

## London is running full tilt against Sudan

by Linda de Hoyos

Spurred by the near political disintegration and military setbacks suffered by the British-sponsored Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), British intelligence has "gone for broke" in its war against the nation-state of Sudan. Activating its assets in the diplomatic arena and within Sudan itself, London is determined to overthrow the current government of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.

On Sept. 12, a group of 16 African countries, at the instigation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, issued a condemnation of the government of Sudan, charging that Khartoum is aiding and abetting terrorism. The statement further charged that Sudan was complicit in the attempted assassination of Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on June 26, at the opening of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit, and claimed that Sudan is now hiding two people alleged to have been involved in the plot against the Egyptian President.

On Sept. 13, there were student protests at the University of Khartoum, resulting in six dead, and 79 arrested.

The combination of Sudan's diplomatic isolation and the eruption of street protests in the capital city has British intelligence already counting its chickens.

"The situation in and around Sudan is seriously deteriorating," one British Africa analyst told a journalist on Sept. 15. "The decision by the Organization of African Unity, to directly accuse the Sudanese government for responsibility for the attempted assassination of Mubarak, is a real turning point."

The London *Observer* on Sept. 20 wagged that soon there will be a "bloody confrontation" between "Islamic strongman Hassan al Turabi," head of the National Salvation Front, and the "military regime of Gen. Omar Bashir." "After five days of demonstrations in Khartoum, Sheik Turabi and his Nation-

al Salvation Front are engaged in a battle for survival," the *Observer* asserted.

"There's a strong possibility of a major change in the not-too-distant future in Sudan," commented an official of the Christian Solidarity International, the nongovernmental organization (NGO) led by Baroness Caroline Cox, which is leading a campaign in the U.S. Congress for full sanctions to be applied against the Khartoum government. "If current dynamics continue, change will be inevitable."

The National Democratic Alliance, composed of opposition to the Bashir government residing in Cairo, issued a statement on Sept. 13 calling the student protests "a popular explosion" and a "harbinger of the broad popular uprising the uproot the regime of the Front. The Alliance urges all Sudanese . . . to come out in every city and town in an organized manner until the uprising spreads and is able to overthrow the regime."

### Britain's game

No such "popular uprising" has occurred. On Sept. 19, the Sudanese government released the 79 Sudanese students who had been arrested during the Khartoum demonstrations the week before, but did not release the contingent of Ethiopian students also involved. According to multiple Sudanese sources, the organizers of the protests were members of the Sudanese Communist Party, an organization which has been headquartered *since its inception in London*, as London is the origin of the entire diplomatic, military, and political assault on the Khartoum government.

At issue is not the political disposition of the Bashir government per se, but the very existence in Khartoum of any government that is committed to the territorial and political sovereignty of the Sudanese nation-state. London is targeting

three major nation-states in Africa for political and territorial disintegration:

- **Nigeria.** With a population of over 100 million, tremendous agricultural potential, and oil wealth, Nigeria is the potential powerhouse of West Africa, and its resources have permitted it to draw lines against the International Monetary Fund.

- **South Africa.** With vast mineral resources, a modernized agriculture, and an industrial base and labor force, South Africa is the great powerhouse of all southern Africa and beyond.

- **Sudan.** With agricultural resources that could make it the breadbasket of Africa, a highly educated elite, and vast oil and mineral wealth, Sudan is the leadership-nation of eastern Africa.

In addition, Sudan is London's biggest political obstacle to its assuming total political control of the Great Rift Valley. An elongated depression running down eastern Africa for 1,800 miles, extending from the Red Sea to the mouth of the Zambezi River in Zambia, the Great Rift Valley runs through Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia, and includes such important lakes as Lake Albert, Edward, Kivu, Tanganyika, Bauasa, Rudolf, and Nyasa. The valley is rich with some of the greatest mineral reserves in the world, especially those of coal, zinc, lead, gold, silver, cobalt, and the platinum group metals. Under conditions of expected financial catastrophe, control of the Rift Valley is a major goal in the British oligarchy's drive for monopolistic possession of the world resources.

