

## THE UNITED STATES' WAR IN DARFUR

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*“The humanitarian tragedy in Darfur revolves around natural resources... Given current realities, no intervention in Darfur will proceed, and if it did it would fail.”*

So opined the authors of the September 2006 OPED “Keeping Peacekeepers out of Darfur” ([DHG](#), 9/15/06). Now, over a year later, the situation in Sudan is grimmer than ever, the Darfur conflict remains widely mischaracterized, and many of the predictions of that OPED have come true. Meanwhile, the “Save Darfur” advocates pressing military intervention in Darfur as a “humanitarian” gesture have escalated pressure in the face of mounting failures, including allegations that millions of “Save Darfur” dollars fundraised on a sympathy for victims platform have been misappropriated.

The Darfur region of western Sudan has been a hotbed of clandestine activities, gunrunning and indiscriminate violence for decades. The Cold War era saw countless insurgencies launched from the remote deserts of Darfur. Throughout the 1990's factions allied with or against Chad, Uganda, Ethiopia, Congo, Libya, Eritrea and the Central African Republic operated from bases in Darfur, and it was a regular landing strip for foreign military transport planes of mysterious origin. In 1990, Chad's Idriss Deby launched a military blitzkrieg from Darfur and overthrew President Hissan Habre; Deby then allied with his own tribe against the Sudan government. Sudanese rebels today have bases in Chad, and Chadian rebels have bases in Darfur, with Khartoum's backing. When the regime of Ange-Félix Patassé collapsed in the Central African Republic in March 2003, soldiers fled to Darfur with their military equipment. Khartoum supported the West Nile Bank Front, a rebel army operating against Uganda from Eastern Congo, commanded by Taban Amin, the son of the infamous Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin, who heads Uganda's dreaded Internal Security Organization. Darfur is the epicenter of a modern-day international geopolitical scramble for Africa's resources.

Conflict in Darfur escalated in 2003 after in parallel with negotiations “ending” the south Sudan war. The U.S.-backed insurgency by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the guerilla force that fought the northern Khartoum government for 20 years, shifted to Darfur, even as the G.W. Bush government allied with Khartoum in the U.S. led “war on terror.” The Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)—one of some 27 rebel factions mushrooming in Darfur—is allied with the SPLA and supported from Uganda. Andrew Natsios, former USAID chief and now US envoy to Sudan, said on October 6, 2007 that the atmosphere between the governments of north and south Sudan “had become poisonous.” This is no surprise given the magnitude of the resource war in Sudan and the involvement of international interests.

Darfur is reported to have the fourth largest copper and third largest uranium deposits in the world. Darfur produces two-thirds of the world's best quality gum Arabic—a major ingredient in Coke and Pepsi. Contiguous petroleum reserves are driving warfare from the Red Sea, through Darfur, to the

Great Lakes of Central Africa. Private military companies operate alongside petroleum contractors and “humanitarian” agencies. Sudan is China's fourth biggest supplier of imported oil, and U.S. companies controlling the pipelines in Chad and Uganda seek to displace China through the US military alliance with “frontline” states hostile to Sudan: Uganda, Chad and Ethiopia.

Israel reportedly provides military training to Darfur rebels from bases in Eritrea, and has strengthened ties with the regime in Chad, from which more weapons and troops penetrate Darfur. The refugee camps have become increasingly militarized. There are reports that Israeli military intelligence operates from within the camps, as does U.S intelligence. Eritrea is about to explode into yet another war with Ethiopia.

African Union (AU) forces in Darfur include Nigerian and Rwandan troops responsible for atrocities in their own countries. While committing 5000 troops for a UN force in Darfur, Ethiopia is perpetrating genocidal atrocities in Somalia, and against Ethiopians in the Ogaden, Oromo and Anuak regions. Uganda has 2000 U.S.-trained troops in Somalia, also committing massive atrocities, and the genocide against the Acholi people in northern Uganda proceeds out of sight. Ethiopia is the largest recipient of U.S. “Aid” in Africa, with Rwanda and Uganda close on its heels. France is deeply committed to the Anglo-American strategy, which will benefit Total Oil Corp.

AU troops receive military-logistic support from NATO, and are widely hated. Early in October 2007, SLA rebels attacked an AU base killing ten troops. In a subsequent editorial sympathetic to rebel factions (“Darfur’s Bitter Ironies,” [Guardian Online](#), 10/4/07) Smith College English professor Eric Reeves espoused the tired rhetoric of “Khartoum’s genocidal counter-insurgency war in Darfur,” a position counterproductive to any peaceful settlement. To minimize the damage this rebel attack has done to their credibility Reeves and other “Save Darfur” advocates cast doubt about the rebels’ identities and mischaracterized the SLA attackers as “rogue commanders.” However, there is near unanimous agreement, internationally, that rebels are “out of control,” committing widespread rape and plundering with impunity, just as the SPLA did in South Sudan for over a decade.

Debunking the claims of a “genocide against blacks” or an “Islamic holy-war” against Christians, Darfur’s Arab and black African tribes have intermarried for centuries, and nearly everyone is Muslim. The “Save Darfur” campaign is deeply aligned with Jewish and Christian faith-based organizations in the United States, Canada, Europe and Israel. These groups have relentlessly campaigned for Western military action, demonizing both Sudan and China, but they have never addressed Western military involvement—backing factions on all sides. By mobilizing constituencies sympathetic to the “genocide” label and the cries of “never again” they do a grave disservice to the cause of human rights.

There is growing dissent within the “Save Darfur” movement as more supporters question its motivations and the Jewish/Israeli link. “Save Darfur” leaders have been replaced after complaints surfaced about expenditures of funds. Many rebel leaders reportedly receive tens of thousands of dollars monthly, and rebels emboldened by the “Save Darfur” movement commit crimes with impunity. There is a growing demand to probe the accounts of “Save Darfur” to find out how the tens of millions collected are being spent due to allegations of arms-deals and bribery—rebel leaders provided with five-star hotel accommodations, prostitutes and sex parties.

“Save Darfur” is today the rallying cry for a broad coalition of special interests. Advocacy groups—from the local Massachusetts Congregation B’Nai Israel chapter to the International Crises Group and USAID—have fueled the conflict through a relentless, but selective, public relations campaign that disingenuously serves a narrow policy agenda. These interests offer no opportunity for corrective analyses, but stubbornly press their agenda, and they are widely criticized for inflaming tensions in Darfur. Rhetoric, aggression and propaganda do not make a strong foreign policy, and the African people suffering from this brutal international conflict involving China, Saudi Arabia, France, Britain, Canada, the United States and Israel cannot eat good intentions foolishly delivered under the banners of “humanitarian aid” and a poorly cloaked militarism.

The West is desperate to deploy a “robust peacekeeping” mission in Darfur, to press the Western agenda, but United Nations forces will only deepen the chaos. The UN forces will cost billions of dollars and will achieve nothing positive. Indeed, the results will be disastrous, creating another Iraq and Afghanistan—only increasing the chaos and devastation already apparent. The United States is hated for this kind of aggression and posturing, and the U.S. economy will continue to suffer.

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