

APPENDIX FOUR

Some Alternative Solutions.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS.

As we noted earlier, there are no completely “correct” solutions to the exercise tasks set out in the body of the book, just solutions that have a variety of strengths and weaknesses that make some, on balance, more likely to succeed than others. The important thing is to try to evaluate the likely impact of each particular move or set of moves on those you are trying to influence; to try to “empathise” (in Ralph White’s terms) with each set of decision makers or opinion leaders; and always to carry out a careful evaluation of each possible strategy both before implementation and after “the results are in.”

Below are some possible solutions to the two exercises in Chapter 2, “Extending an Olive Branch” and “Selecting ‘the’ Parties”. In the latter case, the suggestions are accompanied by an evaluation of each of three possible solutions offered to deal with the dilemma of maximising the chances of “success” in approaching diverse and divided adversaries

Exercise 5.2. Approaching the S.P.L.M. in the Southern Sudan.

CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE ON THE SOUTHERN PROBLEM MEMORANDUM

To: Committee Chairman.
From: The Sub-Group on Peacemaking Possibilities
Re: Proposed Initiative Towards SPLM
Date: 2 December 1989

In response to your request for suggestions about initiating moves towards a peacemaking process with the southern rebels, we sketch out two possible scenarios below, together with our evaluation of the relative advantages and disadvantages of each. We would ask you to note that neither is certain to bring about the desired effect, which, to some degree, will depend upon the decision-making processes within an increasingly divided rebel leadership. However, we feel that the first set of suggestions represents the *least* that the President could do to have some effect on Garang and the SPLM, while the second is the *most* that the Government can safely do, given the expectations of its supporters. We would be happy to discuss both sets of suggestions with you, should you wish to explore either in greater detail.

Alternative A

(1) In mid-December, the President, through the President of Uganda, conveys to the SPLM leadership that he will initiate a unilateral ceasefire for one month throughout the three southern provinces. All military operations will cease from 25 December, save those necessary for escorting convoys between major towns in the south. Our troops will not fire unless attacked. The President calls upon the SPLM to reciprocate in order to build an atmosphere in which technical talks about the extension of a bilateral ceasefire beyond the initial month can take place.

(2) On 25 December the President publicly announces the ceasefire.

(3) On 1 January 1990, the Ministry of justice announces that it is releasing 3 prominent SPLM supporters from prison but will continue to keep them under house arrest in Khartoum.

(4) On 1 January 1990, the Ministry of Education announces the award of a major research grant to the Department of Political Science at the University of Khartoum for a one-year, comparative study of federal and confederal systems of government and their relevance for post-colonial African societies. (It would be an advantage if the grant could be awarded to a team consisting of prominent Northern *and* Southern scholars.)

(5) On 5 January, the President broadcasts over Khartoum Radio a review of the working of the ceasefire, emphasizing its success, and calls upon the SPLM to initiate contacts to begin negotiating an extension as a preliminary to subsequent discussions of an agenda for substantive talks.

Alternative B

(1) On 25 December, the President broadcasts a speech over Radio Khartoum announcing a unilateral one-month ceasefire by Government forces in the south, beginning on 1 January 1990. He states that the ceasefire will be extendable to 1 months if it is reciprocated by the SPLM. He also announces that this is first of a series of confidence-building measures to be undertaken by the Government over the next three months in order to bring a lasting peace to the country.

(2) On 1 January, the ceasefire comes into effect. On the same day, the President issues a statement that, at the end of one month's successful ceasefire and the restoration of 'appropriate conditions' in the south, the Government will undertake comprehensive action to assist in removing ob- to the implementation of humanitarian relief work among the civilian population of the south.

(3) On 15 January, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announces that in March 1990, the President will approach the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity with a request that he undertakes an initiative to help bring peace to the Sudan.

(4) On 1 February, the President reviews the workings of the ceasefire and - given that military incidents have successfully been kept to an acceptable minimum - announces that, once conditions are 'appropriate' the Government will set up a Special Commission' to report on the workings of Shared law in the three southern provinces. It will consider sympathetically nominations for membership of this Commission put forward by 'southern interests and organizations'.

