

EIR News Analysis

Western Powers Seek Sudan Disintegration

by Uwe Friesecke

The United Nations Security Council is debating a resolution on Sudan, in preparation for a vote, which blames the Sudanese government as being responsible for the humanitarian disaster that has engulfed its Western Darfur province for more than one and a half years. Other governments, and members of the U.S. Congress, are pushing to threaten Sudan's government with sanctions and military intervention if it fails to stop the crisis. This is combined with a massive international press campaign accusing the Sudanese government of genocide and ethnic cleansing in Darfur.

The Sudanese government has strongly rejected these accusations, and warned of incalculable consequences if military action were to be taken. During a visit to Turkey, Sudan's Foreign Minister, Mustafa Osman Ismail, said that they did not expect American troops on Sudanese soil, but "if the United States does this, then it would fall into a chaos like Iraq. Sudanese people fight against invaders. . . . If we are attacked, we will retaliate," he told a press conference in Ankara.

Earlier in the week, the government in Khartoum had summoned the ambassadors of Germany and Great Britain to protest the undue pressure from London and Berlin. German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, during a recent visit to Khartoum tried to give the Sudanese government a lecture, which was angrily rejected by his Sudanese counterpart. And in Britain, Tony Blair's government had the head of the army, Gen. Sir Michael Jackson, declare that Britain would be ready to send a full brigade of 5,000 troops to the Darfur region.

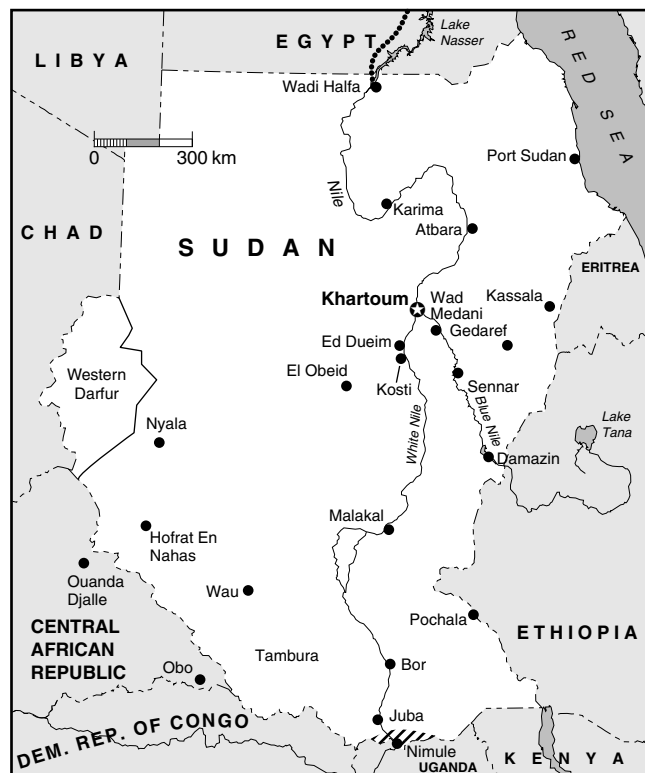
In the meantime, the humanitarian situation for about 1 million people is catastrophic. 200,000 have fled the fighting between different factions in Darfur, to neighboring Chad, and the others fled to refugee camps near larger cities in Darfur

itself. Mobilization of the international community is clearly needed to help take care of the urgent needs of the refugees through the capabilities of the United Nations. But to use this crisis to further blackmail the Karthoum government, as those Western circles pushing for UN sanctions and possible military intervention do, is playing with fire. This could very well lead to a process of disintegration of Sudan, similar to what destroyed Somalia 15 years ago. The consequences for the entire region and for Sudan's neighbors would be incalculable.

The Crisis in Darfur

The crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan, which is a territory larger than France, has its roots, first of all, in a decades-long deterioration of the economic situation of a growing population. During the 1980s, this was aggravated by severe drought, which forced the nomads of the North to move further South in search for grazing land for their animal herds. Thus, the traditional tensions by which different population groups of nomads and peasants are set against each other, grew dangerously. The region was far away from the authority of the central government, and deep-rooted traditional customs were more important than state-related legal codes.

