



Backgrounder

Executive Summary

No. 1449

June 13, 2001

TO STOP SUDAN'S BRUTAL JIHAD, SUPPORT SUDAN'S OPPOSITION

JAMES PHILLIPS

Sudan's 18-year-old civil war—the longest-running internal conflict in the world today—has claimed the lives of more than 2 million people, displaced about 5 million people inside the country, and sent another half-million into exile. The conflict pits the Sudanese government, dominated by Muslim Arabs from northern Sudan, against an opposition coalition composed predominantly of black Christians and animists living in the south.

In recent years, Sudan's radical Islamic regime has escalated the onslaught to genocidal proportions. It has resorted to systematic bombing of civilians, starvation, slavery, ethnic cleansing, religious persecution, and other human rights abuses to break the will of the opposition.

Although Sudan has been relegated to the back burner of American foreign policy for many years, the Bush Administration is poised to become more actively engaged in diplomacy to resolve the conflict. Secretary of State Colin Powell proposed that the United States seek an end to Sudan's barbarous civil war during his recent trip to Africa. While this goal is laudable, Powell's call for evenhandedness suggests a moral equivalence that ignores the role played by the Khartoum regime in repressing its own people and supporting international terrorism against the United States and many other countries. Moreover, by shortchanging

the Sudanese opposition's need for external economic and possibly military aid, an evenhanded policy focused on achieving a diplomatic settlement plays into the hands of Sudan's dictator, Omar al-Bashir.

An exclusively diplomatic U.S. approach to Sudan's festering humanitarian crisis would allow Bashir's regime to engage in endless negotiations as a way to buy time to score a military victory. Proximity talks between the Bashir regime and the Sudanese opposition at a June 2, 2001, regional peace summit in Nairobi, Kenya, made little progress. In fact, Khartoum has flirted with negotiations in the past, only to abandon them when its military position improved. The military balance of power now is shifting in favor of the Bashir regime because of Sudan's growing oil exports, which began in 1999.

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Approaching Sudan's internal crisis purely as a humanitarian issue is self-defeating. The United States has poured more than \$1.2 billion of food aid into Sudan since 1989, yet 3 million people still are at risk of starvation, largely as a result of the regime's scorched-earth tactics. Moreover, the Khartoum regime continues to bite the hand that feeds it by supporting international terrorists like Osama bin Laden who have killed Americans, as well as Islamic revolutionaries who threaten American allies.

The problem is not just ending the civil war but ending the Sudanese government's genocidal policies, and it is not likely that this can be accomplished without a change of regime. Although the recent purge of ultra-radical Islamic ideologue Hassan al-Turabi has led the Khartoum dictatorship to moderate its rhetoric, it remains to be seen whether the regime is truly interested in a diplomatic settlement of the war.

Instead of approaching the Sudan issue as purely a humanitarian crisis that calls for even-handedness, the Bush Administration should oppose any regime in Khartoum that insists on imposing strict Islamic law (Sharia) on non-Muslims in the south, because such rigidity will only prolong the fighting. American military intervention is not necessary, nor has it been requested by the opposition, the National Democratic Alliance. If negotiations break down, the United States should help to arm, train, and support the opposition but should not do its fighting for it.

The long-term U.S. goal should be not just to stop the civil war, but to help transform Sudan into a stable and peaceful state that does not use terrorism and subversion as instruments of foreign policy. To this end, the Bush Administration should:

- **Firmly oppose Islamic radicalism in Sudan, not Sudanese Muslims.** The United States should oppose any regime that continues to support international terrorists or insists on imposing Sharia on non-Muslims in the south.

- **Strongly support the Sudanese opposition.** Washington should increase economic and humanitarian aid to rebel-controlled areas in the south. U.S. military aid should be considered if Khartoum continues to drag its feet on a negotiated settlement.
- **Appoint a special envoy to spearhead and coordinate U.S. policy on Sudan.** A high-level official capable of working closely with the Sudanese opposition, the U.S. Congress, and human rights activists is needed to coordinate all aspects of U.S. policy on Sudan, not just the humanitarian issues.
- **Launch a high-profile campaign of public diplomacy to publicize the regime's harsh policies and enlist international support in pressing Khartoum to halt these abuses.** The special envoy, the Secretary of State, the President, and other high-level officials should take every opportunity to publicize Khartoum's bombing of civilians, encouragement of slavery, forced starvation, ethnic cleansing, and other human rights abuses.
- **Change the way food relief supplies are distributed inside Sudan to deprive Khartoum of its food weapon.** Washington should seek to remove the veto power that the Sudanese government has over food deliveries in the United Nations emergency relief program and instead deliver food supplies directly to southern areas through organizations operating outside the U.N. program.
- **Strengthen U.S. and multilateral economic pressures against the Khartoum regime.** Sudan's economic weakness remains a major area of vulnerability for the regime. Washington should work with its allies and Sudan's creditors to restrict the growth of Sudan's oil revenues and block debt renegotiations until Khartoum has ended its holy war against other countries and its own people.

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JAMES PHILLIPS

Sudan, Africa's largest country, has been convulsed for 18 years by a brutal civil war that has claimed 2 million lives. Once dubbed "the forgotten war," Sudan's internal conflict has attracted growing international attention because of mounting evidence that Sudan's radical Islamic regime has resorted to systematic bombing of civilians, starvation, slavery, ethnic cleansing, religious persecution, and other human rights abuses to break the will of the opposition, composed predominantly of Christians and animists living in the south.

During his recent trip to Africa, Secretary of State Colin Powell proposed that the United States seek an end to Sudan's barbarous civil war. While this goal is laudable, Powell's call for even-handedness suggests a moral equivalence that ignores the role played by the Khartoum regime in repressing its own people and supporting international terrorism against the United States and many other countries. Moreover, by shortchanging the Sudanese opposition's need for external military aid, an even-handed policy focused on achieving a diplomatic settlement plays into the hands of Sudan's dictator, Omar al-Bashir. The problem is not just ending the civil war but ending the Sudanese government's genocidal policies, and it is not likely that this can be accomplished without a change of regime.

