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SUDAN'S FOREIGN POLICY - DETERMINING FACTORS AND LIMITATIONS

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The Sudan is directly involved in the conflict in the Red Sea Region and in the Horn of Africa but one must not forget that the involvement of the Sudan, on account of its size, its geographical location and the size and ethnological structure of its population, <sup>also</sup> extends well beyond the issues at stake in the Red Sea region. The Sudan is both an African and an Arab state, which, particularly in recent years, has seen itself as acting as a link between the African and the Arab communities. The problems the Sudan is facing and the opportunities open to her, both arising out of the above-mentioned geo-political situation the Sudan finds herself in, cannot be seen as separate issues, but rather as very much interdependent.

┌ Maintenance of national unity and overcoming the problems of under-development may be regarded as permanent aims of any Sudanese government. In addition, one may discern four factors determining the Sudan's foreign policy:

a) The Sudan is, on account of its population and geographical location, an Afro-Arab country with 81% of its 16 million inhabitants speaking Arabic or Nilotic-Hamitic and the rest African languages. The concentration of the Islamic population in the West and the North and the African tribes in the South of the Sudan has meant that the country is deeply divided along these lines. The healing of this division has, of necessity, been one of the most important aims of Sudanese governments since independence. Thus, the Sudan's foreign and domestic policies have always had to take into account this uneasy co-existence of two so different ethnic groups with their vastly different levels of development. This, of course, means that the Sudan can never follow a one-sided course in her foreign policy favouring either the Arabs or the Africans.

b) The geo-political situation which the Sudan finds herself in is determined by the fact that it shares common borders with eight different countries: in the North there are the two Arab countries, Egypt and Libya, like the Sudan members of the Arab League; in the East the long border with Ethiopia ( and Eritrea ); in the West the land-locked states of Chad and the Central African Empire; and in the South Zaire, Uganda and Kenya. Since the borders are open, every political disturbance in

neighbouring countries, and particularly the flow of refugees often associated with such developments, has its effects on the Sudan. For this reason, one may assert that the Sudan, as the largest country in this region, indeed in Africa, is predestined to play a role as a conciliator and go-between, not only as far as the bilateral relations between neighbouring countries are concerned, but also as regards the hopes and aims of the Pan-Arabian and Pan-African movements.

c) The fact that the Sudan has about 800km of Red Sea coastline means that the land is also involved in the international rivalry for hegemony over the Red Sea. In this politically tense situation in the Horn of Africa, the interests of the Arab states Saudi Arabia, North Yemen, Egypt and Somalia, in creating an "Arab-controlled inland sea" clash with those of the Great Powers, the USA and USSR, with their respective allies or satellite countries. The degree of tension is further increased by an overlapping with the Middle East conflict in the form of Israel's strategically-determined interest in the Red Sea region, and by the problem of Djibouti. The revolutionary developments in Ethiopia since the imperial family was removed from power in 1974 together with the attempts at secession with the associated international implications ( Somalia's involvement and the Derg's turning to Marxism ) have meant that this socialist land has become the major threat to the political stability of the region. Nevertheless, it is still in the Sudan's interest, as far as her own security is concerned, to strive for a peaceful, neighbourly co-existence with Ethiopia.

d) The stability of every Sudanese government is dependent, not least, upon there being a noticeable improvement in the standard of living of the population. However, since such an improvement can only be achieved with great difficulty if the Sudan has to rely solely on her own means of production, the help of foreign partners is needed in order to develop the country's productive potential. Above all, help is required from those countries able to supply the Sudan with the necessary factors of production over a long period and on favourable terms, with suitable technical know-how in order to build up a diversified agricultural production in the Sudan, and who are able to offer a market for the Sudan's agricultural products. As far as these pre-conditions are concerned, one may consider the Arab oil-producing nations on the one hand and the Western industrial nations on the

other as particularly suitable partners.

