanjani arrived in the Ugandan capital of Kampala on Sept. 5, and disclosed that he was willing to mediate in the conflict between Sudan and Uganda. Uganda, as *EIR* has documented, has been controlled by the British Overseas Development Office of Lady Lynda Chalker and the World Bank, and has been used as a base to launch a dirty British operation aimed at overthrowing the government of Sudan and dividing that country, through support for the south Sudanese separatist rebels, such as the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA). A Uganda-based United Nations "humanitarian" operation was put at the disposal of the SPLA, to continue the war which has devastated the southern region of Sudan.

All previous initiatives to settle the Sudan-Uganda dispute have failed, because the economic side of the issue was not addressed. The simple fact is, without economic development, there can be no peace, especially in Africa. The Iranians, fortunately, did not miss this point. During Rafsanjani's Uganda visit, Iranian and Ugandan officials signed seven major economic accords in the areas of oil, industry, building dams and infrastructure projects, agriculture, and trade. The Iranian president, who visited the Nile River, told reporters that "building a number of dams on the Nile can provide 10,000 megawatts of electricity for the region. This is a great wealth, and is more precious than hundreds of oil wells. In Iran, we have been building six major dams on the Karun River, and we have the expertise to assist the African nations

in this field.”

At a press conference held by Rafsanjani and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the Iranian President said: “If the African nations, since their independence, had exploited their wealth to build Africa, they would have become much stronger today. Stronger than China. The Chinese are not richer than the Africans. The difference is that the U.S. and Europe are not able to impose their will upon the Chinese people.”

On Sept. 8, the Iranian delegation landed in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. To the surprise of reporters and foreign officials, Ugandan Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Eriya Kategaya met the Iranian President’s airplane at Khartoum Airport. Before leaving Kampala for Khartoum, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Velayati announced that both Uganda and Sudan had accepted an Iranian plan for mediation to settle their differences.

The foreign ministers of Sudan, Iran, and Uganda met in Khartoum the same day, and on Sept. 9, a 12-point peace agreement was signed (see *Documentation*). Velayati revealed that secret talks among the three governments had already started three weeks before the date of the agreement.

The first thing the agreement will achieve is the elimination of the separatist groups and their backers from the UN and the non-governmental organizations operating in that region. It will allow stability and peace to prevail in southern Sudan, in order to bring development to that ravaged area. Iranian companies are already involved in projects for oil exploration in the south, and building power plants and building roads in various part of the country.

### **British plots preempted**

In the days preceding and during Rafsanjani’s tour of east Africa, the British-based and -controlled Sudanese opposition started a new assault against the government. Mohammed Osman al-Mirghani and Mansour Khalid, leaders of the Sudanese National Democratic Alliance, which was created by Baroness Caroline Cox at a June 1995 conference in the Eritrean capital of Asmara, and is financed by Cox’s Christian Solidarity International, held a number of meetings in London on Sept. 5-6, with British Labour and Conservative Members of Parliament, to discuss “ways of overthrowing the Khartoum regime,” according to a press release by the SNDA. After the meetings, the SNDA issued a communiqué saying that its forces inside Sudan “will escalate the fighting against the regime in the coming few days.” Similar meetings were held in Washington, with U.S. State Department officials, and with UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on Sept. 7-8. Boutros-Ghali promised to increase UN aid for southern Sudan.

These meetings coincided with a new round of destabilization of Sudan. Riots broke out in Khartoum that week, after agents of the opposition parties infiltrated peaceful demonstrations protesting a strike by bakers, which had resulted in a bread crisis. Three people were killed in the riots.

Then on Sept. 6, a gunman who was allegedly trying to

assassinate al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the leader of the Mahdia sect and Umma Party in Sudan, was overwhelmed at the Omdurman Mosque, and was beaten by followers of the Mahdi. London-based opposition groups immediately charged that “Hassan al-Turabi’s National Islamic Front” had plotted the assassination. Al-Turabi is the chairman of the elected Sudanese Parliament. By blaming the National Islamic Front for the assassination attempt, the London-based groups aimed at intensifying the civil war in Sudan.