On balance, we would recommend that the Committee might seriously consider recommending the first option to the President (perhaps amended so that the initial move takes the form of a public broadcast, which would gain the Government considerable credit, particularly internationally, for making a move towards peace). The army command in the south is less likely to object to a one-month truce - indeed, it may welcome a breathing space - and the easing of the conditions for imprisonment of some of the SPLM leaders could be symbolically important at a relatively low cost. The same can be said of the academic study. None of the moves in the first initiative is irreversible and all have no effect on the essence of the Government's present negotiating position. All are low-cost and can be presented to Dr al Turabi and the NIF hardliners as non-committing moves, which could merely open a dialogue with the rebels.

On the other hand, the moves suggested in Initiative B run the danger of giving the impression that we are in a weakening position vis-a-vis the SPLM, and would undoubtedly face considerable opposition from the army and the NIF. Furthermore, they are likely to signal to SPLM leaders that we are willing to consider modification in our position over Sharia law in the south (although this is certainly not implied in the mere setting up of a Commission) and that we are willing to treat with them as equals. Both impressions have to be avoided in any olive branch we offer.

RELATIVE ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES OF SUGGESTED OPTIONS

	PROS	CONS
Option 1		
(1)	Initial contacts re ceasefire are confidential, so there is no public commitment should SPLM try to take propaganda advantage.	SPLM could try to leak details of initiative and claim our approach arises through weakness.
(2)	Ceasefire not conditional but does test willingness of SPLM to respond.	SPLM could simply use first month to re-group, reorganize and prepare.
(3)	Rapid implementation of ceasefire gives SPLM little chance to leak or distort nature of our initiative.	Possible problems of ensuring that all our military units in south understand and can implement ceasefire.

	PROS	CONS.
Option 2	<p>The initiative will place the onus on the SPLM to demonstrate its willingness to be reasonable in the search for peace.</p> <p>Involvement of the OAU will shift responsibility for any failure away from the President.</p> <p>The February review process will provide an "opt out" point which can easily be used to end the process.</p>	<p>Once made the ceasefire offer cannot be withdrawn whatever the SPLM response</p> <p>There will be a danger of losing control of the process once the Chairman is involved.</p> <p>The initial willingness to discuss "sharia" gives away a major bargaining point with nothing in return.</p>

Recommendation: We strongly recommend that the President tries the first option or some variant thereof for the reasons that we have outlined above.

Exercise 5.4. Selecting the Parties.

I. Three Alternative Suggestions.

Solution 1. Draft Recommendations of an Advisory Sub Committee to the World Council of Churches Committee on Africa.

A. Advisory Sub-Committee Tasks

We were asked to consider two questions. The first was whether circumstances are appropriate for a World Council of Churches attempt to organize, and then convene a peace conference in the Sudan given the current situation in that country and given the Christian Churches' previous relation- with the southern region of the country. If our answer to the first question is in the affirmative, the second question is who within Sudan should we attempt to involve in this process, so that any peace we might help to achieve will be a lasting one?

B. Background Assumptions

We start with what seems to us an obviously practical rule of thumb: we have to work with those organizations that exist and (an justifiably claim to represent some community, or category of people, involved in 'the conflict'.

We acknowledge that accepting this principle underplays the practical difficulties of discovering the truth of constantly heard accusations about certain Sudanese organizations that take the form 'X represents nobody but himself Clearly we need to know - and should try to find out - far more some of 'the parties' involved in the civil war than we do at present, but, at least at the start of the WCC initiative, we recommend assuming that if an organization exists and takes a position on the issues in conflict, then we should assume that it is a 'player in the game' until proven otherwise.

(Two of our members argued strongly that, at least in the longer term, we ought to be working to develop institutions that can speak for communities, ethnic groups or interests who are currently NOT represented in the conflict. In other circumstances, there seems much to be said for this argument about 'unrepresented voices'. However, we are currently attempting to deal with a costly and destructive civil war, which takes

lives and ruins others every day it is allowed to continue. In such conditions, the involvement of others, including ethnic groups and their traditional leaders must, surely, wait until the fighting has died down.)

