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SOUTHERN SUDAN ASSESSMENT

FINAL REPORT

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Submitted by

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INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared in accordance with the terms of Contract No. FDA-1006-0-00-0017-00, which, inter alia, calls for a full report of program operations and needs observed during the southern Sudan assessment mission, and a set of recommendations as to what program adjustments are necessary. The report was prepared jointly by the three USG members of the assessment team, who travelled to about three dozen towns and villages in southern Sudan between April 27 and May 23, 1991. They were accompanied throughout their mission by two officials of the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA), the relief arm of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM), and by a senior field officer of UNICEF, normally based in Kapoeta. During the course of their mission the team interviewed scores of representatives of the SRRA and of the SPLM, representatives of UN agencies and most NGOs active in the area, and many Sudanese villagers. This report represents the distillation of numerous observations and bits of (sometimes conflicting) information. For a more complete description of the team's travels and experiences, please see the Southern Sudan Assessment Journal, which has been prepared as a separate document.

SUMMARY

Rains have begun on time and in appropriate quantities in most areas of southern Sudan. Although the next several months--until the harvest begins in September/October--will undoubtedly be a period of hardship for the population as a whole, mass starvation will not occur among populations observed during the assessment mission.

USG relief food inputs are not always directed at those most in need nor, in most cases and at this late date, can they be. However, specific, immediate interventions can and should be made to minimize hardship and maximize food production. These include: the delivery of seeds and food to Ler; the supply of fishing equipment to Nasir, Yiol, Ler, Ayod, Waat, Akobo, and Pibor; and, the resumption of food deliveries to Itang refugee camp and, if possible, cross border deliveries of food from Gambella to Nasir, Akobo, and Pibor.

An enhanced effort to rehabilitate medical services in several areas is also called for, and longer term famine mitigation/food production issues should be addressed at an early stage. Akon was not visited during the assessment mission but reports suggest the overall situation there is particularly worrisome and an on-site evaluation should be made at the earliest opportunity.

For the longer term, the USG should encourage and assist NGO involvement in the development of fishing cooperatives and in the introduction of alternative crops in the region. Another broad, in-field assessment of the general situation in Southern Sudan should be undertaken in September, 1990.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDING I: The OLS umbrella, in and of itself, is inadequate to respond to all critical needs in southern Sudan.

DISCUSSION: Most locations in southern Sudan are accessible by road only during the dry season, generally early December to mid-April. Several locations--Nasir, Akobo, and Pibor--can be reached by river barge from June through October, but only from Ethiopia; a couple--Yirol and Ler--are accessible only by a combination of barge and truck at any time of year; and one, Akon, is accessible neither by road nor by river. Access by air to all locations is possible under appropriate weather conditions, but most airfields can accommodate only a Twin Otter or smaller aircraft and the amounts of commodities that can be delivered are therefore severely limited.

Under the provisions of OLS, all movements of trucks, aircraft and barges--to transport food, medical supplies, fishing equipment, seeds, tools, and personnel--are subject to the approval of both the GOS and the SPLM, such approval being requested by the UN for a specific schedule of truck convoys, barge movements or airflights for four to six weeks at a time. The SPLM has provided blanket approval for these movements, while the GOS has variously withheld approval entirely, provided approval for limited locations, or provided approval for as little as one week.

No barge movements have ever been approved by the GOS, effectively precluding the delivery of any appreciable supply of commodities to Ler and Yirol under the OLS umbrella. Truck convoys were similarly disallowed from the end of November 1990 until March 18, 1991--limiting deliveries by road to a one-month period, mid-March to mid-April. At the end of September 1990, the GOS cut the list of sites accessible by air from 18 to eight, a condition that prevailed until the end of the year, at which time the GOS banned relief flights entirely for a period of three weeks. Flights to eight locations were allowed from January 22 to February 22, but were again banned from February 23 to March 7. The GOS permitted flights to four locations from March 8 to 15, but then again halted all flights, this time until April 30. From April 30 until about May 10, the GOS allowed flights to five locations and, since then has granted permission for OLS flights to 11 locations. However, by the time the UN was able to make the necessary preparations to fly to one of these (Akon), the GOS withdrew permission for unspecified "security reasons".

The GOS policy in respect to OLS operations in southern Sudan has been clearly capricious, if not blatantly obstructionist. The net effect of the GOS ban on barge movements and limitations on truck convoys has been to prevent WFP making any food deliveries to the four neediest areas (Ler, Yirol, Waat, and Nasir) visited by our team, as well as to other needy areas such as Akobo, Boma, and Pibor. UNICEF sometimes ignored the GOS prohibition on truck movements, and so was able to deliver significant quantities of seeds and tools during the dry season. Nevertheless, the policy of on-again off-again airflight schedules has severely restricted the ability of the UN and NGOs to administer basic humanitarian programs--such as EPI and the training of CHWs--that require forward planning and constant monitoring for successful implementation. The policy has also seriously eroded NGO and UN staff morale; in extreme cases, relief personnel have been stranded in distant locations for prolonged periods when flight permissions have been abruptly withdrawn.

RECOMMENDATION: The USG should be prepared to fund NGO personnel and material transport--by air, land, and river--to and within Southern Sudan to meet critical humanitarian needs, even when such transport is not authorized within OLS.

FINDING II: There is an immediate and critical need for seed and food in Ler.