Although the recent purge of ultra-radical

Islamic ideologue Hassan al-Turabi has led the Khartoum dictatorship to moderate its rhetoric, it remains to be seen whether the regime is truly interested in a diplomatic settlement of the war. In fact, Khartoum has flirted with negotiations in the past, only to abandon them when its military position improved. The military balance of power now is shifting in favor of the Bashir regime because of Sudan's growing oil exports, which began in 1999. Bashir's military budget has doubled in the past two years and probably will continue to grow in the future as the regime continues to pursue its priority: suppressing opposition rather than feeding its own people.

An exclusively diplomatic U.S. approach to Sudan's festering humanitarian crisis would allow Bashir's regime to engage in endless negotiations as a way to buy time to score a military victory. Instead of approaching the Sudan issue purely as a humanitarian crisis that calls for evenhandedness,

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the Bush Administration should oppose any regime in Khartoum that insists on imposing strict Islamic law (Sharia) on non-Muslims in the south, because this will only prolong the fighting.

The U.S. goal should be not just to stop the civil war, but to help transform Sudan into a stable and peaceful state that does not use terrorism and subversion as instruments of foreign policy. To this end, the Bush Administration should:

- **Firmly oppose** Islamic radicalism in Sudan, not Sudanese Muslims;
- **Strongly support** the Sudanese opposition;
- **Appoint** a special envoy to spearhead and coordinate U.S. policy on Sudan;
- **Launch** a high-profile campaign of public diplomacy to publicize the regime's harsh policies and enlist international support in pressing Khartoum to halt these abuses;
- **Change** the way food relief supplies are distributed inside Sudan to deprive Khartoum of its food weapon; and
- **Strengthen** U.S. and multilateral economic pressures against the Khartoum regime.

SUDAN'S FORGOTTEN WAR

Sudan's civil war—the longest-running internal conflict in the world today—has taken a horrifying human toll. The bitter struggle has pitted the Sudanese government, dominated by Muslim Arabs from the northern part of the country, against opposition forces comprised predominantly of black Christians and animists from the southern part of the country. The war and

war-related famines have claimed the lives of more than 2 million people and uprooted about 5 million refugees within Sudan, the largest concentration of internally displaced people in the world.¹ The number of people from southern Sudan that have been killed is greater than all the victims in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Rwanda combined.²

In recent years, the government's onslaught has escalated to genocidal proportions. The Khartoum regime has systematically destroyed and looted southern villages, farms, churches, animist shrines, schools, medical clinics, and humanitarian aid projects. The Sudanese air force has bombed villages, homes, schools, hospitals, markets, food relief centers, and other clearly marked civilian installations to terrorize southerners and drive them off their land. Last year, the regime bombed civilian targets at least 167 times.³ One hospital in southern Sudan run by Samaritan's Purse, a humanitarian organization led by Franklin Graham, the son of the Rev. Billy Graham, was bombed seven times by government forces in 2000.⁴

The government's abuses of human rights have been widely documented.⁵ Despite the efforts of the Khartoum regime to intimidate outside observers and cover up its crimes, a steady stream of reports about government atrocities, massacres, religious persecution, ethnic cleansing, abductions of children, chattel slavery, and rapes has come out of southern Sudan. The United Nations is investigating allegations that the Sudanese military has used chemical or biological weapons in bombing raids over two southern towns.⁶ The Sudanese

1. Another 500,000 Sudanese refugees have fled outside Sudan's borders; Francis Deng, "Sudan: Civil War and Genocide," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2001, p. 13.
2. Recent civil wars have claimed roughly 300,000 lives in Bosnia, 1,000 in Kosovo, and 500,000 in Rwanda; Freedom House, Center For Religious Freedom, "Fact Sheet: Sudan," at http://www.freedomhouse.org/religion/sudan/publications/fact_sheet.htm (accessed May 21, 2001).
3. Ted Dagne, "Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talks, Terrorism and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service *Issue Brief* No. 98043, Updated April 27, 2001, p. 11.
4. Kate O'Beirne, "A Faraway Country...About Which We Know a Lot," *National Review*, March 5, 2001, p. 32.
5. See U.S. Department of State, *2000 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, "Sudan," February 2001, at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/index.cfm?docid=822 (accessed April 17, 2001); Amnesty International, *Sudan: Deteriorating Human Rights*, March 5, 2000; and Leonardo Franco, Special Rapporteur, United Nations Commission on Human Rights, *Situation of Human Rights in Sudan*, September 11, 2000, U.N. Document Number A/55/374.

government has become “arguably the worst human rights violator in the world today.”⁷ It has even been denounced as “the Hitler regime of our time.”⁸ The total war waged by the radical Islamic regime in Khartoum against the predominantly Christian and animist black African people of the south led the U.S. Holocaust Memorial’s Committee of Conscience to make Sudan the focus of its first non-European project last year.

The Food Weapon. The Sudanese government has used starvation as a weapon of war against its own people to break their will to resist. It has attacked agricultural areas, destroyed food supplies, confiscated livestock herds, and blocked international food relief efforts in opposition-controlled territory. After the deaths of an estimated 250,000 people from starvation in southern Sudan, Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), a U.N.-coordinated relief effort, was established in 1989. The Sudanese government routinely has denied OLS access to rebel-held areas in southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains in central Sudan, according to U.N. officials. Moreover, the Sudanese air force has bombed food relief distribution centers, as well as aircraft that have transported food supplies to remote areas.

When the government has allowed OLS to operate, it often has sought to manipulate food distribution for its own purposes. Some U.N.-provided food aid reportedly is distributed “on the condition that the hungry person convert to Islam.”⁹ Government troops have looted food supplies earmarked for southern Sudan. The government also has forced the inhabitants of entire villages to move into concentration camps called “peace camps,” where food is provided in exchange for continued submission to state authority.