One week before that incident, the Sudanese government revealed that it had uncovered a military insurgency led by 15 army officers with connections to the Asmara-based SNDA. The insurgency was attempting to take over or destroy Port Sudan, the most strategic Sudanese area. Meanwhile, the Eritrea-based armed wing of the SNDA continued its attacks on Sudanese army and police posts in eastern Sudan, close to the Eritrean border.

So far, the Iranian initiative has succeeded in thwarting these attempts to destabilize Sudan, but the enemies of the nation of Sudan are reorganizing their ranks. Most of the forces of the SPLA have moved to east Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea.

For the moment, the British plans aiming at destroying Sudan through an alliance among Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Uganda, and also through wrecking Kenyan-Sudanese and Egyptian-Sudanese relations, have been stalled. This gives the nations of east Africa the chance to rebuild their economies and resist the international oligarchy, which has for so long attempted to get its hands on the wealth and labor power of the African nations.

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## **Documentation**

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*From the Preamble of the Text of Agreement between Uganda and Sudan.*

To achieve these noble and sacred goals, the two sides agreed on the following:

1. Cease immediately all campaigns of official negative propaganda against the other, bilaterally or at any other fora;
2. Cease to provide territory to be used by belligerent forces against each other’s country;
3. Refrain from providing support directly or indirectly to belligerent forces opposed to each other’s government;
4. Disarm and dismantle bases and logistics centers of belligerent groups of either of the two countries in the territory of the other;
5. Remove all belligerent groups and all refugees away from common border to a distance not less than 100 kilometers from the common border;
6. Each country should enhance and facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees;

7. To ensure supervision over the implementation of this agreement, a verification team comprising representatives of the two sides, the Islamic Republic of Iran and, if they accept, the Republic of Malawi and the Libyan Arab Jumhuriya, shall be established in the capitals of the two countries. The team shall present all its reports on different areas to the ministerial committee.

8. The verification team shall determine the mode of operation to ensure rapid action. The necessary facilities, such as helicopters, for the speedy dispatch of the verification team to areas where military movements are reported, shall be provided by the government of the host countries;

9. Each of the two countries shall make available areas of their territory for the stationing of the verification team;

10. In case of receipt of reports on violation of understanding in the present agreement by either side, the verification team, in the presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Malawi and the Libyan Arab Jumhuriya, shall investigate and visit the reported location and present its report to the ministerial committee for [review] and decision. On its part, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Malawi, and the Libyan Arab Jumhuriya, shall assign two military delegations at the capitals of the two countries for the purposes of carrying out this function.

11. The foreign ministers of the three countries agreed to meet during the course of the 51st session of the United Na-

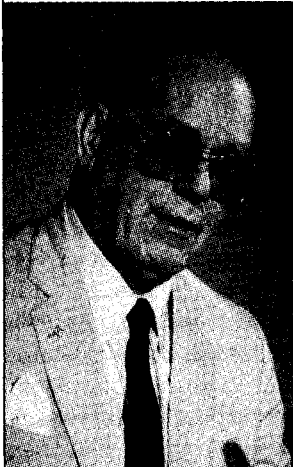
tions General Assembly in New York to review the latest situation and the progress of the implementation of this agreement. They further agreed to meet once every six months on a rotational basis in the capitals of the three countries, to review the progress of the implementation of the present agreement and to help expedite the process of normalization and cooperative relationship. The meeting after New York shall be held in December 1996 in the Republic of Uganda.

12. A three-member delegation from each of the three countries shall meet in the Islamic Republic of Iran on the 30th of September 1996 to determine mission status of the verification teams.

In conclusion, the agreement noted that the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of Uganda reiterated their resolve to implement the provisions of the present agreement and expressed their deep appreciation for the relentless and honest efforts of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In his tour of African nations in September 1996, in mediating, they expressed the hope that with the continuing cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, they will witness lasting peace and stability in the region.

*The agreement was signed on Sept. 9, 1996 in Khartoum, by Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Taha, Ugandan First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Eriya Kategaya, and Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.*

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