DISCUSSION: Ler has received no distributions of food or seeds this year for reasons described under Finding I, above. During April 1991, MSF/Holland carried out a nutritional survey in 17 villages and two cattle camps within Ler District (Western Upper Nile), and found that approximately 20 percent of adults were severely malnourished and that almost 12 percent of children (under age five) were moderately malnourished. (Severe malnourishment among children under age five was observed in only 0.5 percent of the sample, but it should be noted that the people of Ler are ethnic Nuer, who accord great priority to feeding children before adults.) Our own assessment team visit to Ler, May 8 to 13, tended to confirm the MSF conclusions. Although small amounts of grain are currently obtainable at controlled prices from Leek--a five-day round-trip from Ler--it is clear that grain supplies are extremely scarce, that many families cannot afford grain at any price, and that seed grain has largely been consumed as food. The situation in Ler is made more extreme by the high incidence of Kala Azar in the area; Kala Azar morbidity and mortality rates are inordinately high among malnourished populations, and treatment costs in excess of \$300 per patient.

Normal rainfall patterns in Ler generally permit planting to take place until late June. The situation has already reached the point where, if seed alone were provided, much of it would perforce be consumed as food, but MSF has agreed in writing to monitor food distributions if these can be delivered to Ler. WVRD, in the expectation of donor funding, has agreed to undertake the purchase of seed and its transport as far as Bor.

Substantial quantities of WFP food have already accumulated in Bor because wet road conditions prevent WFP from delivering food beyond Bor to Ayod, Waat, and Nasir. WFP has expressed willingness to lend a portion of these commodities to an NGO willing to deliver them (outside the OLS umbrella) to Ler. There is also in Bor a 60 MT capacity barge, formerly owned and operated by ICRC but now under the nominal control of Norwegian Peoples' Aid (NPA). Although in need of repair and the subject of some dispute between NPA and SRRA, the barge is potentially capable of transporting seed to Ler in sufficient time for planting this season, and food commodities in sufficient quantity to enable the population of Ler to survive without consuming their seed.

The extent of need in Ler District is critical and adequately documented, and the elements of a solution--food, seeds, transport, and monitoring--are in hand. What is now required is appropriate pressure on the relevant agencies (SRRA and NPA) to make the barge operational as quickly as possible, and a guarantee of funding for WVRD seed procurement and transport.

RECOMMENDATION: The USG should promote the rehabilitation and use of barge service by NPA from Bor to Ler, and should encourage and assist WVRD to provide food and seed to Ler on an urgent basis.

FINDING III: Additional fishing equipment could significantly ameliorate the effects of food shortages in Nasir, Yirol, Ler, Ayod, Waat, Akobo, and Pibor.

DISCUSSION: Fish is available in abundant quantities in the lakes around Yirol and in the rivers (the Nile, Sobat, Akobo, and Pibor) which flow by Ler, Ayod, Waat, Nasir, Akobo, and Pibor. In each of these areas fish has historically been an important source of nutrition, particularly during the annual hunger-gap period (June-September) that normally coincides with the time of highest waters and greatest availability of fish. Because the protracted civil strife in southern Sudan has

caused an almost complete breakdown in the economic structure, however, there has been no normal supply of fishing line, hooks, and nets in these areas for a number of years.

The need to make substantial inputs of fishing equipment to these and other communities was recognized in last year's OLS report (Cf. A Report on Food Sources and Needs, UNICEF, June 1990), but UNICEF underestimated the amount of equipment required, requesting funding of only \$70,000. The bulk of this assistance was provided to year-round fishing communities of Monthany, mainly between Torit and Bor, areas that can also be supplied with grain even during the rainy season.

Nasir and Yirol, especially, but also Ler, Ayod, Waat, Akobo, and Pibor are needy communities that cannot be assisted with appreciable amounts of food at this stage due to severe logistical constraints imposed by rains. They can, however, receive by UN Twin Otter sufficient quantities of fishing materials to impact substantially on food availability during the critical hunger-gap period, provided immediate steps are taken to procure and deliver these items.

RECOMMENDATION: The USG should immediately make available to UNICEF up to \$250,000 for the urgent procurement and delivery of fishing lines, hooks and nets to Nasir and Yirol (each 20 percent of total), and to Ler, Ayod, Waat, Akobo, and Pibor (each 12 percent of total).

FINDING IV: The population around Nasir relies to a considerable extent on deliveries of food to Itang refugee camp in Ethiopia.

DISCUSSION: During the Assessment Team visit to Nasir, we interviewed a score of farmers to determine the amounts and sources of food and seed they had available to them. We found that both grain and seed, when available, had in almost all cases derived from Itang. Interviews indicated that this situation had prevailed for at least the last year and continued until the end of April. One informant also reported that, in 1990, the SPLA-controlled barge stationed in Gambella had made two deliveries to Nasir of maize obtained in Itang, and that this food was distributed to "the needy" in the district. In addition, we found that Malakal, Nasir's historical market, is not currently accessible to the population of Nasir and that, in any case, Malakal does not contain adequate food even for its own besieged population.