Secondly, power-plays of different factions from neighboring Chad, and from Sudan's elites in Khartoum, intervened for their own purposes. For example, in 1990, Idriss Déby prepared his military coup in Ndjamená—which made him President of Chad—from Darfur, because he is a member of the Zaghawa people, who live in Darfur and Chad. In response to the Zaghawa usurping power in Chad, others fled from Chad to Darfur and started forming militias against the majority Zaghawa. This is one of the beginnings of the



Even though Garang denied that he was arming the SLA, according to the ICG reports, supplies for the SLA and JEM, besides coming through Chad, are being delivered by the SPLA from Uganda and Kenya. The SLA also has the support of Eritrea.

This means that the crisis in Darfur was not due to a spontaneous uprising of one population group against the injustices of the government, or of the Africans against the Arabs, as claimed by most news media; the military operation of the SLA rebels in February of 2003 was already planned a year earlier, and is part of the broader strategy of the Anglo-American backers of John Garang and the SPLA. It also adds the threat of secession of Darfur from Sudan; the SPLA has been wielding the threat of secession of the South for the last 20 years. To underline this, the SLA rebels set as preconditions for negotiations with the government, the withdrawal of all government troops from Darfur; and they walked out of the meeting in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia's capital, two weeks ago, when the government refused it.

Geopolitical Pincer Movement Against Khartoum

Neither John Garang and his SPLA, nor Eritrea, nor Uganda could not have fomented the Darfur rebellion against Khartoum without the active involvement of the Anglo-American powers. Since 2001, the Bush Administration has been trying to dictate peace to Sudan over the decades-old conflict in the South of the country. U.S. and British diplomacy have cajoled the Khartoum government of President al-Bashir into peace negotiations in Kenya, held under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD). They have wrung one compromise after another out of President Bashir's negotiating team. The threat was, that Garang could launch renewed military offensives in the South, fully supplied and backed up by the United States, Britain, and President Museveni's Uganda.

Despite this, there was resistance in President Bashir's camp in Khartoum. In the middle of 2003 he replaced the leader of the Kenya negotiating team, special Presidential peace advisor Dr. Ghazi Salahedin Atabani, with Vice President Ali Osman Taha. The Darfur rebellion of February 2003 threatened Khartoum with a two-front war, and thanks to Eritrea and the SLA's connection to the Beja Congress—a rebel group in Sudan's East—even a three-front war. Added to this was the obvious lesson of the Iraq invasion, so the Bashir government saw no choice but to agree to almost all of the demands put on them concerning peace in the South.

The negotiated agreement between the Bashir government, and Garang's SPLA, which was supposed to be signed soon in Washington in the presence of President Bush, would establish John Garang as Vice President in Khartoum. It would give him far-reaching powers over the policy for the entire Sudan, much more than it would give to the central government power over the South.

Janjawid militias. But all of these populations are of Muslim religion. The difference is more one of culture and tradition rather than religion or ethnicity. The standard description—that this conflict in Darfur is between the Arabs from the North (nomads and *Janjawid* militias) and the Africans from further South (peasants and anti-government rebels)—breaks down immediately, if one considers that prominent leaders of the two rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) are followers of Hassan al-Turabi. The founder and chairman of the JEM, Khalil Ibrahim, was a former state minister who sided with Turabi when he broke away from Sudanese President Al-Bashir in 2002.

The current crisis in Darfur is the result of active intervention from the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA), the South Sudanese rebel group—and its leader John Garang—that has, for the decades-long duration of the South Sudan conflict, worked for Anglo-American geo-political interests. According to reports by the Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG), the SPLA trained 1500 Darfurians near Raja in western Bahr el-Ghazal in southwest Sudan in March of 2002. These were the core of the young military fighters attacking government installations in February of 2003. The first SLA political declaration, of March 13, 2003, was edited by exiled Darfur activists and SPLA leaders. The chairman of the SLA, Abdel Wahid, met officially with John Garang in Asmara, Eritrea, last April.