Sudanese foreign policy has, since 1971, been characterised by a high degree of pragmatism. It is obvious that the foreign policy has been influenced to a large extent by the four, above-mentioned determining factors. The actual course of foreign policy which Numeiri's government has followed has also been determined by three additional factors: changes in price- and demand-levels on the world markets, the political circumstances and the clash of interests in the Middle East, and the conflict of interests within the Sudan itself.

## 1. The Stages of the Sudan's Foreign Policy since 1971

### 1.1 Internal Consolidation and Orientation towards the West

The priorities in foreign policy since independence in 1956 may be seen in the relations to four key states: Sudan's neighbour, Egypt; its former colonial master, England (nowadays, to the European Community); the Soviet Union - the "other side"; and finally, since 1973, Saudi Arabia, the wealthy and politically most influential Arab state.

When Colonel Numeiri and his Nasser-orientated fellow-officers seized power from the Party leaders in May 1969, they declared that the Sudan was to become a "democratic, socialist and block-free" country. However, the Pan-Arabian, pro-Nasser orientation of the new military regime was almost bound to bring them into conflict with three internal groups:

- approx. 4 million Africans in the South fighting for recognition of their cultural identity and the political autonomy of their region;
- approx. 3 million Arab Mahdists, Sudanese Muslims afraid of domination by Egypt and by the socialist military regime;
- the small but fanatical group of "Muslim Brothers" who saw their dream of an Islamic state organised on capitalist lines threatened by the seizure of power by "pro-communist" military and burocratic elements.

It was soon to be proved that it is hard to realise one's aims in foreign policy without a strong enough basis of power at home. On October 27, 1969, a Co-operation Treaty, the so-called "Tripoli Charta" was signed by Libya, Egypt and the Sudan, and was designed to lead on to a political union of the three countries. However, the opposition to this plan for a federation, at home and abroad, was so fierce that Numeiri was forced to declare in

November 1971 that the Sudan would not be joining the "Federation of Arab Republics" (by that time, Syria had been admitted, too) at that time. The cautious retreat from a Pan-Arabian course, implied by this statement, was a reaction to various conflicts threatening to destroy the stability of Numeiri's rule (the opposition of the Southern provinces, the Communists and others). In this politically delicate situation of being attacked by left-wing and conservative groups in his own country - with their respective support from abroad - Numeiri changed the direction of the Sudan's foreign policy, taking it onto a course which was finally to open the way for the present-day alliance with Egypt under Sadat and Saudi Arabia. The attempt to isolate the Communists, and, then, after the failure of the Communist Party's coup d'état, their persecution and virtual elimination were the pre-conditions for Numeiri's new course in foreign policy. An important result of the turbulent events of June 1971 as far as foreign policy was concerned was the deterioration of diplomatic relations with Eastern Europe, which was accused of having given

direct or indirect support to the attempted coup. The People's Republic of China profited directly from these developments and various co-operation treaties were signed with the Sudan during Numeiri's visit to Peking in August 1971.

The end of the "Nasser era" in the Sudan paved the way for a rapprochement with the West, which was documented by the renewal of diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany and the USA. After two turbulent years of government in which Numeiri pursued ambitions in the field of foreign policy regardless of their domestic conflict potential, Numeiri was now ready to make allowance for factors associated with a policy of national consolidation and economic development which were mentioned at the beginning. In actual fact, this meant getting to grips with three problems:

- creating a stable internal basis of power (the formation of a Unity Party);
- solving the conflict in the South of the Sudan; and
- looking for useful foreign partners in order to enlist their help in solving the country's economic and structural problems.