Subsequent to our field assessment, we have received credible reports of large numbers of Sudanese refugees abandoning Itang and Fugnido camps in Ethiopia, due apparently to a climate of insecurity in those areas and a sense of abandonment by the international community. (UNHCR, MSF, and GPDRE Administration for Refugee Affairs personnel are all reported to have left Gambella District and it is uncertain whether any food deliveries have been made to the refugee camps during the past month or so.) The return of any sizable numbers of these refugees to Nasir, Akobo, or Pibor will undoubtedly place such an intolerable strain on existing food and medical resources that disaster--the deaths of tens of thousands of the overwhelmingly child populations of the camps--may well be inevitable.

Neither Nasir, Akobo, nor Pibor are currently accessible by road, and none has an airfield capable of accommodating more than a Twin Otter aircraft. The only conceivable way large quantities of food could be delivered to those areas, therefore, is by an expensive and cumbersome air-drop procedure. The assessment team believes that a more workable solution would be to effect immediate resumption of food deliveries to refugee camps in Ethiopia in order to signal continued international involvement in the camps and, hopefully, to entice those who have abandoned the camps to return to them. While pursuing a policy of rationalization of food deliveries to the camps based on actual populations, it may also be worthwhile to undertake a regulated, and necessarily limited, cross-border feeding operation from Gambella to Nasir, Akobo, and Pibor using the SPLA barge. Such a program could assist the present populations in those areas, provide "bridging" assistance to allow fleeing refugee populations to return to their Ethiopian camps, and demonstrate that international assistance can reach needy persons in Sudan even in the absence of inflated population figures in refugee camps.

RECOMMENDATION: The USG should make every effort to effect the immediate resumption of food deliveries to Itang refugee camp. The USG should also seriously consider supporting a limited cross-border feeding program by river from Gambella to Nasir, Akobo, and Pibor.

FINDING V: There is an urgent need for the restoration of medical and supplementary feeding services in Yirol, Nasir, Bor, and Waat.

DISCUSSION: In the areas visited in Eastern Equatoria, Kapoeta and Torit, the team found strong NGO presence and the existence of good SRRA medical facilities, staff and community outreach, due to the proximity of Kapoeta and Torit to the field headquarters of the SRRA, UNICEF and IRC, as well as the accessibility of these areas throughout the rainy season. Kajo-Kaji, located in the breadbasket of the South, Western Equatoria, has a sophisticated health system, and little malnutrition. MEDIC and IAS interventions in the provision of potable water in these areas has also had a significant impact in the control of gastro-intestinal disease.

In Kapoeta, the hospital is run by a very accomplished SRRA doctor; IRC runs an MCH clinic--including medical services, feeding, and EPI; UNICEF provides basic medicines; and, WVRD provides more sophisticated drugs and equipment. The Torit hospital is well-staffed with qualified medical personnel; it is supported by UNICEF with basic drugs and by Norwegian Church Aid with medical staff and supplementary medicines. The Torit hospital has an extensive outreach network of 61 PHCUs and 8 feeding centers throughout the district, all supplied regularly by UNICEF and the NGOs with drugs and food. The hospital also runs a successful EPI program using three mobile teams.

Kajo Kaji hospital has an SRRA doctor and a pharmacist, serving a population of 240,000. The hospital renovations and outreach activities (i.e. EPI) are supported by AICF through a grant from OFDA. Doctors working in Kajo Kaji did not raise with the visiting USAID team any particular health concern except sleeping sickness, but made requests for further physical improvements to the hospital.

Moving away from Eastern Equatoria to Bor, Yirol, Waat, and Nasir--areas where OLS operates sporadically due to the GOS "on-again, off-again" policy on OLS flights, and where ground access is possible only during the dry season--one finds that medical services have broken down, hospitals are virtually nonfunctional, and there is little or no nutritional monitoring going on. These are also the areas where drought and floods have alternately caused massive harvest failures over the past three years, where displaced people from conflict areas around Malakal, Rumbek and Bentiu have gathered, and where the deadly disease Kala Azar is taking its toll on those people whose weakened condition has left them vulnerable to this AIDS-like virus.

In Bor, although there is a regional UNICEF officer and the NGO INTERAID working in supplementary feeding, the hospital services have broken down since the departure of the German Emergency Doctors (GED). GED had been involved with the renovation of the hospital and in the provision of nursing services and an SRRA doctor had also been assigned there. GED departed after disputes with the SRRA leadership and the doctor has gone away for personal medical treatment. The hospital is now being run by a pharmacist, who has no medical background or training in how to run a hospital. Furthermore, the hospital was bombed by the GOS Antinov in March, killing a number of patients. As a result, the supplementary feeding program run by INTERAID at the hospital has been stopped, and no one comes to the hospital for treatment. During our visit there were only 6 in-patients, and these were being cared for by SRRA nurses. Patients requiring anything beyond chloroquine or aspirin are referred to the Torit or Kapoeta hospitals. In the absence of a doctor, there is virtually no supervision of any of the 17 PHCUs in the area.

ICRC worked in Virol up until February 1990, providing medicines for both EPI and cattle vaccinations as well as general medical supplies and equipment for the hospital. In November 1990, ICRC withdrew, leaving the Virol hospital with a few vaccines and medicines. Once that supply was exhausted, all serious medical treatment and outreach in the area around Virol ceased. The hospital now accepts no in-patients, the nine PHCUs in the area have been closed for lack of drugs. The district's four Medical Assistants have been recalled to Virol, where they assist in administering a modest out-patient department at the hospital that functions in accordance with the vagaries of an uncertain drug supply. (One recent shipment came on the NPA/SRRA barge, but is insufficient to restart the PHCUs, and barely enough to keep the hospital OPD functioning at a minimal level.) When there are no medicines, the hospital treats no one; when medicines arrive, the out-patient clinic does brisk business of 120-150 new patients a day. There are presently no vaccines for EPI or cattle vaccinations, and therefore the EPI and cattle teams are idle.

