

# Web Memo



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## Keeping the Pressure on Sudan

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In recent years violence and atrocities committed by “Arab” militias in the Darfur region of western Sudan have increased. The large numbers of deaths and displaced persons, as well as the ethnic component of the conflict, have led many to compare the situation to the genocide in Rwanda. Many have blamed the U.S. for failing to act more decisively to stop the crisis in Darfur, but the U.S. has pressed repeatedly for U.N. resolutions to authorize a robust peacekeeping effort and impose stiff sanctions on the Sudanese government. In most instances, these efforts have been stymied or watered down by opposition from China and Russia who use their veto and influence in the Security Council to block action. In the meantime, the U.S. has encouraged a multi-pronged effort to negotiate cease-fires and a peace agreement, secure access for humanitarian relief efforts, support intervention by the African Union, and press for sanctions on individuals involved in the conflict, while continuing to press forward on U.N. action. Despite the seriousness of the situation in Darfur, the response has been limited to narrow U.N. sanctions, humanitarian support, and a woefully inadequate peacekeeping mission from the African Union.

Frustrated by the lack of progress in resolving this ongoing crisis, President George W. Bush instructed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

last week to again press the Security Council to authorize a U.N. peacekeeping operation in Darfur. As with previous efforts the resolution approved by the Security Council on May 16 failed to establish explicitly a U.N. peacekeeping force in Darfur or identify consequences for the Sudanese government if it fails to cooperate with U.N. efforts in Darfur.<sup>1</sup> While the Bush Administration should be applauded for helping secure the Darfur Peace Agreement and providing humanitarian relief, it is past time to push for more robust U.N. action and expose the real culprits behind the failure to act in Darfur.

### History of a Crisis

Unrest and periodic violence in Darfur, a region of western Sudan the size of Iraq, is not new. On the contrary, numerous reports identify a timeline of tension and violence in the region dating back two decades or more. Two main issues have driven the violence. First is an ethnic division between the Sudanese government and the non-Arab African tribes in Darfur, which has led the government to support “Arab” groups in the region. Second is an age-old economic

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competition between the nomadic Arabized herdsmen and the sedentary farmers of the African tribes over land use and water.

What is relatively new is the sharp escalation in violence over the past decade. During this period, the Sudanese government has backed “Janjaweed” militia and related predecessors engaged in steadily more vicious attacks on local villages. These attacks have spurred local militants to organize their own armed rebel groups, notably the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The clash entered a new phase when rebel groups attacked a police station in 2002 and burned government garrisons in early 2003. The Khartoum government responded by increasing its support for the Janjaweed militia groups, which have committed rampant atrocities. To date, experts estimate that at least 200,000 people have died due to violence, and another 2 million have fled to refugee camps in Sudan and neighboring Chad.

The U.S. has been leading the effort to stop the atrocities in Darfur. As Secretary of State, Colin Powell declared that violations of human rights, war crimes, and genocide are occurring—a judgment that Congress and some human rights groups have echoed—although a U.N. inspection team sent to Sudan concluded that there had been no intent to commit genocide despite widespread war crimes.<sup>2</sup>

The U.S. has been central in trying to resolve the dispute. It was a major party in negotiating ceasefire and peace agreements. For the past several years, the U.S. has sought to pass Security Council resolutions condemning the atrocities, establishing economic sanctions on leading figures committing atrocities in Darfur, and authorizing a U.N. peacekeeping force for Darfur. At the urging of the U.S., the Security Council passed seven resolutions and four presidential statements in 2005 and several more in 2006. Unfortunately, these resolutions lack the

teeth necessary to address forcefully the situation in Darfur—in large part because China and Russia have resisted strong action against the government in Khartoum out of concern for their commercial interests in Sudan.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these obstacles, recent resolutions have adopted the first sanctions on individuals involved in the Darfur atrocities and supported the transition of the African Union peacekeeping force into a United Nations operation. The Bush Administration and international community have not been alone in pressing Sudan to assist in resolving the crisis in Darfur. Non-governmental organizations and religious groups also have called for the Sudanese government to help resolve the crisis and delivered aid and support. Currently, the following steps have been taken:

- **The Darfur Peace Agreement.** On May 5, 2006, negotiations yielded a peace agreement between the Sudanese government and individuals representing most of the SLA rebel group.<sup>4</sup> A smaller faction of the SLA and the JEM did not sign the agreement. In the agreement, the Sudanese government reiterated its promise to disarm the Janjaweed, integrate rebel fighters into the national army, grant the rebel groups positions in the government, and channel more funds to Darfur. While the peace agreement is a positive development, past ceasefires have often been broken, and substantial rebel elements are holding out for more concessions by the government.
- **Establishing a peacekeeping presence in Darfur.** Under a limited mandate, approximately 7,300 African Union peacekeeping troops, military observers, civilian police, and civilian staff have been deployed to Darfur. The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), while established to monitor and support the peace process in southern Sudan, has also been

tasked with providing political and logistical support to the AU Mission in Darfur.<sup>5</sup> Regrettably, most experts believe that the AU force is too small to prevent Janjaweed attacks and lacks the equipment, funding and training to be fully effective.

On March 10, 2006, the African Union Peace and Security Council decided to support tentatively the transition of the current African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) to a U.N. operation and to extend the mandate of AMIS until September 30, 2006. The body confirmed that decision on May 14 with a firm endorsement of a transition to a U.N. force in Darfur after September 30. On May 16, the U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1679 calling “for the deployment of a joint African Union and United Nations technical assessment mission within one week of the adoption of this resolution.”<sup>6</sup> The resolution was passed under Chapter VII, which the U.N. Charter requires all U.N. member states to obey. However, Khartoum has refused to permit U.N. military planners into Darfur in the past, and Russia, China and Qatar continue to insist that a U.N. peacekeeping operation in Darfur must have Sudan’s agreement. The resolution fails to identify consequences if the Sudanese government fails to comply although the Council did state that it would consider banning travel and freezing assets of individuals or groups blocking implementation of the Darfur peace agreement.

- **Targeted Security Council sanctions.** The Security Council passed a resolution in April 2006 imposing sanctions against four Sudanese nationals implicated in war crimes in Darfur, including two rebel leaders, a former air force officer, and a Janjaweed militia leader.<sup>7</sup>

- **Humanitarian aid.** The U.N., bilateral aid agencies, and non-governmental organizations continue to provide relief to those affected by the conflict in Darfur, although they face harassment from the Sudanese government and from rebel groups. The U.S. government is the largest international donor to Sudan and provided over 60 percent of aid to Darfur and 50 percent of all aid to Sudan in 2005. According to the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. government was responsible for “more than 85 percent of the food distributed by the World Food Program (WFP), more than \$300 million in other humanitarian assistance for Darfur, and \$1.3 billion in FY 2005 funds overall to both Darfur and other regions of Sudan.”<sup>8</sup> The U.S. is projected to provide half of the World Food Programme’s aid for Sudan in 2006. On May 11, United Nations World Food Programme official Kenn Crossley publicly thanked the U.S. for being “far and away” the largest donor to WFP operations in Sudan and with “clearly ... driving all of the effective response in Sudan right now.”<sup>9</sup>

Congress has also held hearings and considered legislation such as the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006, which directs the President to block assets and deny visas for those responsible for genocide and war crimes in Sudan, authorizes the President to support the AMIS, urges North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) support of AMIS, and urges the President to pursue U.N. efforts to address the crisis.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Time for Stronger Action in the U.N.**

The situation in Darfur remains dire, and it is time for substantive U.N. action. The new Darfur Peace Agreement holds promise, but, after years of war, all parties to the conflict are extremely suspicious of each other and have repeatedly broken cease-fire agreements. The Darfur Peace Agreement must be followed up with effective

efforts to disarm the Janjaweed and rebel militia groups and the return of refugees to their homes. A robust peacekeeping effort is essential to provide incentives for both sides to adhere to the Darfur Peace Agreement, verify compliance, and protect civilians from further atrocities.

In the past, the U.S. has been frustrated in its effort to establish a more vigorous U.N. presence in Darfur by China or Russia and has had to settle for watered down resolutions. Even with the most recent resolution, China, Russia and Qatar made clear their stance that the Sudanese government must agree before a U.N. peacekeeping operation is deployed in Darfur. This stance leaves open the question of whether a U.N. peacekeeping force will be approved by the Security Council. Indeed, the government in Khartoum has resisted U.N. activities in Darfur and blocked U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland from visiting the region earlier this year.<sup>11</sup> These weakened efforts, unfortunately, have left the impression that the Washington is not committed to resolving the situation.