One of our members notes the risks that the WCC might run of legitimizing some parties by contacting them formally, and delegitimizing others by not contacting them at all. However, we have taken this as a recommendation to proceed with caution and, initially, through informal channels.

Secondly, we felt that it was vital to include in any peacemaking process all those who have the capacity to undermine, derail or delay that process, no matter how opposed to peace they currently appear to us, as outsiders. This assumption implies that the WCC cannot simply try to set up a peace process or convene a peace conference by involving those who have shown previously that they can, and in some cases do, work with the Government in Khartoum; or those members of the Khartoum Government who are 'reasonable' on the Southern Question.

This assumption emphasizes the need to bring in those whose commitment to their goals have led them to violent resistance and who are portrayed as 'hawks' or 'hardliners'. If these people are not brought into the process at some stage, then they will use their best efforts to undermine any peace process in its later stages. The need to involve 'intransigents' seems particularly acute with the southerners, but even the strong political position currently enjoyed by President Nimiery in the north should not prevent us at least entertaining the idea that a settlement needs to be endorsed by all important political factions in Khartoum.

Lastly, it seemed to us practical to try to deal with one major conflict at a time. Several of our members have suggested that the WCC might involve itself in the conflicts developing in Kordofan and in Darfur and that peace in one part of the country is intimately bound up with overall peace in the Sudan. We agree with this viewpoint in principle, and with the idea that the conflicts in the country -and some that are occurring elsewhere in the region - are closely 'interlocked'.

However, the WCC has limited means and should not try to set itself up as a general peace-bringer, save in the spiritual sense. While it is true that the conflicts are connected, it is important to make a start with one 'core' conflict in the hope that success there might lead to successful peace making processes in others. Our problem, therefore, is where to start first? Given the pervasive and countrywide effects of the struggle in the south, this does seem the appropriate place to start.

C. Recommendations

With these assumptions in mind, we recommend that the WCC consider initiating a peacemaking effort between the Sudanese Government in Khartoum and the various political and politico-military organizations operating in the three southern provinces. The eventual aim of the initiative will be the holding of a peace conference in a neighbouring capital city, under the auspices of the WCC or the All Africa Council of Churches, possibly with the assistance of a major African leader to give legitimacy to the proceedings.

As an initial step, the WCC should send an informal and confidential fact-finding delegation to Khartoum, to consult with President Nimiery about the possibilities of a negotiated settlement to the conflict and his willingness to countenance: 1 (a) an official WCC approach to the southern parties and (b) an eventual meeting with their leaders to discuss arrangements for a peaceful future for the country. The delegation should explore the implications of recent Presidential statements and whether the President has any pre-conditions for attending a possible peace conference, given that careful preparations will to be made for such an event.

Given a positive response from the President, the WCC should announce its plans to despatch a public, fact-finding mission to Uganda, Kinshasa and the southern Sudan to explore three issues with the leaders of the southern parties: their willingness to hold preparatory talks among themselves regarding a possible negotiated settlement with Khartoum; their possible, subsequent willingness to prepare for and attend a 'round table' peace conference with members of President Nimiery's new government; and the possibilities for outside development assistance for the re-construction of the south, once fighting has ceased. The mission should be open to approach by all existing southern organizations, both political and military.

Should there be a willingness on the part of 'key' southern leaders to meet among themselves to discuss a joint negotiating stance, the question arises as to whether the WCC should be involved in such a meeting in some way. Our recommendation is that this part of the process should - if possible - be conducted by the southerners themselves. If WCC becomes too closely involved in a process which might be construed in the north as an effort to build southern unity, preparatory to greater military efforts, the effects on WCC credibility in Khartoum will hardly be beneficial. If it seems likely that the southern organizations need assistance in convening or facilitating such a meeting, other relevant organizations might be encouraged to undertake such a role, the WCC reserving itself for the later peace conference, or national level round table.

Again, we should emphasize that the objectives of this second, 'southern' stage of the process should include an effort to discover which of the southern organizations are serious parties, representing significant

interests and groupings in the south. The WCC should not be in the business of choosing who is a party to this conflict and who is not. The southerners themselves should know this and should develop a process that includes the major players.

We submit the above recommendations for the Committee's consideration and would be happy to discuss further details with members of the Committee either individually or while in session.