Of particular concern in the Virol area is the lack of potable water and the movement of displaced people into Virol from around the government-held towns of Rumbek and Thiet, creating a larger at-risk population in an area with no health services. The traditional wells are all poorly maintained and many have caved in. There are several boreholes in Virol town itself, but these do not serve the majority of the population who live in the outlying areas; most people collect water from the nearby lakes. Water borne disease is pervasive, and malaria is so endemic that the doctor estimates that 80 percent of the population has the sickness. Enlarged spleens from repeated bouts of malaria are very common in children.

Yirol was requested as an OLS destination in early 1991, but no flights have yet been approved. Yirol has had two relief deliveries by the NPA/SRRA barge, but the food and medicines delivered were inadequate to meet the needs of the area. The nearest medical facility with in-patient services is in Ler, which is isolated from Yirol by extensive marshes.

Waat has a health center staffed by a Medical Assistant. Drug supplies are irregular here even though Waat has been more accessible than Yirol both by land and by air. The absence of any sources of potable water and the rapid growth of the incidence of Kala Azar in the area has overly taxed the fragile health system. There is no EPI program due to the irregularity of flights which precludes adequate supervision by a doctor.

There is also no doctor in Nasir, and only a medical assistant provides basic health care to the local population of about 238,000 as well as the numbers of travellers who migrate through Nasir on their way to and from Itang refugee camp in Ethiopia. Medical supplies can only reach Nasir by air. During the rainy season, even the Twin Otter cannot land regularly at Nasir, and flight authorizations are in any case dependent on the whims of the GOS.

The hospital in Nasir is a shattered structure located along the river, the small in-patient ward unprotected from the hordes of mosquitoes that invade the area during the rains. Medical equipment is non-existent. Since the bombing of Nasir on May 15, all the in-patients have fled, but a few out-patients still come to the daily clinic. Medical supplies are so scarce that the sick must often go untreated; victims of puff adder bites usually die for lack of an antivenom. The introduction of Kala Azar into the area--possibly transmitted by those moving from infected areas through Nasir to Itang--is a frightening complication of an already difficult situation.

There are no boreholes in Nasir, and potable water is non-existent. Water-borne diseases are rampant as the population drinks, bathes, and defecates in the river. Medical supplies are insufficient to keep up with the rate of gastro-intestinal illnesses. There is no nutritional monitoring in Nasir district, nor is there an active EPI program which could be used as the basis for a nutritional monitoring program.

RECOMMENDATION: The USG should actively encourage and financially support the expansion of medical activities by NGOs already operational in Southern Sudan, and should urge additional NGOs to become involved in the area. The USG should also press the GOS to permit the resumption of ICRC activities in the South.

FINDING VI: Food distributions in Southern Sudan are not sufficiently targetted according to need and neither WFP nor the NGOs have adequate control over those distributions.

DISCUSSION: All USG food aid for SPLA-held areas of Southern Sudan has gone to Eastern Equatoria, while WFP food has gone to areas north of Equatoria. USAID has recently approved a WVRD proposal to take food to Yirol and Ler by barge (see Finding II, above), but because of a May 1, 1991 ban on the export of maize from Kenya, WVRD has not yet been able to move any food to those areas.

USG food for Southern Sudan is provided to WVRD and CRS, who in turn work with the SRRA to distribute the food. WVRD and CRS transport the food to their designated areas in Sudan and it is then either transported directly to the distribution site or first to a regional warehouse and later to the distribution site. SRRA decides, with a varying amount of coordination with the NGO involved, how much is to be sent to each distribution site, and SRRA supervises the actual distribution through local/tribal officials. The NGO whose area it is sends monitors to witness the distribution whenever possible, or sends monitors to the area after the distribution has taken place to see that the food has been distributed as planned. However, the NGOs do not always get to each distribution site and since the majority of local officials are illiterate, no written records are kept at the local level.

Targetting of the food by the SRRA appears to be rather haphazard. The NGOs have worked with the SRRA to try to work out a distribution plan in advance of the arrival of the food in Sudan, and WVRD has even been able for the first time to elicit from SRRA a 3-month distribution plan (April through June 1991), but when the trucks arrive in Sudan, the plan is subject to change.

The actual decision on how much food should go where is determined by SRRA based on informal reports they receive from their staff and local officials, and on their judgement of the traditional tribal system of equity. No attempt is made to do systematic surveys of the area to determine actual need in a given village or to determine whether one particular village or area is more needy than another. Therefore, there is no certainty that the food is going to the neediest area, and, in fact, there are indications that SRRA attempts to share the food equally whenever possible.

The assessment team felt that this was probably the major weakness in the food aid program in Southern Sudan and needs to be addressed as soon as possible, jointly with all those involved in food distribution.

It should be noted that the present system of food distribution is the "traditional cultural way" of sharing largesse. This is also true of non-food items, but it is food which most needs to be carefully targetted and it is also food which seems to be the most politically sensitive, both to the SPLA/SRRA and to the GOS. There will, no doubt, be great resistance from SRRA and local officials to any attempt on our part to impose our way of doing things on them.