In March 2001, the United Nations World Food Program warned that an estimated 3 million Sudanese require emergency food assistance. Although some food shortages can be attributed to an ongoing drought, the effects of the drought have been severely exacerbated by the Khartoum regime’s concerted efforts to deny food to southerners opposed to its draconian rule. Sudan, the southern portion of which contains several fertile agricultural regions, was projected by many development economists in the 1970s to become “the bread basket of Africa.” Instead, it has become an African basket case because of the government’s misrule and harshly repressive practices.

The Revival of Slavery. An appalling outgrowth of the government’s ruthless efforts to crush the opposition has been the revival of historic patterns of tribal warfare in which tribal militias take women and children as war booty and force them into slavery. The radical Islamic Bashir regime has encouraged Muslim tribes allied with the government to target racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, particularly the Dinka tribes that are a major base of support for the southern resistance. Raiding parties from the Arabized Baggara tribes of Western Sudan, armed by the regime and incorporated into the Popular Defense Forces, the regime’s feared militia, have attacked Dinka villages, murdered the men, abducted the women and children, and transported them north to work as slaves. “Once captured they become the private property of individual masters, and have to endure endless hard work, poor nutrition, and sexual abuse.”¹⁰

The number of slaves is a matter of dispute. John Eibner, an official with Christian Solidarity International, a Switzerland-based human rights organization that reportedly has bought the

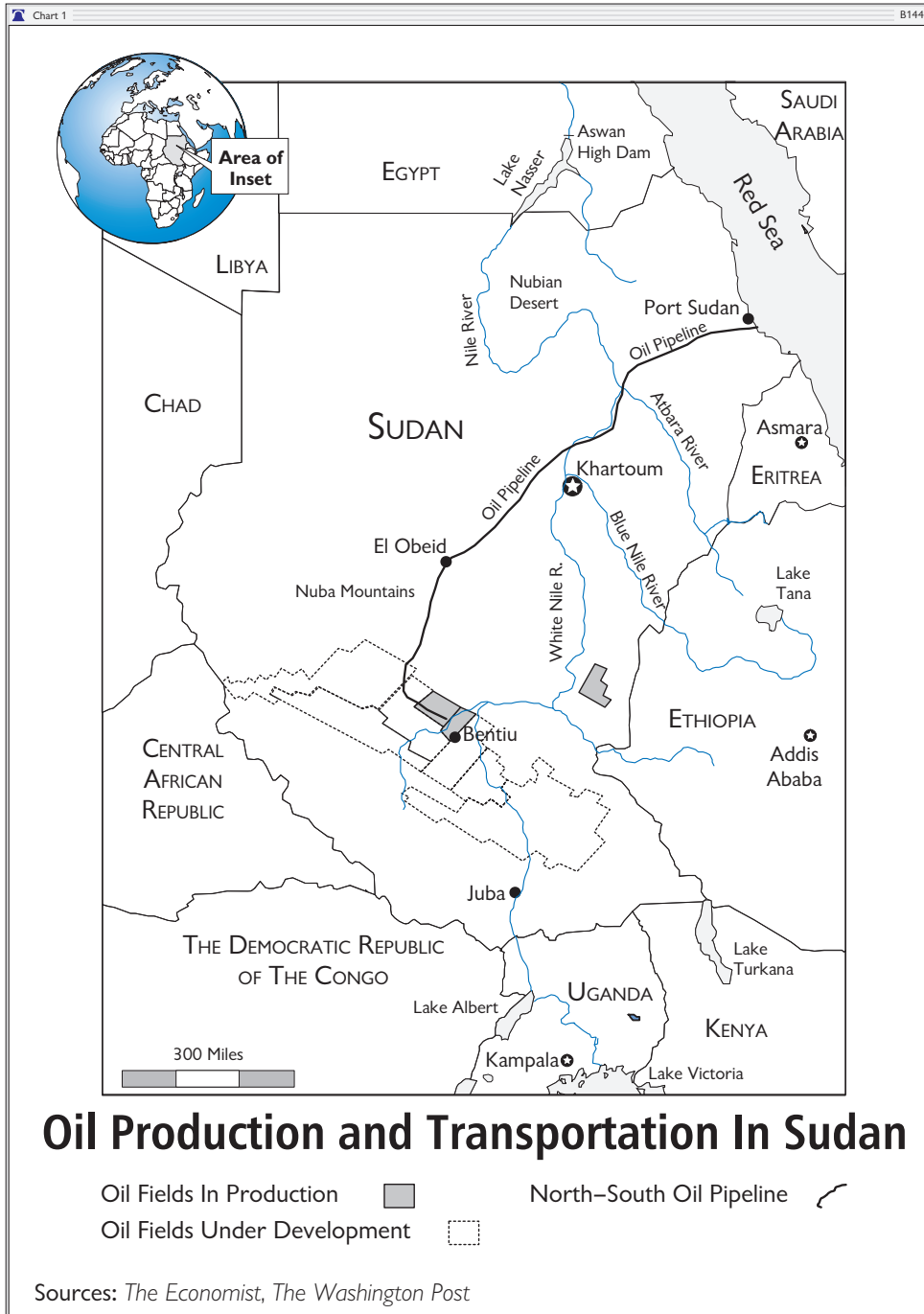
6. Dagne, “Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talks, Terrorism and U.S. Policy,” p. 11.

7. Mary Ann Glendon, “Sudan’s Unpunished Atrocities,” *The New York Times*, December 8, 1998.

8. Michael Horowitz of the Hudson Institute, quoted in O’Beirne, “A Faraway Country...About Which We Know a Lot,” p. 32.

9. Testimony of Michael Young, Commissioner, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, before a joint hearing of the Subcommittee on Africa and the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, 107th Cong., 1st Sess., March 28, 2001, p. 2.