In view of the constructive role played by the Sudan, an Afro-Arab country, in the region, the so-called "Addis Ababa Treaty" (March 1972) must be regarded as one of Numeiri's most significant political successes. The bloody conflict between the North and

the South of the Sudan was the result, historically speaking, of a "colonisation" of the heavily discriminated South by a ruling class which regarded itself as culturally and politically superior. Although the granting of regional self-government to the South in 1972 has not been able to solve the economic and social problems of the Southern provinces, the compromise achieved at Addis Abeba did, however, serve as the necessary preparation for and the basis of a lasting reconciliation with the Sudan's African neighbours. All these countries were more or less involved in the Sudanese civil war as a result of the problem of the South Sudanese refugees (around 250,000 in 1970). The reconciliation of the Arabs and the Africans in the Sudan enabled the government in Khartoum to develop a policy towards Africa based on peaceful co-existence and mutual aid. The Addis Abeba Agreement not only made possible a large-scale return of refugees from the Sudan's African neighbours, but also brought with it schemes to rehabilitate refugees which were financed by the Arab oil-states and by Bonn and Washington.

A series of official visits Numeiri made to various African countries as well as those of African statesmen to Khartoum marked the beginning of this new era in the policy towards Africa which was characterised by the adherence to a policy of strict non-involvement in the internal affairs of neighbouring states, the determined search by this Afro-Arab country for areas of common ground with other black African states at a bilateral and OAU level, and the Sudan's role as a diplomatic go-between as far as Arab and African interests were concerned in issues such as the isolation of Israel and the condemnation of white minority rule in Southern Africa. One should mention Numeiri's successful role as a mediator between Egypt and Somalia and in the border conflict between Kenya and Somalia - successful, that is, until 1976 when a completely new regional conflict began to emerge as a result of developments in revolutionary Ethiopia. The recognised role of the Sudan as a bridge and mediator between the rich OPEC-states and the credit-hungry African states was expressed in particular by the fact that Khartoum was chosen to be the seat of the "Arab Bank for Economic Development" (ABEDA) which was formed in 1973. Numeiri's election to the chairmanship of the OAU (1978/79) further underlined the Sudan's role.

1.2 Relations with Ethiopia and Libya - between confrontation and reconciliation.

The political landscape in this region of Africa has changed dramatically during the seven years since the signing of the Addis Abeba Agreement. The following developments have presented the Sudan with new challenges in its domestic and foreign policy:

- the socialist revolution in Ethiopia, which began with the violent overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, induced Somalia to attempt to conquer the Ogaden (an attempt which failed) and finally resulted in a Friendship Treaty between the Derg and the Soviet Union;
- the increases in the price of oil which the OPEC-States have been forcing through since 1973 and which have resulted in the strict Muslim state of Saudi Arabia becoming the leading financial power and political force in the Near East;
- Sadat's Israeli-Egyptian peace initiative, based on the Camp David talks, with the resultant split within the Arab ranks into supporters and opponents of Sadat;
- the overthrow of Idi Amin's regime of terror in Uganda at the start of 1979 with the help of Tanzanian troops which led to new refugee problems in the South of the Sudan.

Of all the disputes associated with Sudanese foreign policy, the conflict with Libya's ruler, Gaddafi, has, up to now, proved to be the most dangerous for Numeiri's regime. From 1974 onwards, Libya granted political asylum to Numeiri's opponents, the "National Front" led by the exiled head of the Ansar sect, Sadik al-Mahdi, and worked for the overthrow of the Numeiri regime. Gaddafi had two reasons for wanting Numeiri's removal: on the one hand, Numeiri's refusal to support Gaddafi's wild ideas of a Pan-Arabian federation under Libya's leadership; on the other hand, the close co-operation between Sadat and Numeiri who, as Presidents of the two Arab countries with the largest populations and the weakest finances favoured a pro-Western, anti-Soviet foreign policy.

Libya's hostility towards the Sudan provoked the most serious crisis which Numeiri had had to face since the failure of the left-wing coup in June 1971 (crushed, incidentally, with Gaddafi's help): the attempted coup in Khartoum in July 1976, which was crushed with considerable loss of life. This attempted coup was launched at the instigation of Sadik al-Mahdi and with Gaddafi's support, both politically and as far as the necessary hardware was concerned. Ninety-eight of those involved in the attempted coup, armed Ansar supporters who had invaded from Libya,

are said to have been executed immediately. Four hundred people died during street-fighting in Khartoum. From his exile in Britain, Sadik al-Mahdi admitted responsibility for the attempted coup and made no secret of the fact that Gaddafi had supported him (cf. The Middle East, Dec. 1977, p. 34-41)

Whereas a rapprochement took place between the Sudan and Libya in May 1979, the confrontation between the Numeiri regime and the Sudan's eastern neighbours, Ethiopia, has been getting steadily worse since 1974. The new policy of alliances followed by Mengistu Haile Maryam and the intensification of Ethiopia's relations with the Soviet Union since 1977 have been one reason for this deterioration, the escalation of the military operations by the central government against the Eritreans another.