RECOMMENDATION: The USG, together with other major donors, should convene a meeting in Nairobi with appropriate SRRA, WFP, and relevant NGO representatives to agree upon a common set of criteria for linking a determination of need to actual food distributions which meet the humanitarian objectives and accountability requirements of the donors.

FINDING VII: A significant portion of relief food in southern Sudan reaches other than the intended beneficiaries.

DISCUSSION: It is clear from NGO reports on the food aid program, as well as from indications received by the team during the assessment mission, that a sizable portion of relief food goes to SRRA staff. We also noted that a substantial amount of food is distributed monthly to Kidepo, nominally a camp for displaced persons but clearly a site in which a major part of the population engage in training activities of a military nature. In addition, relief food appears to be received in some quantity by the FACE school at Pallataka, although distributions to that site are not indicated in food aid program reports.

Virtually all of the civil administration in SPLA-held areas of Southern Sudan, such as it is, is made up of SRRA personnel. All officials involved in civil administration, medical, agricultural, educational, veterinary, water and sanitation activities, and relief distribution are SRRA staff. None of them is paid any salary since the SRRA has no source of funding, and the official line is that they are supposed to be "supported" by the local community. Therefore, the food they receive through the food aid program could be considered a form of food-for-work, since it is they who are administering the relief program.

Kidepo, the camp for displaced persons, has a population of about 6,000 persons, of whom some 4,000 are adult men and another 500 to 800 are unaccompanied minors, all boys. During our site visit, we saw evidence that the boys were attending school, at least part time; but we also saw about 500 men in a number of units marching in close-order drill with uniform lengths of bamboo, in place of rifles, on their shoulders. Since December, Kidepo has received an average of 38 MT of relief food monthly through WVRD. This amount of food would provide a half-ration for all 6,000 residents. In March, the allocation rose to 61 MT, and the SRRA has proposed an allocation of 50 MT monthly in their April-June distribution plan.

At Pallataka, there are 1,500 primary school-aged boys whos, since December 1990, have been living in roofless buildings that are intended to be converted into classrooms. For the moment, at least, there is no primary education being imparted at Pallataka and observers have voiced their concern that the proposed curriculum--while not overtly military in nature--is not appropriate to the needs and capabilities of children under the age of twelve. While Pallataka has accordingly not received the support of the donor community, there is nevertheless a presumption that relief food makes its way in inadequate quantities to the institution.

The assessment team does not necessarily object in principle to USG food being used for support of the SRRA bureaucracy or for the feeding of children at Pallataka or, for that matter, for the children at Kidepo. However, we do note that, in accordance with the humanitarian aims of USG relief programs, most recipients at Kidepo are unlikely to be eligible for assistance. We also believe that USAID should be aware that food aid is being used to support the SRRA and, apparently, the FACE school at Pallataka, and that USAID should make a conscious decision whether to continue support to either or both institutions. At present we are not providing any direct assistance to the SRRA, although they have several times requested financial support for their offices in Nairobi and Kapoeta.

RECOMMENDATION: The USG should decide to what extent it wishes to support the various institutions in SPLA-controlled areas of Southern Sudan and communicate this decision directly to the SRRA as well as to the NGOs involved in food relief programs.

FINDING VIII: The absence in the field of a UN official with authority to make operational decisions within the parameters of OLS inhibits the functioning of UN agencies in Southern Sudan.

DISCUSSION: Operation Lifeline Staff headquarters are in Nairobi, where senior UN staff from UNICEF and WFP coordinate food and non-food interventions with NGOs and the SRRA. Each agency has placed regional representative in principal districts to handle day-to-day program operations, to resolve local disputes that might arise between SRRA, NGOs, and/or the UN, and to receive and dispatch cargo based on agreed-upon plans with SRRA headquarters and OLS/Nairobi.

None of these individuals, many of whom have extensive field experience, has the authority to make operational program decisions without clearance from Nairobi. For example, WFP had several hundred tons of food in Bor that obviously were beginning to rot from having sat in a warehouse for over a year. This food had originally been designated for Waat, but a GOS prohibition on movement of convoys had left the food physically stranded in Bor. With the onset of rains, any hopes that this food could be delivered were dashed. The local representative of WFP wished to distribute the food in areas around Bor, based on an SRRA distribution plan, as soon as possible to avoid further deterioration of the stock, but had to refer back to Nairobi for approval of the allocations. Often such decisions from Nairobi take time, for the OLS staff there is overworked and understaffed. Furthermore, the senior OLS/Nairobi staff rarely travel to the field and are therefore not in the best position to make operational decisions.

When a repeat of this situation appeared to be in the offing earlier this year, and a food convoy could not proceed to its planned destination, a WFP field official took it upon himself to order the food distributed directly from trucks to needy communities that remained within reach. That field official subsequently lost his job because of this unauthorized action.

The assessment team recognizes that there are certain situations which must be handled by Nairobi, but in a program that can be as time sensitive as the one in southern Sudan (windows of opportunity for moving food may be 24/48 hours), there should be someone from each agency with the authority to make operational decisions without referring constantly to Nairobi. Local representatives of both UN agencies expressed their frustration over the current set-up and thought it would make a real difference if a senior person were present in the field.