10. John Eibner, “Slavery in the Sudan,” *Middle East Forum Wire* No. 16, December 7, 2000, p. 1.



and animist slaves remain in Sudan today.¹¹ The U.S. Department of State estimates conservatively that between 10,000 and 12,000 remained in captivity at the end of last year.¹²

Regardless of the numbers, however, it is clear that the Bashir regime is culpable for the actions of its tribal surrogates and has done nothing to stop them.¹³ In fact, Khartoum also has supported the Lord's Resistance Army, a Ugandan extremist group that has kidnapped 3,000 Ugandan children in the past 10 years and brought them to Sudan, where they are "forced to become sex slaves or soldiers."¹⁴

FUELING THE FLAMES: DICTATORSHIPS, JIHAD, AND OIL

Sudan has been locked in its bitter internal struggle for 34 of its 45 years as an independent country. The first round of the civil war actually started in 1955, the year before Sudan was granted its independence by the United Kingdom. Since

freedom of more than 45,000 slaves since 1995, estimates that more than 100,000 black Christian

then, Sudan has been ruled mostly by military dictatorships dominated by Arab Muslims from

11. Steve Hirsch, "Why Sudan Matters," *National Journal*, June 2, 2001, p. 1644.

12. U.S. Department of State, *2000 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, "Sudan."

13. See Nina Shea, "Special Groups and Slavery in Sudan," statement before the 57th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, April 12, 2001, at www.humanrights-usa.net/statements/0411item14.html (accessed May 30, 2001).

14. U.S. Department of State, *2000 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, "Sudan."

the northern part of the country. These regimes have sought to impose a strong Islamic central government on the country's multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural mosaic of 500 Arab and African tribes containing 19 major ethnic groups speaking more than 100 different languages.

Spurred by resentment at being treated as second-class citizens, the predominantly black, non-Arabic-speaking southerners rebelled against government efforts to impose an Arab and Islamic identity on state institutions and Sudan's pluralistic society. The first phase of the civil war lasted for 17 years, claiming half a million lives, before the 1972 Addis Ababa agreement gave the south a large measure of autonomy and control over local economic resources.

Unfortunately, the 1972 power-sharing agreement was abrogated by General Jafar Numeiri in 1983. Numeiri, who seized power in a 1969 military coup, drifted from socialism to Islamism, imposed Sharia (Islamic law), and stripped the southern legislature of its powers. Southern soldiers mutinied and formed the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) under the leadership of Colonel John Garang, a charismatic Christian leader. Since 1983, the SPLA has fought a grueling guerrilla war against northern domination. After Numeiri was deposed in 1985, resistance against the democratically elected government of Sadeq al-Mahdi continued.

Fighting intensified following the 1989 military coup that brought Lt. Gen. Omar al-Bashir to power, in league with the militant National Islamic Front led by radical Islamic ideologue Hassan al-Turabi. The Bashir-Turabi regime prosecuted the war with renewed vigor. Bashir provided the military muscle while Turabi asserted an extremist

Islamic ideological framework to motivate the troops and mobilize Muslim tribes.

Turabi envisioned the National Islamic Front not just as an instrument for wielding power in Sudan, but as the vanguard of a global Islamic revolution. He declared a jihad (holy war) against those resisting the government's authority and reinvigorated efforts to impose Sharia on non-Muslims. Turabi's militant brand of Islam exacerbated endemic religious, ethnic, and tribal tensions and greatly increased the brutality of the conflict.

Religion has become the pivotal factor in the conflict because "Religion on both sides defines identity."¹⁵ By installing Islam as the state religion and invoking jihad, Turabi has unleashed a virulent campaign of religious persecution. "Individual Christians have been imprisoned, tortured, assassinated and even crucified for their faith."¹⁶ Thousands of abducted children have been forced to convert to Islam or face beatings and torture, while captured slaves reportedly are forced to attend Quranic schools and change their names.¹⁷ In May 2000, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom concluded in its first annual report that the Sudanese government was "the world's most violent abuser of the right to freedom of religious belief."¹⁸ In a March 2001 follow-up report on Sudan, the Commission found that the situation had grown even worse.¹⁹

The regime's Islamic militancy has driven the leaders of traditional Islamic parties, such as Sadeq al-Mahdi of the Umma Party, into the arms of the opposition. Many Muslims consider Turabi's jihad a perversion of Islam. As one Muslim religious leader in the south bitterly complained, "The regime talked about a jihad. But that is not true Islam. Their jihad was to take freedom away. I would myself be ready to fight against them

15. Francis Deng, "Sudan—Civil War and Genocide," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2001, p. 16.

16. Nina Shea, "War on Religion," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 31, 1998, p. W11.

17. Dagne, "Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talks, Terrorism and U.S. Policy," p. 12.

18. *Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom on Sudan*, May 1, 2000, at http://www.uscirf.gov/reports/01May00/policy_Sudan.php3#A (accessed April 30, 2001).

19. See *Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom on Sudan*, March 21, 2001, at http://www.uscirf.gov/reports/21Mar01/sudan_21Mar01.php3 (accessed April 30, 2001).

Table 1		B1449
Sudan By The Numbers		
Population:	35,079,814 (July 2000 est.)	
Ethnic groups:	black 52%, Arab 39%, Beja 6%, foreigners 2%, other 1%	
Religions:	Sunni Muslim 70% (in north), indigenous beliefs 25%, Christian 5% (mostly in south and Khartoum)	
Languages:*	Arabic (official), Nubian, Ta Bedawie, diverse dialects of Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, Sudanic languages, English	
GDP:	purchasing power parity - \$32.6 billion (1999 est.)	
GDP, real growth rate:	3% (1999 est.)	
GDP, per capita:	purchasing power parity - \$940 (1999 est.)	
GDP, composition by sector:	agriculture: 41%; industry: 17%; services: 42% (1997 est.)	
Note:*	Program of arabization in process.	
Source:	Central Intelligence Agency, <i>The World Factbook 2000</i> , at: http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/su.html .	