Signed:

..... Co-Chair

..... Co-Chair

Solution 2. Sub-Committee on a Sudanese Initiative; 31 August 1971

To: Africa Committee, World Council of Churches

From: Chair, Sub-Committee on the Sudan

Date: 30 August 1971

Re: Proposed WCC Peacemaking Initiative

We have discussed the questions that you asked us to consider regarding a possible WCC initiative to convene a peace conference on the issue of 'Peace in the Sudan', to which representatives of the Khartoum Government and leaders of the southern 'parties' could be invited.

In the view of Sub-Committee members, such an initiative would probably be premature, given the current state of disarray within the southern leaders and their organizations. I have given our brief review of the recent history of the conflict in the south of Sudan reveals a long-standing inability of various southern factions and ethnically based organizations to co- with one another, and the tendency of any political coalitions to be short-lived. In the present situation, there appear to be two rival 'governments' in the south, at least three militias, and an indeterminate number of political organizations, some apparently grouped around single, influential leaders.

It is our contention that any effort to bring such a disparate and divided group of 'parties' to a negotiating table with the Khartoum Government would merely convince the latter of the incapacity of the southerners to agree on a set of goals, to conclude any lasting agreement or to make one 'stick'.

However, we would recommend that the Committee on Africa might consider the possibility of establishing a forum for the *southern parties*, in which their leaders or representatives could discuss the issues that divide them, and the requirements for constructing an agreed 'platform' from which negotiations with the new regime in Khartoum might, at some future date, be opened. Until the southerners manage to establish a minimum of unity among themselves, there seems to be little chance of the negotiated settlement apparently sought by General Nimeiry, but a significant chance that premature attempts at negotiation will either end in frustration in Khartoum or a revival of the idea that a military solution is the best way of achieving a peaceful south - or both.

Specifically, we recommend that:

(1) The WCC sends a fact-finding mission to Uganda and the south of the country to determine:

- (a) Who are the key leaders of the main southern parties, and how might they be best approached with the idea of a southern 'forum'?
- (b) What support do the various parties and factions enjoy, and is this based upon ethnic, religious or other factors?
- (c) What is the relationship between the political parties and the guerrilla organizations fighting in the bush?
- (d) What appear to be the main issues separating the various southern parties, and might there be a basis for constructing an agreed, initial negotiating position to be presented to Khartoum as a basis for formal negotiation?

(2) Subject to the information revealed by such a commission, the WCC proposes to convene a forum, or 'round table', in Kampala or Nairobi, at which differences between southern organizations could be discussed and, if possible, a common negotiating platform agreed.

- (3) Simultaneously, an informal mission be sent to Khartoum:
- (a) to discuss the possibility of a negotiated settlement with General Nimiery;
 - (b) to explain the purpose of the WCC's mission to the south;
 - (c) to explore the possibility of southern notables now working in Khartoum attending a forum in Kampala; and
 - (d) to establish whether the WCC might be able to play any role in a subsequent meeting between representatives of the Khartoum Government and southern leaders.

If these recommendations seem too ambitious, at the very least the WCC should send a fact-finding mission to Khartoum to explore the new government's views about the possibility and desirability of a negotiated settlement.

.....
Chair, Sudan Sub-Committee

Solution 3. Sub-Committee on the Sudan: Recommendations

The members of your Sub-Committee have carefully considered the outline proposal for a mission to explore the possibilities of the WCC mediating a peace conference on the civil war currently continuing in the Sudan.

While recognizing that there are clear signs that General Nimiery's new government in Khartoum might be willing to proceed towards a negotiated settlement if a way could be found of doing so without loss of 'face', we feel it would be premature for the WCC to undertake such a mission.

Your Sub-Committee felt that we simply lack the detailed and accurate information that would enable the WCC to embark on such a delicate process with any hope of success.

It certainly seems to be the case that, in contrast to the position of the government in Khartoum, the southern move- is characterized by diverse groups and factions, divided from one another by differences and antagonisms that may be based on ethnic and religious factors, personal rivalries, leadership struggles or issues of principle. However, we currently lack an accurate picture of what are the key issues in the south, who are key leaders and which are the key parties.