A related issue is the prohibition on UN contacts with the SPLA. This rule makes it extremely difficult for UN workers to be effective in their jobs. The SPLA and SRRA are closely linked, and very often the SPLA actually directs SRRA actions.

RECOMMENDATION: WFP and UNICEF should each appoint to Southern Sudan a senior officer with the authority to make operational decisions.

FINDING IX: The situation in the area of Akon, particularly in respect to displaced persons returning from Khartoum, may be especially critical.

DISCUSSION: The Assessment Team was unable to visit Akon due to the lack of GOS authorization for OLS flights to the area, but reports of large numbers of displaced persons returning to southern Sudan through Akon were widespread and persistent.

If returnees are arriving in Akon in substantial numbers, it is most unlikely that they are bringing with them any significant amount of food or seed, and it is probable that health concerns are very serious. While it is difficult to envision the elements of a relief effort that could completely stave off disaster if the reports of returnees prove valid, it is nevertheless conceivable that some measures could be undertaken that would mitigate the dimensions of such an occurrence. In any case, the very existence of a disaster in the making should not go unnoticed.

RECOMMENDATION: REDSO/ESA should make an assessment visit to Akon at the earliest opportunity, and USAID/Khartoum should similarly attempt a survey trip to Aweil as soon as security permits.

FINDING X: There appears to be significant long-term potential for greatly increasing food availability in Southern Sudan through the expansion of fishing activities and the introduction of alternative crops.

DISCUSSION: Food security is essential if southern Sudan is to recover from the devastation of the civil war. In the past three years a combination of drought and floods has destroyed crops in most areas north of Bor. In particular, an apparent retardation of the flow of the Nile annually creates a massive

flood plain in the area between Bor and Kongor, making it impossible for farmers to cultivate their traditional maize crop. According to Achuil, our SRRRA agriculturalist travelling companion, rice cultivation in this area could encompass vast areas and produce good yields. He believes that the introduction of rice cultivation to the small farmer would be a way to help them deal with a changing environment that is making maize cultivation impossible. The OFDA Famine Mitigation project might be a vehicle for testing rice cultivation and acceptance in this area. In the longer term, the Bor-Kongor area could be a rice-exporting region.

As noted in Finding III, fish has traditionally provided an important dietary supplement for riverine farming and pastoral communities during during the annual hunger-gap period. In addition, however, fishing has historically been the full-time, year-round occupation of the Manthany, a Dinka clan settled along the Nile and its tributaries mainly between Juba and Bor.

Civil war has caused periodic displacement of these fishing communities as well as a disruption in markets resulting in a shortage of fishing lines, nets and hooks, as well as an almost complete absence of affordable boats. A demand for fish still exists in the non-riverine towns of southern Sudan, however, and traditional traders in this market include many ethnic southern Sudanese who remain in the area.

A program to revitalize the fishing industry in southern Sudan would also present an ideal opportunity for donors and NGOs to support the formation of producer cooperatives where scarce resources, such as fishing boats and nets, could be shared. Assistance to fishing cooperatives could stimulate the revival of old trade routes, create new ones, and attract urgently needed consumer goods.

RECOMMENDATION: OFDA should seriously consider funding, through NGOs willing to engage themselves in southern Sudan, pilot effortss that seek to increase food production and/or distribution within the region. OFDA may wish to consider using the Famine Mitigation Project or other appropriate mechanisms toward this end.

FINDING XI: Funding, procurement and transport of relief commodities for distribution in Southern Sudan requires substantial lead time because of the logistical constraints imposed by infrastructure, topography, and climate.

DISCUSSION: Relief commodities for southern Sudan virtually all come from or through Kenya or Uganda. In the early stages of OLS, commodities also came from northern Sudan, but this has now been reduced to an almost insignificant trickle from Khartoum to Juba. The commodities from Kenya and Uganda are either acquired locally or transshipped from Mombasa through those countries into Sudan. Obviously, any commodities shipped from the U.S. require several months lead time, and even items acquired locally in Kenya and Uganda often takes some time to obtain and transport to Sudan. Most of the USG relief food for southern Sudan has been obtained through swap arrangements, under which USG wheat is exchanged with the Government of Kenya for maize which WVRD and CRS transport to Sudan. This swap arrangement has not been without problems--because of a bad harvest in Kenya, for example, the GOK has banned the export of food since May 1, 1991--and often takes several months of bureaucratic processing, but it has usually provided the food commodities required.

The main problem with getting relief commodities to destinations in southern Sudan has been logistical difficulties within Sudan itself. The road infrastructure has been both neglected and damaged because of civil conflict which has continued intermittently since 1955. Most roads are passable in the dry season (December to mid-April), but once the rains start virtually anyplace north of Equatoria and east of the Nile river is completely cut off. West of the Nile, there has been fighting for the last year or more, along a line stretching from Juba to Yei to Maridi, effectively cutting off everything west of the river, except right along the Ugandan border. That area is now reported to be quickly settling down and NGOs are hoping within the next few weeks to begin serving Yirol, Akot, Mundri, Maridi and Yambio, all of which are accessible--even in the rainy season--from western Uganda. However, it is impossible to go further north, to northern Bahr El Ghazal (Aweil, Akon, Gogrial), during the rainy season.

In addition to the constraints imposed by the poor road system, there is also an almost complete lack of fuel and trucks outside the aegis of the UN and NGOs. Relief commodities are imported using Kenyan or Uganda trucking firms and are carried by those same trucks all the way to the final destination. SRRA has a few trucks scattered around the countryside (mostly left behind by NGOs), but has very little fuel and no money to keep them running.