Sudan, which produced 200,000 barrels of oil per day last year, is projected to double its production to more than 400,000 in the next two years, making it a middle-sized oil exporter.²¹ Oil revenues, estimated at \$500 million last year, could soon rise to over \$1 billion per year if world oil prices remain high.

Sudan's growing oil revenues have raised the stakes of the war, escalated the intensity of the fighting, and could tilt the balance of military power in the regime's favor. To consolidate its control over oil-producing areas, the regime has resorted to scorched-earth tactics to drive nearby southern tribes out of their homelands.²² Sudan has doubled its military budget since beginning to export oil in 1999 and is now using more sophisticated weapons against the rebels.²³ It also reportedly is using airstrips and roads built for oil projects to conduct military operations.

because as an Imam I do not believe this is a true jihad."²⁰ The government has secured a religious edict that declares all Muslims who oppose the regime to be "apostates," thereby clearing the way for state security services, armed forces, and tribal militias to persecute not just Christians and animists, but also Muslim political opponents.

Oil Inflames the War. The discovery of oil in Sudan not only contributed to the renewal of the war in 1983, but has fueled the fighting in recent years as well. Although the bulk of the oil deposits are located in the south, oil revenues are controlled by the regime and primarily benefit the north. Sudan's oil reserves, now estimated at 1.2 billion barrels, could soon increase to 2 billion or 3 billion barrels with additional exploration.

The rebels, for their part, have repeatedly sabotaged the thousand-mile pipeline linking the oil fields to Port Sudan. Despite the resultant damage, however, rising oil revenues will enhance the regime's military superiority over the rebels and increase the regime's incentives to expand ethnic cleansing operations.

SUDAN'S SUPPORT OF TERRORISM

In addition to unleashing terrorism against its own people, the Khartoum regime has supported a wide variety of international terrorist groups. Sudan provides sanctuary, logistical support, training facilities, and travel documents to terrorists who have murdered Americans and other victims

20. Caroline Baroness Cox, "Sudan: A Contemporary Jihad," paper submitted for Claremont Institute Conference on *Statesmanship and Sudan: What Should America Do?* June 14, 2000, p. 4, at www.claremont.org/publications/she_a_sudankeynote000614.cfm (accessed May 24, 2001).

21. Francis Deng and J. Stephen Morrison, *U.S. Policy to End Sudan's War: Report of the CSIS Task Force on U.S.–Sudan Policy*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2001, p. 4.

22. "War, Famine, and Oil in Sudan," *The Economist*, April 12, 2001, at www.economist.com/world/Africa/printer-friendly.cfm?story_ID=569099 (accessed May 6, 2001).

23. Testimony of Michael Young, Commissioner, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, before a joint hearing of the Subcommittee on Africa and the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, 107th Cong., 1st Sess., March 28, 2001, p. 2.

from many countries allied with the United States. Sudan harbors members of Egypt's Islamic Group, Egyptian Islamic Jihad, HAMAS, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization.²⁴

Al-Qaeda, the group responsible for the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, has a long history of close relations with the Khartoum regime. In fact, Osama bin Laden was greatly influenced by Hassan Turabi when both worked in support of the most radical mujahideen (holy warrior) groups in Afghanistan during the 1980s, and both remain supporters of the ultra-radical Taliban regime that currently dominates Afghanistan. Bin Laden lived in Sudan from 1991 to 1996 before moving his base of operations to Afghanistan. According to a declassified State Department report, he established three terrorist training camps in northern Sudan and paid to transport 500 Arab militants to Sudan from Pakistan.²⁵

The close working relationship between al-Qaeda and the Bashir regime was underscored by revelations at the recent trial of four al-Qaeda members convicted of the embassy bombings. General Bashir not only authorized al-Qaeda activities inside Sudan, but also exempted it from paying taxes or import duties and gave it immunity from local law enforcement agencies.²⁶

The Bashir regime also was a close supporter of the spiritual leader of the terrorists who bombed the World Trade Center in New York City in 1993. Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman, the radical Egyptian cleric who inspired the bombing, came to the United States directly from Sudan. A Sudanese diplomat was later expelled from the United States because of suspected involvement in a subsequent plot to bomb the United Nations building and other New York City landmarks.²⁷ Sudan was

added to the State Department's list of countries that support terrorism in 1993.

In addition, Sudan has cooperated closely with Iran to export terrorism and Islamic revolution throughout the Muslim world. Following a 1991 visit by Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, Iran dispatched several hundred Revolutionary Guards to train terrorists in at least five Sudanese training camps.²⁸ These Islamic militants have launched terrorist attacks and have sought to undermine governments in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and other Arab countries. Sudan has given refuge to Egyptian Islamic militants wanted in connection with the failed 1995 assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak during his visit to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Sudan's refusal to extradite these terrorists led the United Nations Security Council to impose sanctions on Sudan in 1996. Sudan also has supported Muslim and non-Muslim revolutionary groups operating against the governments of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Uganda.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD SUDAN

Sudan has been relegated to the back burner of American foreign policy for many years. Following the 1989 military coup against Mahdi's civilian government, Washington suspended bilateral military and economic aid. Sudan's extensive support for terrorism quickly became the chief source of friction in bilateral relations. In 1993, the State Department added Sudan to the list of states that support terrorism, and this triggered sanctions that barred Sudan from receiving U.S. economic assistance, arms-related exports, and U.S. support for its loan requests at international lending institutions such as the World Bank.

In February 1996, the U.S. embassy in Khartoum was evacuated because of security concerns related to the presence of a wide variety of

24. U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2000*, April 2001, p. 35.

25. Mary Ann Weaver, "The Real Bin Laden," *The New Yorker*, January 24, 2000, p. 36.

26. Steven Emerson and Daniel Pipes, "Terrorism on Trial," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 31, 2001, p. A16.

