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SUDAN'S INTERNATIONAL CHARM OFFENSIVE EYES WASHINGTON...

U.S.-Sudanese relations took a major step forward with the recent announcement by the newly-formed government in Khartoum that - for the first time in 20 years - the country would be sending a diplomat to Washington. The move is part of the new government's efforts to reform and rehabilitate its global image now that long-serving strongman Omar al-Bashir is no longer in charge. That effort isn't just directed at Washington, however. Of late, Khartoum has courted a number of U.S. allies, including Israel, in an attempt to prove that its leaders have turned over a new political leaf.

Top of mind for the new government in Khartoum appears to be a change in its status as a "State Sponsor of Terrorism" under U.S. law - a title it has held since 1993. That priority is more than simply symbolic; a lifting of the designation is expected to result in an economic boost, helping to speed development in the struggling country. (*Voice of America*, May 6, 2020)

...AS THE EMIRATES COME CALLING

Nevertheless, the Sudanese government is still holding meetings that observers might consider troubling. In late April, Emirati government representatives reportedly met with Sudanese officials in an effort to drum up support for their country's military campaigns in Libya and Yemen. The diplomatic summit followed signs in recent months that Emirati mercenary groups were recruiting Sudanese citizens to fight in these campaigns, and doing so under false pretenses. Meanwhile, the country's transitional government is expected to soon hand over control of a key seaport to DP World, a nationalized Emirati company. The current deputy chief of the Sudanese Transitional Military Council, General Mohamed Dagalo, is believed to have deep ties to the Emirati government. (Doha *Al-Jazeera*, April 30, 2020)

TANZANIA BACKS AWAY FROM BEIJING

The Tanzanian government is maneuvering to avoid a potential "debt trap" in the form of a loan being offered by the Chinese Communist Party. After unsuccessfully attempting to renegotiate a \$10 billion loan entered into by his predecessor to build a port in the town of Bagamoyo, Tanzanian president John Magufuli has opted to cancel the project outright. The terms of the loan - which stipulate that, if the Tanzanian government fails to pay off the debt, the Chinese government would acquire the land and Tanzania would forfeit control over potential investors - are not foreign to those familiar with CCP lending practices. Indeed, "several organizations" raised issues with the loan and demanded that Magufuli cancel it before he decided to do so. (*International Business Times*, April 23, 2020)

CHAD TURNS INWARD

Combating terror groups in North Africa just got more challenging for the G-5 and Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) - two key regional African security alliances. In mid-April, Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno announced that his country's military would no longer contribute troops or resources to regional efforts to stamp out Islamic extremism. Moving forward, Itno said, Chad will instead focus on quashing only those Islamic militants who commit attacks within its borders. The decision comes as a blow to regional counterterrorism efforts, because Chad's military is one of the best trained and equipped anti-terror forces on the continent, and their effective retirement from the regional fight suggests that the challenge of Islamic extremism is likely to worsen over time. (Agence France Presse, April 10, 2020)

DUBLIN EYES AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Ireland is hoping to help play a more prominent role in the development of Africa. The government of Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has formally signed on to the African Development Bank (AfDB) as the body's 81st member state - 27 of which are non-African nations. By doing so, the Republic of Ireland is hoping to support "Africa 2025," its national Africa policy that calls for, among other things, greater involvement in the continent's financial institutions. The move appears to be part of a broader Irish governmental push to further bolster its expanding trade between with the continent, which is home to some of the world's fastest growing populations and economies. (*The New Dawn*, May 5, 2020)

SOUTH KOREA RESTARTS DEPLOYMENTS TO SOUTH SUDAN

Following delays resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, South Korea is now poised to move ahead with a refresh of its military presence in Africa. Seoul will reportedly soon deploy 300 Sudanese Reconstruction Assistance Force troops to South Sudan as part of a scheduled rotation. The presence of the force, commonly known as the Hanbit Unit, is part of South Korea's participation in post-conflict reconstruction in the country pursuant to a UN Security Council resolution intended to prompt development in the East African country following its split from Sudan in 2011. (*The Korea Herald*, May 12, 2020)