We would therefore recommend that, as a first step, the WCC sends a private, unofficial fact-finding mission to the south of the Sudan with the task of producing an accurate picture of the political and military situation there. The issue of a further WCC initiative can then be discussed in the light of the mission's Report.

The mission should be required to provide information on, at least, the following questions:

- (1) Which are the key political and politico-military organizations from the southern Sudan?
- (2) What level of support does each enjoy and what is the source of this support?
- (3) Who are key leaders in each group?
- (4) What relations, if any, do each of these organizations bear to southern individuals and organizations currently working in the north with the Khartoum Government?
- (5) To what extent do political and ethnic divisions in the south coincide?
- (6) To what degree do key southern parties co-operate or conflict with one another?
- (7) What are the attitudes within the various southern parties to the idea of a negotiated settlement, or even of exploring a peace process?
- (8) Which parties possess important outside patrons that would have to be brought into any peace process?
- (9) Are there any currently unrepresented groups or communities who would be stakeholders in any peace agreement?
- (10) Are there currently any groups or factions totally opposed to talks with Khartoum, and what is the basis for their rejection of discussions?

II. EVALUATIONS.

Comments on Three Alternative Proposals for WCC Mission to Sudan

All three drafts have obviously taken considerable care over the problem of how to involve all the relevant parties in the proposed peace initiative and have considered some of the implications of what appear to be significant divisions within the 'southerners'. All show a recognition that the WCC faces a situation of great uncertainty and the suggestions they make differ according to:

(1) the importance of first reducing the level of uncertainty before taking any initiative, rather than proceeding rapidly on the basis of present, admittedly inadequate, knowledge, and thus taking advantage of an apparent northern willingness to contemplate a negotiated settlement;

(2) the level of risk they view as acceptable in the light of potential benefits arising from a successful peace initiative; this ranges from high risk of failure and related costs to the parties and WCC together with high potential benefits to more cautious, incremental and low risk suggestions; and

(3) the implied degree of flexibility likely to be demanded of the mission they suggest (i.e. the extent to which they leave open possible WCC tactics for dealing with likely reactions from both Khartoum and the southerners).

The main problems seem to be how to find out and recognize 'relevant' parties, and what criteria are to be applied to determine which are/are not relevant to a peacemaking initiative; in what order to approach the various tasks associated with initiating a peace process; and whether the WCC should be the organization to undertake all of the relevant tasks, but particularly those involved in reconciling divisions among southerners as well as bringing northern and southern parties together to negotiate an end to the civil war.

Solution 1

Strengths include a willingness to explain the background assumptions underlying recommendations, acceptance of the principles that no one organization can do everything, and that there is a need to define what are 'essentials' (and why) and then concentrate on dealing with these, rather than taking up' other problems and dissipating effort.

There is a perennial problem in many conflicts of losing some credibility with one side by going first to the other, and always a need to have a convincing explanation as to why one went first to the enemy. In this case, a WCC visit to Khartoum first may run the risk of losing WCC credibility with the southerners. Also, there needs to be some contingency planning for WCC's next steps if President Nimiery's reaction is lukewarm, or if he expresses strong antipathy toward a WCC visit to 'the south'.

Plans for the second stage do deal with the potential difficulty of involving the WCC directly in a procedure for 'empowering' the southerners (this is almost inevitably what it will look like to Khartoum). However, the questions of who will convene and organize such a process, and which person or organization will take up the role of southern 'unifier' are left 'up in the air' so some ideas are needed about who to encourage in this task. Similarly, the WCC might need to think about how to line up donors before making promises about development assistance. There is a lot left to chance and hope in the proposal as presently outlined.

The principle that outsiders should not select 'the serious' parties is a good one but is it realistic to believe that the Southern parties will be able to agree themselves on inclusion or exclusion? Moreover, what happens if the southerners, with lit Without outside help, are unable to 'get their act together' and form a united front? Is the prospect of getting to negotiate with Khartoum sufficient reward to make them abandon their obvious differences? Some thought needs to be given to WCC contingencies if the southerners remain disunited, as opposed ill emerging willing to talk with Khartoum as a united coalition.