27. John Goshko, "Sudanese Envoy at U.N. Ordered to Leave U.S.," *The Washington Post*, April 11, 1996.

28. "Is Sudan Terrorism's New Best Friend," *Time*, August 30, 1993, p. 84.

anti-American terrorists hosted by the Sudanese government. In April 1996, the United States supported the imposition of United Nations economic sanctions against Sudan under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1054 because of Sudan's failure to extradite Egyptian terrorists involved in the abortive assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak during his 1995 state visit to Ethiopia.

Aroused by Khartoum's support of terrorism, attempts to destabilize its neighbors, and abuses of human rights, the Clinton Administration imposed comprehensive economic sanctions on Sudan in November 1997 under Executive Order 13067, which blocked all Sudanese assets in the United States, restricted exports and imports, barred financial transactions, and prohibited investment in the country by U.S. companies. In December 1999, however, the Administration diluted the impact of its own sanctions by waiving the ban on the importing of gum arabic, a substance derived from the sap of the Sudanese acacia tree that is added to consumer items such as candy and soft drinks. Although gum arabic was virtually the only product that the United States imported from Sudan, the Administration argued that American companies needed time to find alternative sources of supply because Sudan was the source of roughly 80 percent of the world's supply of that obscure substance. In addition to undermining its own unilateral economic sanctions,²⁹ the Clinton Administration made little effort to press its allies to join multilateral sanctions to increase the pressure on Khartoum.

The Clinton Administration treated the various symptoms of Sudan's descent into jihad—terrorism, human rights violations, man-made famine, slavery, and the destabilization of Sudan's neighbors—in an ad hoc manner, with no clear over-

arching strategy. No effective policy was crafted to address the cause of these symptoms: the radical Bashir–Turabi regime. It was unclear whether Washington's highest priority was to force a change of regime, encourage reform, or push for an end to the war. The Administration issued tough rhetoric but often did not follow through with concrete actions. It denounced the regime for repressing its own people but did little about it. When it did take military action by launching the August 1998 cruise missile strike against the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, suspected of manufacturing chemical weapons for Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist group, it did so in a clumsy fashion with a pinprick attack against a symbolic target.³⁰

The Clinton Administration's support for the Sudanese opposition also was largely symbolic in nature. Rhetorically and diplomatically, the Administration supported the National Democratic Alliance, the umbrella coalition of southern resistance organizations and northern political parties that were ousted by the 1989 coup. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met with Sudan's People Liberation Movement leader John Garang in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 1999, but the Administration did not offer to furnish military or economic aid, merely food and humanitarian assistance. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice, much to her credit, visited southern Sudan in November 2000 to examine human rights and food supply conditions. Rice became the first high-level U.S. executive branch official to visit rebel-held areas and has opened the door to increased official contacts in the future.

The Clinton Administration sought to isolate Sudan diplomatically and successfully blocked Khartoum's attempt to gain a seat on the U.N. Security Council in the fall of 2000. Washington

29. In 1997, the Clinton Administration also opened a legal loophole that would have allowed the Occidental Petroleum corporation to pursue a \$930 million deal in Sudan despite provisions in the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act that barred U.S. firms from making financial transactions with states that support terrorism. Occidental later pulled out of the deal. See David Ottaway, "GOP Targets Sudan Loophole," *The Washington Post*, February 7, 1997, p. A30.

30. The Administration initially claimed that a chemical found outside the pharmaceutical plant provided incontrovertible proof that the plant was involved in the clandestine production of chemical weapons, but this was later disputed. It also claimed that the plant was secretly owned, at least in part, by Osama bin-Laden; but in 1999, it released the frozen assets of the self-proclaimed owner in a move that was perceived as a tacit admission that a mistake had been made.

also defeated Sudan's attempts to lift U.N. economic sanctions, despite Sudan's backing from the Arab League and the Organization of African Unity.

But the Administration's attempts to open a diplomatic dialogue with Khartoum have produced few benefits.³¹ In 1999, President Bill Clinton appointed former Representative Harry A. Johnston (D-FL), who chaired the Africa Subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee before retiring in 1996, as special envoy for Sudan. Johnston traveled to Sudan in March 2000 to initiate a dialogue to encourage changes in Khartoum's policies on a wide spectrum of issues: terrorism, human rights, negotiations to end the civil war, and humanitarian relief issues. "Unfortunately," however, as former Assistant Secretary of State Rice has acknowledged, "virtually none of [these changes] have occurred."³² Khartoum did sign several international treaties on terrorism, but it can choose to ignore these when it suits its purposes, just as it has ignored other international agreements.

Congress Takes the Lead. The Clinton Administration's half-hearted and disjointed approach to Sudan left a growing number of Congressmen chafing at the bit. In June 1999, the House passed H. Con. Res. 75, which condemned the Khartoum regime "for its genocidal war in southern Sudan, support for terrorism, and continued human rights abuses" and called on the President to increase food aid to non-OLS relief programs and give food and development aid directly to the Sudanese opposition. Congress also passed the Brownback Amendment (P.L. 106-113), incorporated into a consolidated appropriations bill in 1999, which gave the President the authority to provide food aid to Sudanese opposition forces.

Earlier this year, Senator Bill Frist (R-TN), a medical doctor who traveled to southern Sudan

to treat patients last year, introduced the Sudan Peace Act (S. 180). The bill authorizes the Secretary of State to use Department of State personnel for the support of ongoing negotiations, and eventual implementation of a peace settlement, between the government of Sudan and opposition forces; expresses the sense of Congress that the United Nations should be used as a tool to facilitate peace and recovery in Sudan; calls for the U.S. representative at the U.N. to push for U.N. condemnation of the regime's bombing of civilians, a U.N. investigation of slavery in Sudan, and a revision of the terms under which OLS food is provided in Sudan; and directs the President to develop a contingency plan to provide, outside U.N. auspices, the greatest amount of U.S. government and privately donated relief to all affected areas in Sudan in the event that Khartoum stops cooperating with the U.N.'s OLS program.