John Garang belongs to the group of former radical guerrilla leaders which have over the last 18 years been brought to power as the new leaders of Africa. Most prominently, Presidents Museveni of Uganda, Kagame of Rwanda, and Afewerki of Eritrea have changed from being radical Marxists to becoming the most fanatical supporters of the free-market ideology of the IMF and World Bank. They have become one version of the puppets for the geopolitical powershift in Africa that the Anglo-American powers have organized in their favor.

Sudan had to be brought to submission for two reasons: one, oil; and second, the water of the Nile. Until now, U.S. firms were excluded from the lucrative oil deals available in Sudan. Total reserves are estimated at 2 billion barrels. The lead actors in Sudan's oil industry are the China National Petroleum Corporation, Petronas from Malaysia, Talisman Energy from Canada, Gulf Petroleum Corporation from Qatar, Ludin Oil from Sweden and the French Total Fina Elf. On July 25, a new investment package of \$1.7 billion was signed for the exploration of new oilfields in the South and the construction of a new pipeline to the Red Sea. This time, British and Russian firms were also part of the deal. After the implementation of the Kenya peace treaty, those lucrative oil deals would also be open to U.S. firms.

But strategically even more important may be the question of water from the Nile. In Khartoum the Blue and the White Nile join together to constitute the lifeline for Egypt. During recent months, Anglo-American pressure led to Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania questioning the old Nile treaties with Egypt. Garang in power in Sudan would line up with this group and be ready to be used by the Anglo-American powers to further blackmail Egypt.

The Sudanese government was warned in January of 2001 that the Bush Administration would not treat them better than the former Clinton Administration from Washington. Democratic Presidential candidate Lyndon La Rouché was the keynote speaker at a seminar organized by the Schiller Institute, *EIR*, and Sudan's Institute for Strategic Studies in Khartoum, under the title "Peace through Development along the Nile River." There, LaRouché warned his Sudanese audience of the geopolitical intentions of the new Bush Administration. But some of the Sudanese participants were still so angry at Bill Clinton's Sudan policy, that they insisted things would work out with the new Bush team. Tragically, LaRouché's warnings are now fully confirmed through the events in Darfur.

The crisis in Darfur confirms again the cynical nature of the West's Africa policy. First, for decades the global financial institutions, led by the IMF and World Bank, blocked development for Sudan, Chad, and other countries in the region. Thus social and political conflicts became unavoidable. These conflicts were then heated up by the unhindered and targeted flow of weapons. Western powers, through the news media, define the conflicts as ethnic or

religious, and manipulate them for their own geopolitical purposes. If these conflicts go out of control, the humanitarian crisis is used as a pretext for declaring countries as "failed states," and pressure is exerted to accomplish "regime change." According to this model, the West, and predominantly the Anglo-American powers (with France not challenging them), bears most of the responsibility for Africa's wars of the last 15 years in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, West Africa and South Sudan.

The escalating crisis in Darfur is only the latest example of this. Factions of the Khartoum elite may use this crisis for their own power games. But the Bashir government did not start the conflict. Rather, it tried to implement the treaty which was signed by Foreign Minister Ismail and the UN's General Secretary Kofi Annan on July 3, to disarm the *Janjawid* militia, and to improve the humanitarian access to the refugee camps. The government itself has asked for help from the African Union.

The accusation of genocide does not apply to the Sudan government. Instead, this must be directed against those in the West who are engaged in the geopolitical manipulation of Africa policy, as happened 14 years ago in Rwanda, and later in the Congo.

Commentary

Sudanese 'Peace' Deal Could Spell Disaster

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

The peace agreement made between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the SPLA/M of John Garang, could signal the beginning of a process leading to the destruction of Sudan as an Arab-African nation-state. A detailed briefing on the dangers inherent in the accord, which is scheduled to be signed by the end of the Summer, if nothing intervenes to change it, was given to *EIR* by the leading Sudan specialist in Cairo University, at the Institute of African Research and Studies.

In the view of Prof. Ibrahim A. Nasr El Din, head of the Department of Economics and Political Science, who spoke with this author during a June visit to Cairo, there are four possible scenarios which could unfold in Sudan.

1. Sudan could go the way of Somalia. This is real and could be imminent. In Sudan there are two opposing forces, the GoS, which is Islamist, and the Garang rebels, who are