Many towns in southern Sudan have airstrips, but very few of them can accomodate anything other than light aircraft. The airstrips which can handle a C-130 Hercules are Kongor, Yiol, Ler, Akon, Yambio and Thiet. Most of the airstrips--even those which can accomodate C-130s--are affected by weather, closing for days at a time after a heavy rain. In addition, the distances are considerable, making air transport on any large scale very expensive. Therefore, airlifts are not considered a viable option for delivering significant amounts of relief commodities to communities in southern Sudan.

For a relief operation to be successful it is vital that the roads be upgraded and maintained, and that transport be accomplished in the dry season (December to mid-April). Planning should therefore begin in advance of December, so that the pipeline through Kenya and Uganda can begin flowing before December. Work should be done to improve the roads as soon as they dry out in order to take maximum advantage of the short dry season. The main harvest is in October/November, but by September we will already have a good indication of what the needs are going to be next year and planning can begin.

RECOMMENDATION: A second, broad in-field assessment--similar to that undertaken by this mission--should be carried out in southern Sudan in September, 1991.

APPENDIX

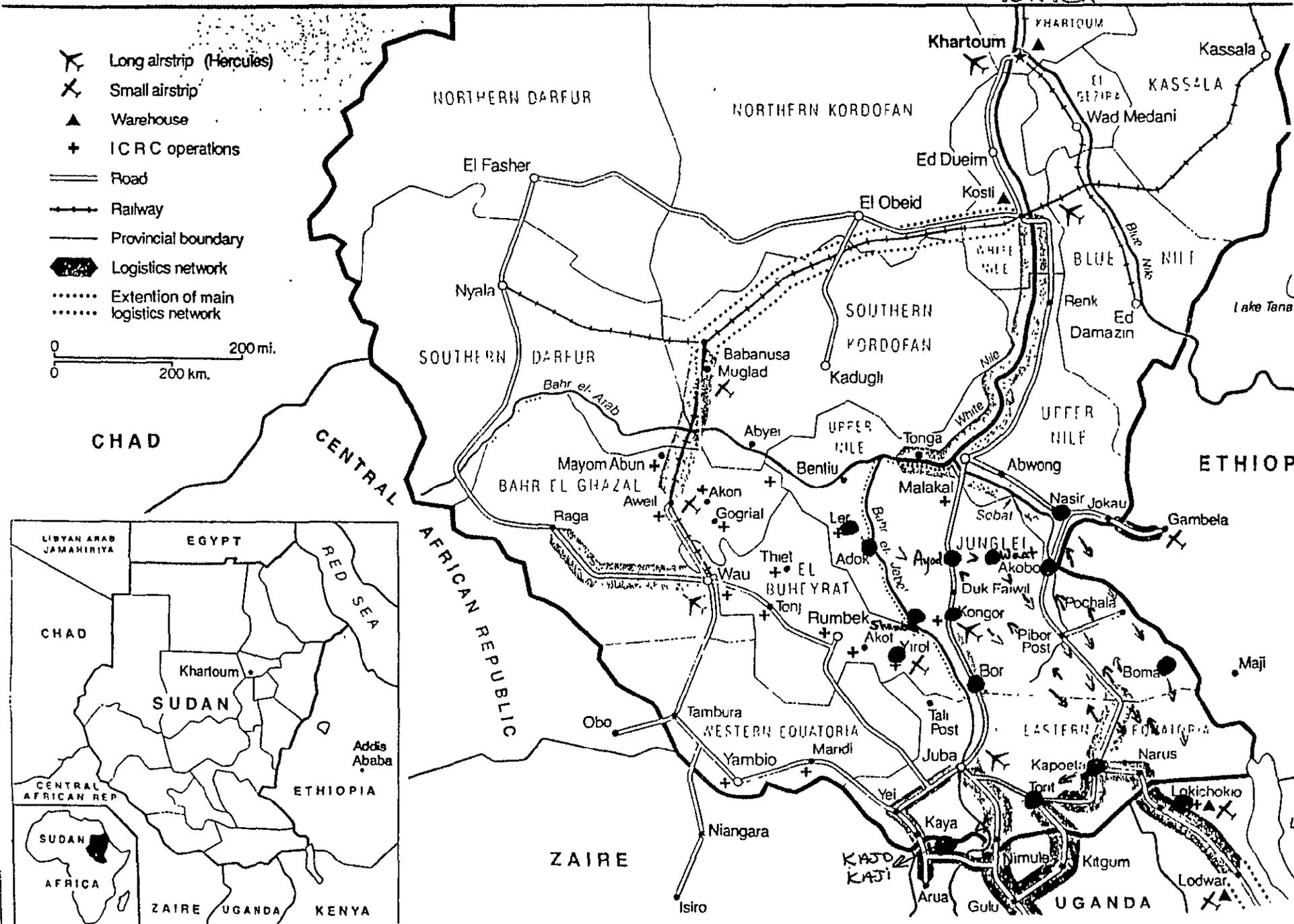
Operation Lifeline Sudan

USAID ASSESSMENT TEAM TRAVEL ROUTES

LAND AIR WATER
● SITES VISITED

- ✈ Long airstrip (Hercules)
- ✕ Small airstrip
- ▲ Warehouse
- + I C R C operations
- == Road
- +— Railway
- Provincial boundary
- ▬ Logistics network
- ⋯⋯⋯ Extention of main logistics network

0 200 mi.
0 200 km.



