

## Vanguardia de Ideas

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**Zach Vertin, “A Poisoned Well: Lessons in Mediation from South Sudan’s Troubled Peace Process”, New York, International Peace Institute, April 2018.**

Abstract:

“In 2013, the world’s newest nation—the Republic of South Sudan—descended into civil war. External actors moved quickly to convene peace talks under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), leading to a comprehensive peace deal in August 2015. But the agreement unraveled just a year later, before it could be implemented, and the war metastasized.

This paper examines the IGAD-led peace process for South Sudan from 2013 to 2015. Viewed through a prism of mediation best practice, it is a critical assessment of the attempt to negotiate a settlement of the conflict and a distillation of lessons learned.

While singular conclusions are hard to draw, the paper concludes that the process may have helped to slow South Sudan’s civil war and provided a platform to confront the fundamental changes required to transform state and society. But inherent flaws meant the peace deal lacked the political will, broad national ownership, and implementing authorities necessary to make it stick. As IGAD member states and international partners now attempt to “revitalize” the peace process, they would be wise to evaluate, and build upon, its lessons.”

[https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/1804\\_Poisoned-Well.pdf](https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/1804_Poisoned-Well.pdf)

**Francis Ghilès, “Will EU Dare have a Real Foreign Policy?”, Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, Opinion 535, 6/2018.**

“Just over a month ago, French President Emmanuel Macron pushed the limits of international diplomacy when his last-ditch appeal to salvage the Iran nuclear deal, wrong-footed his European allies and was met with intransigence by US President Donald Trump. “The purpose of all wars is peace” observed St Augustine, one of the fathers of the Christian Church in the first millennium. But, as Andrew Bacevich, author of America’s War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History, makes clear, “wars without end and a (US) military system incapable of ending anything it begins are facts in our present lives”. St Augustine’s aphorism “just might require a bit of updating” he

adds which explains no doubt why if “prior to Trump, the EU’s influence on US policy was minimal; today it is non-existent”. Mr. Macron’s attempt to cultivate a personal bond with Trump showed him to have badly misjudged the US president. Preserving the existing nuclear accord could serve as the cornerstone of a new, expanded deal that would address the Islamic Republic’s ballistic missile program and destabilizing behaviour across the Middle East ran headlong into Trump’s competing instinct on foreign policy. [...]

The US move on Iran casts a harsh light on Europe’s vulnerability to Trump’s America First approach. The US can use three types of tools on European business interests in Iran – fines, a ban on doing business in the US and blocking access to the US financial system and the dollar payment zone it mediates for companies involved in Iran and their bankers.

Martin Sandbu recently outlined in the *Financial Times* what bypassing the US financial system would entail and how it could be done. If Europe creates sanctions bypass tools, “they would have three significant effects. One is that Europe would have a particular type of leverage over Iran much in the way the US has leverage over Europe; by providing financial connectivity with the rest of the world. The second is that it would demonstratively defy US policy; it would be (for Europe) an uncharacteristically escalating move. The third and biggest consequence would be the creation of an embryonic alternative global payment and settlement system to the dollar-based one.” Europe has never shown such wit, assertiveness, dare one say courage. [...] Now is the time to seize the opportunity offered by Mr. Trump’s provocations and puts his words where his mouth is.”

[https://www.cidob.org/publicaciones/serie\\_de\\_publicacion/opinion/europa/will\\_eu\\_dare\\_have\\_a\\_real\\_foreign\\_policy](https://www.cidob.org/publicaciones/serie_de_publicacion/opinion/europa/will_eu_dare_have_a_real_foreign_policy)

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Observatorio Paz, Seguridad y Defensa.

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