President Numeiri, who had to deal with a separatist movement within the Sudan himself, had been trying from 1973 onwards to find a political solution to the Eritrea conflict. During the 14th OAU Summit Conference in Libreville, Gabon, Numeiri accused Mengistu of having murdered the Generals Andom and Benti who had been attempting, with the help of the Sudan, to find a political solution to the conflict. Furthermore, he accused the military regime in Addis Abeba of having established, with Libyan and Soviet assistance, training camps for Sudanese dissident groups and mercenaries to prepare them for actions against the Sudan. In the question of Eritrea, Numeiri supported the Eritrean Liberation Movement's demand for secession from Ethiopia and the right to self-determination: " The Sudan does not accept and cannot support the assertion that the national unity of a country must be maintained, regardless of the price which the population of that country has to pay, especially if the undesirable consequences of this situation affect other countries as well" (Sudanow, Khartoum, August 1977, s.10-11).

In spite of these attacks on Ethiopia, the Sudan has since then been attempting to establish a situation of peaceful co-existence with the regime in Addis Abeba. The most important motives behind this policy are concern for the internal security of the Sudan and reasons of State. The Eritrea crisis has left the Sudan with a refugee problem which is economically unbearable and politically very difficult to control. According to Sudanese figures, around 200,000 Eritreans and 50,000 Ethiopians have sought refuge in the Sudan, fleeing from the troubles caused by the civil war. Another aspect which may have influenced Numeiri is the fact



that a hostile regime in Addis Abeba, well equipped with Soviet arms, would be able to block off the waters of the Blue Nile, with its source in Ethiopia's Lake Tana, stop them flowing through the Sudan and Egypt and thus be in a position to put political pressure on both countries.

In February 1979 President Siaka Stevens of Sierra Leone arranged for a <sup>summit</sup> conference between Numeiri and Mengistu in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. However, this did not lead to a normalisation of relations as had been hoped. Mengistu declared that he was not authorized to discuss the question of Eritrea, the latter being a purely internal affair for Ethiopia, and was only prepared to discuss the refugee problem. However, the Numeiri regime will almost certainly continue to try and establish good neighbourly relations with Ethiopia, particularly since the signing of the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty and the totally different situation in Iran have meant that Numeiri's earlier plans for an anti-Soviet alliance in the region, to include Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Morocco, are now unrealistic.

## 2. The Effects of Conflicts in the Region

The Sudan is also threatened on its southern border by the conflicts in Zaire and Uganda. The first "Shaba Invasion" of Zaire by Katangan opponents of President Mobutu, sanctioned presumably by the Soviet Union and Cuba, recalled in Khartoum memories of similar actions in recent Sudanese history. Khartoum certainly gave diplomatic support, if not more, to the international "relief campaign" for Mobutu. The Sudan acted similarly as the second "Shaba Invasion" was crushed in spring 1978. Numeiri's support for the intervention of the Western powers determined to stabilise the Mobutu regime in Zaire, regardless of the cost, brought Numeiri the particular attention of France. In May 1979, President Giscard d'Estaing visited the Sudan in order to discuss with Numeiri, in his capacity as President of the OAU, the French plans for a European-African-Arab dialogue. This French initiative must be seen in the light of Giscard's "forward defensive strategy" in Africa: France's reaction to the destabilising attacks on the francophone regimes in Chad and Zaire has been to plan the formation of a powerful mobile task force to be used to crush any rebellion in Africa quickly - a plan which needs the support of as many African leaders as possible.