In general, the WCC might need to think a bit more about what it does if things begin to go wrong - and, indeed, what will be clear signs that things are going wrong.

Solution 2.

The major risk with this proposal, of course, is that of being seen as a partial intervener, whose impact, even if not whose main aim, is to unify and strengthen rebellious southerners, so that they can conduct a more effective political and military campaign against the 'legitimate, national government' in Khartoum. More thought probably needs to be given to how the WCC might reassure Khartoum - and, indeed, whether this c m be done to a level whereby the WCC remains a potential Interlocutor between Khartoum and a south they have helped to unify. If the prospect seems unlikely, then some thought might be given to who can carry on a peace process between Khartoum and the unified south, if the WCC cannot - and what relationship the WCC's regional peacemaking process should have to any national-level process.

That said, the proposal is good on the problems posed by a divided south, and the need for unity and order to enable negotiations to begin with the north. The problem is whether the idea of 'unity for negotiation' can be differentiated in principle from 'unity for more effective coercion', and even if it can in principle, can it in the minds of both the southern and northern leaders?

Lastly, this scheme also seems to call for some contingency plans and some criteria. For example, what, broadly speaking, are the criteria for determining whether to go forward with the southern 'forum' or not? For example, suppose some southern leaders indicate that they would be unwilling to attend such a forum, or

attach stringently unacceptable conditions to their attendance? ('I am not going to come if that traitor X is there!') What contingencies need to be considered in the face of such possible outcomes - and what in the case of a complete failure to get the southerners together and/or keep them together if they do reach any agreement among themselves, particularly given that the WCC will probably have already lost most of its credibility in Khartoum?

Solution 3.

Obviously, this is the most cautious of the three proposals, and the one that involves the lowest risk, both to the parties and the WCC. (Decision-making groups often tend to go for low risk, incremental options, so it may be necessary to subject this option to the question; 'Can't we do a bit more than this?')

On the other hand, this suggestion does take sensible account of the uncertainties about the situation in Sudan mainly the south - and the need to try to clarify the details of who is who, and what is going on. (Does this demand a WCC fact-finding mission to the south? Are there no other reliable sources of data that avoid the problems of such a trip?) It asks good questions and is a model for the kind of questions all the proposals should seek to answer, by one means or another.

There might be a problem of sending even a fact-finding mission to the south without first clearing it with Khartoum, so there would then be a need to explain to Khartoum what the longer-range intentions of the WCC might be. Hence there is some need to think a bit ahead in terms of contingency planning on the basis of what different pictures - and recommendations - the mission *might* bring back from its investigations.

Overall, this suggestion really needs some extending into the future, and several 'What then?' questions could sensibly be posed about *subsequent* WCC actions. It is quite possible to undertake sensible speculations about a number of alternative scenarios involving WCC activities - up to and including a full-WCC mediation initiative - so that some anticipatory ideas might be appropriate even given the current levels of uncertainty and lack of knowledge.

III. SUMMARY.

Overall, the three proposals confront many of the main problems likely to be faced in considering the launching of some form of peacemaking initiative into a conflict system characterized by divided and even structurally incoherent adversaries; and they bring up some interesting and sensible ways of dealing with such difficulties. There are no easy answers.

The major weaknesses exhibited to some degree by all the proposals involve, firstly, a certain unwillingness to ask questions about the likely perceptions held by the parties themselves of the WCC, its past relations with the Sudan, especially given the religious issues and overtones involved in the conflict and the historical role of missionaries in the south under colonialism, and the likelihood that it will be perceived as an ally - or a partial patron - rather than an unbiased intermediary seeking to make peace. Secondly, while all proposals implicitly or explicitly acknowledge that the WCC cannot 'do everything' in a peace mission, none really takes up the question of which other entities might be involved in a peace process, and how they might best be involved. Some ideas on this might be useful. Lastly, the proposals suffer from an unwillingness to try to answer the question: 'What do we do if this does not work, or things go wrong?' The proposals concentrate on 'the next steps' if things work out 'as we hope they will'. This sort of thinking is necessary, but some thought has to be given to contingency planning for things going wrong (they will!) and for rescuing the initiative, the parties and the W C C.