

**Digest of Information to be released – FOI 0683-17**

Document 1: **Sudan: A briefing note on the period (September-October 1998)**, British Embassy Khartoum

STARTS “The Economy:

Immediately after the attack on Eastern Equatoria the minister of national Defence briefed the National Assembly and asked for a “budget of war” together with the conscription of 50,000 volunteer fighters. It seems, only few officials and NA members are aware of the fact that the budget has been for long a “budget of war”. The Secretary General of the Workers Union, Prof. Ghandour, told the NA members that the war cost has been 80% of the country’s national income and 100% of the development budget. As a result, 92% of the Sudanese people are classified to be under poverty line (Prof. Ghandour). Other figures on those under poverty line are 90% (official estimates), 94.3% (Umma Party) and 95% (Prof. Mohammed Hashim Awad). According to the Secretary General of the Workers Union, the government wages cover only 22.7% of the workers basic needs.

The minister of finance has always been the scapegoat when there are military pressures and when these facts are either not widely known or are simply ignored. In the midst of criticisms from NA members on their report he presented on his ministry’s performance during the last 6 months, the minister commented by saying that “the NA economic committee has ignored the context in which the budget is implemented and that the ministry has committed itself to provide funding, in local and foreign currencies, for five military fronts. The ministry, he said, began providing funds annually, then monthly and then on a weekly basis. He concluded, the expenditure on war has left the treasury empty.

Despite this, again it is Dr al Turabi who was the 1<sup>st</sup> to say that the report of the ministry of finance is poor. This has encouraged some NA members to raise doubts about the truth of the figures provided by the report of the ministry of finance. The report has eventually been approved by the Assembly. However, the minister asked for an apology or, alternatively, a vote of confidence from the national assembly. “ENDS

Document 2: **Future Crises: Sudan – 30 June 1998**, Policy Planning Staff, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

STARTS “**British Interests**

Minimal commercial interest (UK export to Sudan £50.7m IN 1997). Oil sector particularly buoyant, but other countries ahead of UK, especially China.” ENDS

Document 3 : **Internal email – Sudan, 21 April 1999**, British Embassy Khartoum

STARTS” There may also be commercial opportunities as Sudanese oil production is increased.” ENDS