If the Sudanese government fails to comply with the U.N. Security Council demand in Resolution 1679 that it permit U.N. military planners into Darfur, or if it continues to oppose the transition of the AU mission into a joint U.N. operation, the U.S. should press forward with a strong resolution that imposes sanctions on Sudan and establishes a U.N. peacekeeping operation in Darfur. Such a resolution would place great pressure on China and Russia. If they vetoed that resolution, it would demonstrate their determination to prevent action and the inability of the U.N. Security Council to act decisively on Sudan. Moreover, that clear demonstration would clear the path for willing governments and perhaps the NATO to assist the African Union force with support, funding, and appropriate military intervention.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Public Information, "Security Council Endorses African Union Decision on Need for Concrete Steps in Transition to United Nations Operation in Darfur," Security Council Resolution 1679, SC/8721, May 16, 2006, at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2006/sc8721.doc.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> See Glenn Kessler and Colum Lynch, "U.S. Calls Killings In Sudan Genocide: Khartoum and Arab Militias Are Responsible, Powell Says," The Washington Post, September 10, 2004, p. A1, at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A8364-2004Sep9.html>; "US House calls Darfur 'genocide'," BBC News, July 23, 2004, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3918765.stm>; and Human Rights Watch, "Take Action to End the Killing in Darfur," Human Rights News, April 30, 2006, at <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/04/25/darfur13266.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> See "China, Russia bar Sudan sanctions," BBC News, April 18, 2006, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4917970.stm>. Brooks and Shin of The Heritage Foundation report, "Sudan, which now supplies 7 percent of China's total oil imports, has benefited from the largest Chinese investments. The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) is the single largest shareholder (40 percent) in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, which controls Sudan's oil fields, and has invested \$3 billion in refinery and pipeline construction in Sudan since 1999.... 4,000 Chinese People's Liberation Army troops guard Sudanese oil pipelines, Khartoum recently built three weapons factories with Beijing's assistance, complicating international arms embargos against Sudan — and a conflict that is now spilling over into neighboring Chad." See Peter Brookes and Ji Hye Shin, "China's Influence in Africa: Implications for the United States," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* #1916, February 22, 2006, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/bg1916.cfm>. See also, "Sudan and Russia Forging New Ties Around Oil and Arms," Global Policy Forum, January 22, 2002, at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/natres/oil/sudan/2002/0122arms.htm> and "Russia Arms Producers See Sudan as Major Client," MosNews, October 22, 2004, at <http://www.mosnews.com/money/2004/10/22/sudanarms.shtml>.

- <sup>4</sup>“Darfur Peace Agreement,” U.S. Department of State Fact Sheet, Office of the Spokesman, Washington, DC, May 8, 2006, at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/65972.htm>
- <sup>5</sup>The U.S. contributed \$132 million to UNMIS in FY05 and is contributing about 27 percent to the mission in 2006.
- <sup>6</sup>Department of Public Information, “Security Council Endorses African Union Decision on Need for Concrete Steps in Transition to United Nations Operation in Darfur,” Security Council Resolution 1679, SC/8721, May 16, 2006, at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2006/sc8721.doc.htm>.
- <sup>7</sup>Security Council Resolution 1672, S/RES/1672, April 25, 2006, at <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/326/77/PDF/N0632677.pdf>.
- <sup>8</sup>“Humanitarian Situation in Darfur,” U.S. Department of State Fact Sheet, Office of the Spokesman, Washington, DC, May 8, 2006, at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/65971.htm>. See also, “America: Helping the People of Sudan,” U.S. Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs, at <http://usinfo.state.gov/af/img/assets/4475/sudan1.pdf>.
- <sup>9</sup>Charles W. Corey, “World Food Programme Thanks American People for Contributions,” International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State, at <http://usinfo.state.gov/af/Archive/2006/May/12-931030.html>.
- <sup>10</sup>The Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006 has passed the House of Representatives, but is still before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. See “The Darfur Peace and Accountability Act of 2006” at [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109\\_cong\\_bills&docid=f:h3127rfs.txt.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=109_cong_bills&docid=f:h3127rfs.txt.pdf).
- <sup>11</sup>Rueters, “After visit blocked, UN's Egeland mulls Sudan return,” April 5, 2006, published by AlertNet, at <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L05400922.htm>.
- <sup>12</sup>President Bush has supported a greater role for NATO in Darfur. An Associated Press story reported on March 20, 2006, that “NATO is prepared to support a U.N. force in the Darfur region of Sudan, the alliance's secretary-general told President Bush in a White House visit Monday.” Associated Press, “NATO Ready to Support U.N. Force in Darfur,” published by FoxNews.com, March 20, 2006, at <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,188513,00.html>.