The House of Representatives also has been increasingly active on the Sudan issue. House Majority Leader Richard Armey (R-TX) and Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY) announced the formation of a Sudan caucus that includes many key players on Africa policy including Representatives Donald Payne (D-NJ), Edward Royce (R-CA), Thomas Tancredo (R-CO), and Frank Wolf (R-VA). Representative Tancredo on June 5 introduced H.R. 2052, essentially a companion bill to the Sudan Peace Act that would also block companies that do business in Sudan from trading securities on U.S. capital markets unless they publicly disclose their activities in Sudan. In addition, the bill urges the Bush Administration to facilitate the peace process in Sudan, dedicate \$10 million appropriated last year to humanitarian aid, and find alternative ways to deliver aid if the Khartoum regime blocks U.N. food relief shipments.

31. For an excellent critique of U.S. policy on Sudan, see Nina Shea, "U.S. Policy in Sudan," keynote address to Claremont Institute conference on "Statesmanship and Sudan: What Should America Do?" June 14, 2000, at www.claremont.org/publications/sheasudankeynote000614.cfm (accessed May 24, 2001).

32. Susan Rice, quoted at press conference held by U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, January 30, 2001, at www.uscirf.gov/briefings/Sudan_010130.php3?mode=print (accessed April 30, 2001).

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S OPPORTUNITY IN SUDAN

Since coming to office in January, the Bush Administration has undertaken a review of U.S. policy toward Sudan that reportedly is nearing completion. Secretary of State Colin Powell clearly has recognized the enormous human suffering in Sudan and stated in congressional testimony on March 7 that "There is perhaps no greater human tragedy on the face of the earth today."³³

Powell has taken a personal interest in African issues and late last month made a diplomatic tour of Africa in which he addressed the Sudan crisis during a visit to neighboring Kenya. While in Nairobi, Powell stated on May 26 that "We are anxious to see reconciliation in Sudan" and that "We are not against any side."³⁴ A reporter from the *Washington Post* who was travelling with the Secretary reported that Powell "indicated that the United States may take a more even-handed approach to the conflict than did the previous administration."³⁵ Significantly, unlike his predecessor, Madeleine Albright, Powell did not meet with SPLA leader John Garang.

Secretary of State Powell's statements are alarming for several reasons.

- **First**, they imply a disturbing moral equivalence between the predatory regime in Khartoum and the Sudanese opposition forces.
- **Second**, Powell's approach appears to downplay the Bashir regime's support of international terrorism, export of Islamic revolution, efforts to destabilize American allies in the region, alignment with Iran, and opposition to American foreign policy on such issues as containing Iraq and promoting a stable Arab-Israeli peace settlement.
- **Third**, an even-handed approach weakens American leverage over Khartoum by ruling out a campaign for stronger multilateral

economic sanctions or military aid for the southern resistance forces. Unilaterally forgoing such U.S. options actually diminishes the long-term prospects for peace by reducing Khartoum's incentives for making painful concessions. Ruling out greater support for the beleaguered opposition also makes it more likely that the Bashir regime will use diplomatic negotiations as a smokescreen to buy the time it needs to crush the opposition on the battlefield.

Rather than treating the Sudanese problem as primarily a humanitarian problem and trumpeting that it is "anxious to see reconciliation," the Bush Administration should take a hard-nosed approach to ensure that the Bashir regime becomes "anxious to see reconciliation." After all, it is Khartoum that must moderate its policies if there is to be any chance of achieving a lasting peace. Rather than ruling out military support for the opposition, the Administration should rule out a military victory by the regime. Washington should make it clear to General Bashir that he has no chance of scoring a military victory or starving the south into submission. The United States should work with Sudan's neighbors and other interested parties to provide the National Democratic Alliance with increased food supplies, economic aid, diplomatic support, and military aid if necessary.

American military intervention is not necessary, nor has it been requested by the opposition. In fact, such intervention could backfire against the opposition, which would then be denounced by the regime as a tool of a neo-colonial superpower. Once committed, American troops would be required to remain for decades, distracted from more pressing threats to American national interests in the Persian Gulf and East Asia. If peace negotiations break down, the National Democratic Alliance has enough manpower to protect civilians in the south, but it needs weapons and logistical support to do so. The United States should help to

33. Pauline Jelinek, "Sudan's 18-Year Civil War 'A Priority'," Associated Press, March 9, 2001, at www.intellnet.org/news/2001/03/09/3316-1.html (accessed April 30, 2001).

34. Karl Vick, "Powell Calls for Reconciliation in Sudan," *The Washington Post*, May 27, 2001, p. A20.

35. *Ibid.*

arm, train, and support the opposition, but not do its fighting for it.

The long-term U.S. goal should be not just to stop the civil war, but to help transform Sudan into a stable and peaceful state that does not use terrorism and subversion as instruments of foreign policy. To this end, the Bush Administration should:

- **Firmly oppose Islamic radicalism in Sudan, not Sudanese Muslims.** There can be no peace inside Sudan until it develops a government that respects the pluralistic nature of Sudan's multi-religious and multi-ethnic society. In particular, southerners will continue to fight any government that seeks to force Sharia on them.

Since Islamic radicals such as those in Turabi's National Islamic Front regard Islamic law as a central tenet of their rule, there is little chance of negotiating a viable peace with such a regime. Although General Bashir appears to be more pragmatic than Turabi, it is doubtful that he would be willing and able to abandon his past insistence that Sharia be imposed on all of Sudan. To make an internal Sudanese peace possible, the United States therefore should seek to uproot the Bashir dictatorship unless it decisively drops its commitment to impose Sharia.

Forcing Sudan to halt its support for international terrorism should be the highest U.S. priority. Any regime that continues to harbor terrorists such as bin Laden's al-Qaeda group is not likely to be a trustworthy partner in peace negotiations.