Britain has, since 1973, once again occupied the first place amongst those nations on friendly terms with the Sudan. This year, the British Army once again took over the leading role in training the Sudanese Army, a role which has become more important as a result of the fears which the Sudanese military regime has of subversive elements at home and of being surrounded by hostile regimes abroad. In Jan-Feb 1978 the first joint British-Sudanese manoeuvre took place on the Red Sea coast ("Operation Jagged Thorn"). Since the end of 1976, the USA have again become one of the decisive factors in Sudanese foreign policy, a development which had been carefully planned in advance:

- in May 1976, President Numeiri visited the USA where he attempted to obtain arms' deliveries and, at the same time, approached US firms from the agricultural sector with regard to investing in the Sudan, promising them "an ideal climate for private investments";
- about the same time, Numeiri formed a special inter-ministerial committee "to promote the relations between the USA and the Sudan", with particular emphasis on extending and facilitating technical and economic co-operation;
- in May 1977, Numeiri threw out the remaining ninety Soviet military advisors and forced the Soviet Embassy to reduce the number of staff drastically.

Following the visit of a US military delegation in August 1977, sizeable quantities of arms have been delivered.

The Sudan also plays an important role in the USA's foreign policy as a go-between between Egypt on the one hand and the other member states of the Arab League on the other. Before the Camp David Agreement had been signed, Numeiri was taken into their confidence in the hope that he would be able to prevent the moderate Arab leaders from joining the boycott of Egypt. Several trips which Numeiri undertook to Arab capitals achieved nothing because the Sudanese President had nothing to offer apart from conciliatory remarks with which to persuade Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf States to risk a confrontation with the majority of the opponents of the Peace Treaty under the leadership of the radicals.

Just as is the case with the Arab world, there is, as far as Africa is concerned, a discrepancy between the role which the Sudan is trying to play and what has actually been achieved. Numeiri's latest initiatives to try and find a peaceful solution

to the internal conflicts in Chad (between the central government and the rebellious Northern province supported by Libya) and in Uganda proved to be failures. In Chad's case, the peace initiative has passed to Nigeria (without any success until now) and in the case of the Ugandan crisis, the OAU was unable to act either. In June 1979, Numeiri, as retiring OAU President, admitted himself that the OAU in its present form is not in a position to solve Africa's current problems. Sudan's government has therefore made some suggestions for revising the OAU Charter.

President Nyerere's personal decision to send in Tanzanian troops to get rid of the Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin, has led to a deterioration in relations between <sup>on the one hand</sup> Khartoum and Dar-es-Salaam and Kampala on the other, not least as a result of the renewed flow of refugees into the South of the Sudan. The government in Khartoum has accused Tanzanian and Ugandan troops of killing Ugandan citizens on suspicion of their being Sudanese. Up to now, as many as 100,000 refugees have fled to the Sudan.

In view of these conflicts and the threatening developments along the Sudan's eastern, southern and western borders, it becomes clear why the Numeiri regime, for reasons of national security, has to do its best to stay on friendly terms with its northern neighbour, Egypt. However, this aspect of the Sudan's foreign policy has also involved her in new difficulties of adjusting to the changes brought about by the Camp David Agreement with the resultant danger of further crises at home and abroad.

### 3. The Sudan's Foreign Policy - caught in the field of tension between internal security and foreign aid.

One of the keys to understanding Sudanese foreign policy is to recognise that the Numeiri government is doing its best to stay in power. Despite numerous attempted coups, mutinies, student unrest and workers' strikes, Numeiri has succeeded in this aim up to now. Two weeks after the failure of the attempted "invasion" of July 2, 1976, which was launched with Libyan support, an Egyptian-Sudanese Defence Treaty was signed. Three days after a conference took place in Riad between Numeiri, Sadat and King Khalid during which it was agreed to set up combined political and military institutions. As early as February 1977, the Sudan had begun to take part in the "United Political Command" which had been formed by Egypt and Syria to preserve peace in the Middle East and in the Red Sea region. In the same year, the

Sudan applied for membership of the "Arab Military Industries Organistaion" (AMIO) which had been formed in May 1975 by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Katar and the United Arab Emirates.

