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More Tragedy Coming in Sudan

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An article at Foreign Policy makes for some depressing reading. "There's a new Sudan calamity in the making, and it may well come in 2010 with a unilateral declaration of independence by the enclave of South Sudan," writes J. Peter Pham, a senior fellow at the National Committee on American Foreign Policy. "If it does, the resulting conflict stands to be more painful, militarized, and devastating than Sudan has ever known. Imagine Darfur with a lot more guns, not to mention Chinese fighter jets."

As if President Obama did not have enough on his foreign policy plate with the emergence of Yemen as a haven for Al-Qaeda, the continuing inability of Pakistan to control its frontiers or its extremists, the need to begin withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq and the build-up of troops in Afghanistan, here comes a new crisis in the making. And, to make matters more complicated, dealing effectively with Sudan requires a showdown with China, which is busy building armament factories in Khartoum. What should the President do? Sending in U.S. troops will only make matters, inviting jihadists from around the world to come make life hell for the already suffering people of Sudan.

There is a final complication: Sudan, unlike Iraq or Iran, is not a vital U.S. interest. They have oil, but we aren't getting it now. The country cannot, like Iran, lob missiles into Israel or shut down the Straits of Hormuz. They do not share a border with India, nor possess nuclear weapons like Pakistan. The temptation to do nothing will be huge.

Pham's article is a must-read. But, be prepared to get depressed. It is as easy to foresee the impending crisis as it is to see that there is next to nothing we can do about it.

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