## Staying power

London's decision to dramatically escalate operations against Sudan is not taken from a position of strength, but of apparent necessity.

Within Sudan, mid-August saw a releasing of prisoners, including all women prisoners who are mothers. The government on Aug. 30 also released Sadiq al-Mahdi, the head of the Umma Party, who was ousted as prime minister in 1989 by General Bashir. "Some hardliners who call for violence" against the government, he said in a statement Sept. 19, "must realize violence will not achieve good results. It is a dead end."

On Aug. 12, Sudanese government forces captured the town of Kaia, an airbase town formerly under SPLA guerrilla control near the Ugandan border, breaking a key SPLA supply route. "With the liberation of Kaia," the Sudanese Defense Ministry stated, "the whole region of Bhar al-Jabal is now out of the control of the rebels." Khartoum's *Akhbar Al-Youm* daily reported Sept. 8 that for the first time in 12 years, barges are now going down the White Nile River taking aid to victims of the fighting near the border.

In neighboring Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni, a personal friend of Baroness Lynda Chalker, British Minister of Overseas Development, has been forced by steady gains by guerrillas operating in the north and central areas of the country, to call in 15,000 troops from neighboring Tanzania,

according to the Kenyan *East African Standard* on Sept. 1.

In a commentary on Aug. 14 in the *International Herald Tribune*, Christian Solidarity International's Baroness Caroline Cox blamed the SPLA's defeat on Jimmy Carter, for his "announcement of a unilateral cease-fire on behalf of the country's National Islamic Front regime." In reality, according to sources, Garang's SPLA has disintegrated into 15 contending tribal groupings, with its military strength dissipating accordingly.

Nor was unity of the opposition achieved at a meeting called in Asmara, Eritrea, by the British backers of the Sudanese opposition. One leading opposition leader has reconciled with the government.

The diplomatic isolation of Sudan in the region comes after a concerted British pressure particularly upon Ethiopia. The condemnation against Sudan was issued by the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention and Management, a sub-committee of 16 countries, which met in Addis Ababa on Sept. 11 to ostensibly discuss the crisis in Burundi. Instead, the meeting focused on Sudan and Ethiopian-Egyptian charges that Sudan is harboring a suspect in the June 26 attempted hit against Egypt's Mubarak. The Ethiopian charge represented a complete about-face from Ethiopia's announcement of their investigative results immediately after the attempt. And the Ethiopian authorities repeated on Aug. 2 that the attempt had been carried out by an Egyptian terrorist, Sarif abd al-Rahman Tawfiq al-Madani.

Ethiopia has come under massive pressure, including from Chalker herself, who visited Addis Ababa at the end of July, to join Egypt, Eritrea, and Uganda in the encirclement of Sudan. A donors' conference held in August held out the implicit threat that funds would be withheld from this war-ravaged country, if Ethiopia were not to join the game. Eritrea, which severed relations with Sudan in December, hosted Uganda's Museveni early this month, and has issued new denunciations of Sudan.

For its part, Sudan has reported that the person they are alleged to be harboring is an Ethiopian with an Ethiopian passport, who was smuggled into the country as part of a "sting" operation against Khartoum, and was immediately shown the door out.

But London is insistent that tensions between Egypt and Sudan could erupt into war. In a sabre-rattling display that many believe is directed at his internal, rather than external, enemies, Egyptian President Mubarak stated in an Aug. 24 interview to the London-based *Al-Hayat* daily that he had not ruled out military intervention against Sudan. "All options are open," he said. "If we were forced to resort to the difficult alternative to protect the country, we will carry out any step." Two weeks later, Egypt charged Sudan with seizing a "re-sthouse" in the disputed territory of Halibe.

Although observers of the region do not expect an Egyptian-Sudan war, there is no doubt that the war against Sudan from London is on.