In the course of the Sudan's policy of pan-Arabian co-operation with other anti-communist and pro-Western neighbouring governments, Saudi Arabia has become the most important power for the Sudan as a result of the wealth which the petro-dollars have brought to that country. Without Saudi Arabia's interest in the Sudan - her neighbour across the Red Sea - the Sudan's internal and economic development would be unthinkable.

Two important events must be mentioned in this context: on the one hand, the start of the Sudan's transformation into the "bread basket" of the Arab world, as expressed officially in the new "Six-Year-Plan for Economic and Social Development" (1977) on the other, the political rehabilitation of the Islamic opposition groups which had previously lived in exile or been imprisoned. During the next few years, the Sudan, at present one of the poorest countries of the world, plans to become a net exporter of food (wheat, beef, sugar, edible oils, fruit and vegetables) to the Arab world. With the help of Western technology and the managerial know-how of the international agricultural business and financed by credits from Arab states and the World Bank, the extremely promising potential of this Nile country is to be exploited. Credits amounting to thousands of millions of petro-dollars have been promised to the Sudan for the realisation of these projects. However, whether or not they are actually made available will depend on the good conduct, politically and economically speaking, of the Numeiri regime.

A vitally important political "advance payment", as it were, which Numeiri had to agree to in order to obtain the increasing amounts of external financial and military aid was the reconciliation with his political opponents at home, in particular the Mahdists and the "Muslim Brothers". In July 1977, Numeiri met the man who had been, up till then, his bitterest political rival, Sadik al-Mahdi, in Port Sudan and shortly after that announced a general political amnesty (which included imprisoned Communists) and gave al-Mahdi and some representatives of the "Muslim Brothers" posts in the highest state and Party bodies. However, Numeiri was not prepared to allow the political monopoly of the rigidly-organised and tightly-controlled Unity Party, the SSU, to be loosened. For this reason, the policy of national

reconciliation was only half successful: at the beginning of 1979, al-Mahdi was again in self-imposed exile, as was Sharif al-Hindi, the leader of the **Khatemiyya based opposition**. Both **oppose** Numeiri's close alliance with Sadat and regard the development policy which Numeiri is forcing through as disastrous in the long run and as having dragged the Sudan into a permanent financial crisis since it was started in 1977.

Numeiri is faced with a double dilemma, at home and abroad. At home, on the one hand, he has not been able to satisfy the religious elements fully and bring about a reconciliation; on the other hand, the South is again afraid that the policy of national reconciliation and the participation of the Islamic-Arab elements in the government could lead to a renewed domination of the South by the North. As far as foreign policy is concerned, the difficulties of a policy which is directed more and more towards Sadat's Egypt are now becoming obvious. In 1976, Sadat and Numeiri signed a mutual assistance pact. Egyptian troops are stationed near the Sudanese capital, ready to intervene in an emergency; they are alleged to have already gone into action twice on the border between the Sudan and Eritrea. Several joint sittings involving ministers and parliamentarians from both countries have taken place since 1977 in order to push ahead with the planned economic and political "integration" of the two countries - something which evoked the open opposition of even some SSU parliamentarians. In this instance, too, the representatives of the South are afraid of an overpowerful Arab element in the Sudan. The Jonglei Canal Project in the South, which was begun with Egyptian aid and, when completed, will be particularly beneficial to Egypt, aims to dam the waters of the Nile, which has been drying up, in order to use them for new irrigation schemes in the North. The Project has increased the anti-Egyptian feelings amongst the Southern Sudanese because the Canal greatly affects the living and working conditions of the Dinka tribe which lives in the affected area.