- **Strongly support the Sudanese opposition.** The Bush Administration should give the National Democratic Alliance a hand, not treat it with "evenhandedness." The U.S. goal should be to restore security and self-determination to southern Sudan—within the framework of a democratic federal system if possible but in the form of a separate state if necessary. Specifically, the Administration should greatly increase financial support for the opposition above the \$3 million announced on May 25 for

logistical support for transportation and communications. It should increase cross-border development aid to build a more effective civil administration in opposition-controlled areas from \$4 million in fiscal year 2001 by at least 50 percent a year for the next three years. And if the regime's latest peace offensive and bombing halt prove to be short-lived as expected, the United States should provide the opposition with military aid, including communications gear, mortars, anti-aircraft guns, and anti-tank weapons. This will help offset the regime's growing military budget, give it added incentives to negotiate in good faith, and help convince it that it can not win a military victory.

Washington also should encourage the opposition to build the broadest political base possible. It is particularly important to reach out to Sudanese Muslims in the north, because without them the southerners have no chance of ousting the Bashir regime. The Umma party of Sadeq al-Mahdi is particularly important because it is believed to have greater popular support than Turabi's National Islamic Front, which never has received more than 18 percent of the vote in free elections.

- **Appoint a special envoy to spearhead and coordinate Sudan policy.** A high-level envoy is needed to coordinate all aspects of Sudan policy. Secretary of State Powell has sought to head off the appointment of a high-powered envoy by asking U.S. Agency for International Development Director Andrew Natsios to coordinate policy on aid and human rights issues. But the Sudan crisis is more than a strictly humanitarian issue: It is a political-diplomatic-military problem.

An effective special envoy should have considerable knowledge about Sudan; experience with international affairs, particularly in dealing with dictatorships; an open door to the Secretary of State as well as to the White House; the ability to work closely with congressional leaders; and credibility with the Sudanese opposition and with American

constituencies active on the Sudan issue, especially advocates of religious freedom.

- **Launch a high-profile campaign of public diplomacy to publicize the regime's harsh policies and enlist international support in pressing Khartoum to halt these abuses.** The special envoy, along with the Secretary of State, the President, and other high-level officials, should take every opportunity to publicize Khartoum's bombing of civilians, support for slavery, ethnic cleansing, and other human rights abuses. By publicizing these issues in international fora such as the United Nations, European Parliament, and Council of Europe, and at both bilateral and multilateral summits, the United States government can mobilize Western public opinion and other governments to pressure Khartoum to end its repressive war against its own people.
- **Change the way food relief supplies are distributed inside Sudan to deprive Khartoum of its food weapon.** The United States has contributed more than \$1.2 billion in humanitarian aid to Sudan since 1989.³⁶ Most of this is donated through the U.N.'s Operation Lifeline Sudan program, which unfortunately has given Khartoum veto power over where and when the food is distributed. The United States should push for an immediate revision of these arrangements to allow OLS to deliver food where it is desperately needed, not just where it serves Khartoum's interests. Washington should also earmark an increasing percentage of the roughly \$100 million in relief aid that it provides to Sudan each year to be provided outside the OLS program and directly to rebel-controlled areas. Currently, only about one-third of American aid is provided this way. This portion should be gradually increased to two-thirds of the total. If the Bashir regime balks at renegotiating the OLS agreement to remove its veto over food deliveries, the U.S. should pull out of the OLS

program and allocate 100 percent of its food aid to rebel-controlled areas.

- **Strengthen U.S. and multilateral economic pressures against the Khartoum regime.** Sudan, one of the world's poorest countries, is saddled with major economic problems. The International Monetary Fund suspended Sudan's membership in 1993 for failure to pay interest on its heavy national debt, now estimated at \$20 billion. Washington should oppose any efforts to refinance this debt as long as the civil war continues and should encourage other countries to follow suit.

The Bush Administration should tighten a loophole in its trade ban by restoring the prohibition against importing gum arabic. The rationale provided by the Clinton Administration to justify easing the ban in 1999 was that it would give U.S. companies time to develop alternative supplies. That should have happened by now.

The Administration also should take measures to restrict the growth of Sudan's oil revenues because "The oil that fuels the internal war also funds terrorist groups."³⁷ Sanctions should be tightened against foreign oil companies that have invested in Sudan's oil and gas industry to prohibit them from raising money in U.S. capital markets. Companies that have helped develop Sudan's oil economy, such as Canada's Talisman Oil, Lundin of Sweden, and the China National Petroleum Company, have raised capital in the United States, and this amounts to an indirect American subsidy for Sudan's war. Such a ban would reduce incentives for investment in Sudan, slow the rate of growth of Sudan's oil export revenues, and impede Khartoum's military buildup as well as its ability to finance terrorism.

CONCLUSION

Sudan's radical Islamic regime has created one of the world's worst human rights situations and

36. Deng and Morrison, *U.S. Policy to End Sudan's War*, p. 3.

37. Elliott Abrams, "What to Do About Sudan," *The Weekly Standard*, May 7, 2001, p. 6.

one of its largest humanitarian crises. But approaching Sudan's internal crisis as purely a humanitarian issue is self-defeating. The U.S. has poured more than \$1.2 billion in food aid into Sudan, yet still finds that 3 million Sudanese are at risk from starvation as a result of the deliberate actions of their own government. Moreover, that government continues to bite the hand that feeds it by supporting international terrorists like Osama bin Laden who have killed Americans, as well as Islamic revolutionaries that threaten America's allies.

The root problem is not ending Sudan's war, but bringing an end to Khartoum's militant brand of Islam, which has imposed war on the non-Muslim

south in pursuit of its rigid insistence on imposing Sharia. Given the Bashir regime's past record of human rights abuses and support for terrorism, the Bush Administration cannot afford to assume an even-handed posture toward Sudan's civil war. It should support the Christian, animist, and Muslim victims of Khartoum's jihad and raise the diplomatic, economic, and military costs of continuing that jihad beyond what the Bashir regime is willing to pay. Only then can there be peace in Sudan.

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