APPENDIX B

USAID ASSESSMENT TEAM
TRAVEL SCHEDULE
SOUTHERN SUDAN

<u>DATE</u>	<u>VISIT/TRAVEL</u>	<u>OVERNIGHT</u>
April 27	Kapoeta	Kapoeta
April 28	Kapoeta, Bunio	Kapoeta
April 29	Khor Machi Chukudum	
April 30	Kidepo Torit Chakhari Gericol East	Torit Torit
May 1	Moti Magwe Pallataka	 Torit
May 2	Ngangala Tibari Pariak	 Bor
May 3	Makwac Bor	 Bor
May 4	Bor-Kongor	Kongor
May 5	Kongor Jalle	 Barge
May 6	Shambe Yirol	 Yirol
May 7	Adior Shambe	 Barge
May 8	Adok Ler	 Ler
May 9	Ler	Ler
May 10	Duar	Ler
May 11	Ler environs	Ler
May 12	Ler	Ler
May 13	Ler-Lokichokio	Lokichokio

May 14	Lokichokio-Nairobi (TS,KF) None (TB)	Nairobi Lokichokio
May 15	None	Lokichokio (TB) Nairobi (TS,KF)
May 16	Ayod (TB) Waat (TB) None (TS,KF)	Lokichokio Nairobi
May 17	None (TB) Nairobi-Lokichokio (KF) None (TS)	Lokichokio Lokichokio Nairobi
May 18	Nasir Pananyang (TB,KF) None (TS)	Nasir Nairobi
May 19	Nasir, Duarding, etc. (TB,KF) None (TS)	Nasir Nairobi
May 20	Boma (TB,KF) Nairobi-Lokichokio (TS)	Lokichokio Lokichokio
May 21	Akobo (TS,TB) Lokichokio-Nairobi (KF)	Lokichokio Nairobi
May 22	None (TS,TB) None (KF)	Lokichokio Nairobi
May 23	Kajo Keji (TS,TB) None (KF)	Nairobi Nairobi

APPENDICES

APPENDIX C

LIST OF CONTACTS

<u>Location</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Name</u>	
Nairobi	UNICEF/OLS	Vincent O'Reilly Detlaf Palm Adrian Pintos Michelle John Suzy Cohen Anthony Owereko	
	WFP/OLS	Nils Engvist Louis Imbleau	
	SPLA	Dr. John Garang	
	SRRA	Elijah Malok Pierre Ohure James Duku	
	CRS	E. Scott Osborne Berhe Berhan	
	WVRD	Leo Ballard Bruce Menser Mark Janz	
	ICRC	Pierre-Andre Conod Geoff Loane	
	IRC	Duke Miller Ann Zimmerman	
	NPA	Egil Nielsen	
	Medair	Steve Box	
	AirServ	Warren Thurn	
	MSF/Holland	Johann Hesselink	
	LWR	Sigurd Hanson	
	Medic	Bruce Pike	
	ACROSS	Dan Kelly	
	SIL	Dan Butler Russ Hersman	
	Lokichokio	UN/OLS	Bob McCarthy
		AirServ	Sileshi Motola

Kapoeta	SRRA	Dr. Dau Aleer Acueil Melith Moses Mabior Deu Peter Kidi Attem Garang Dr. Achol Dr. Riak
	SPLA	Cmdr. Pagan Abit Loki Lincoln
	UNICEF	Ian Lethbridge
	IRC WVRD	Richard Jacquot Mario Rodrigues
Torit	SPLA	Kuol Man Yang
	SRRA	Urbano Jobojobo Alecio Clement
	UNICEF	Humphrey Ware
	SKI WVRD NSCC	Emma McClure Varghese Rev. Roger Schrock Fr. Matthew Haupmann
	Diocese of Torit	Bishop Paride Taban
Pallataka	Diocese of Torit	Fr. John Garry Fr. Jim Kennedy
Bor	SPLA	Aru Man
	SRRA	Juma Guet Dr. Wilson Deng
	UNICEF WFP	Dr. Bernadette Kumar Jean-Luc Siblot David Richardson
	Inter Aid	Alex and Vilma Gomez Celle Gomez
Kongor	SRRA	Peter Deng
	UNICEF	Myint Maung Ruth Oloo Peter Flanagan
	WFP	Ben Martinson
Yirol	SRRA	Louis Ohide Paul Dr. Michael Mabor

Ler	SRRA MSF/Holland	Bior Pager Dr. Stephen Nyak Dr. Philippe Barbosa Anna Da Roos Hugo Hulshof Cor De Windt Marga Goris Carry van Gyzen
Duar	MSF/Holland	Dr. Jill Seaman Dr. Judith Schorsdar David Ashford
Ayod	SRRA	Gabriel Atem
Waat	SRRA	Timothy Taban Juc David Yien
Nasir	SRRA	John Chol John Majok Deng Sudan Nyuon Steven Mayen
Akobo	SPLM SRRA Medair	Commander Riak Andrew Bul Peter Rial John Cebur Andrea Winklemann Laura Longino
Kajo Kaji	SRRA	Hillary Bulbol Dr. Pius Subek Dr. Charles Taban