However, the biggest problem facing Numeiri with regard to his opponents at home and his Arab colleagues abroad is his wholehearted support (at least, up to May 1979) of Sadat's policy towards Israel which has, since the Camp David Agreement, been regarded, even by the moderates Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, as a "betrayal" of the Palestinians and of the Arab world. Iraq was

the first of the opponents of Sadat's policy to punish the Sudan for supporting Sadat: in 1978 deliveries of oil to the Sudan were stopped ( the Sudan could not pay for them any longer anyway ). On April 23, 1979, Numeiri announced the breaking-off of diplomatic relations with Iraq because " the relationship had been one of robbery, exploitation, deceit and coercive measures; there had even been attempts to humiliate the Sudan and starve her to death" (Monitoring Service of the "Deutsche Welle", Middle East, 25.4.79, p.4). At the same time, Numeiri recalled the Sudanese military delegation and closed the Iraqi Trade Centre in Khartoum.

A month later, Numeiri announced to everyone's surprise that the Sudan would now be supporting the economic and political sanctions directed against Egypt which the Arab opponents of Sadat's policy had agreed to in April. This sudden about-turn in Numeiri's political rhetoric is unexplainable without taking the influence of Saudi Arabia into consideration. (Whether this rhetoric will actually be followed by deeds will partly depend upon whether or not it is possible to win more concessions from the Israelis.) Saudi Arabia appears to have taken over not only the delivery of oil to the Sudan in Iraq's place, but also the financing of the re-armament of the Sudanese Army with American weapons. Although Numeiri is still concerned with keeping on friendly terms with Sadat - he congratulated him on the return of al-Arish with the following words: "We are aware that in the struggle of the Arab peoples Egypt can achieve the aims of the Arab nation" ( Monitoring Service of the "Deutsche Welle", Middle East, 30.5.79 ) - Numeiri's falling into line verbally with the Arab opponents of Sadat has paved the way for a rapprochement with Libya's ruler, Gaddafi, up to now, Sadat's bitterest enemy. On May 7, 1979, in Tripoli, the Foreign Ministers of the Sudan and Libya signed a treaty of cooperation <sup>in</sup> the areas of economic affairs and transport. The Sudanese negotiator was, at the same time, anxious to commit the Libyan government to dissolving the military camp for Numeiri's Sudanese opponents which had, on several occasions, been the starting-point for attempted coups in the Sudan.

#### 4. Summary

In the ten years of Numeiri's foreign policy, there have been a whole series of changes of allegiance with the relations to

the People's Republic of China alone remaining constant. A certain continuity may be read into these developments - political partners were chosen chiefly for their usefulness in strengthening Numeiri's power base at home and less for ideological reasons. Another determining factor as far as Numeiri's foreign alliances were concerned was the desire for massive economic aid from abroad in order to develop the Sudan's most valuable economic asset, her arable land.

Generally speaking, the Sudan's foreign policy is characterised by one fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, the country is seemingly predestined, as a result of such factors as its size, geographical location etc., to play an important role in the Arab world and in Africa, and also within the context of the growing Arab-African relations; furthermore, the Sudan is deeply involved in the political struggles in the region around the Red Sea and in the Horn of Africa.

On the other hand, the relatively unstable situation in the Sudan itself and the country's economic under-development make it difficult for the government to follow a clear and long-term political concept. The fact that the Sudan has, in recent years, become to a large extent dependent upon other countries in many areas of national life means that the country has become more of an object of foreign policy, <sup>rather</sup> than being a determining force in itself. Even in the region around the Red Sea and in the Horn of Africa, it is scarcely possible for the Sudan to play an independent role. In the Red Sea region, the Sudan's policy is determined by Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and in the Horn of Africa the initiative has passed to the socialist regime in Ethiopia which enjoys the support of Moscow. The fact that the policies of both the Sudan and Ethiopia, the two most important states in the region, are determined by foreign powers means that, in the foreseeable future, it will be difficult to arrive at a political compromise which makes an intensification of the co-operation between the two states, <sup>possible</sup> and leads to a stabilisation of the situation in the region, which geographically and geo-politically speaking, does indeed form a sub-region of its own, differing from the neighbouring regions and sub-regions of the Arab world and Africa.

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