



## **Leveraging New International Action on Darfur**

### **How the U.S. Can Use Strategic Diplomacy to Break the Deadlock and Protect Darfur Now**

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#### **Introduction**

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The international community is running out of options on Darfur. The death toll in western Sudan continues to mount as the latest wave of government-sponsored violence intensifies. Tens of thousands of people have been newly displaced in recent weeks. Reports from the United Nations (UN) and the media indicate that the crisis is now at its worst point ever: the Sudanese government is arming its proxy militias to a greater extent than ever before,<sup>1</sup> violence is reaching more deeply into Chad, and insecurity is constraining the humanitarian response throughout Darfur and leaving millions of lives in increasing jeopardy.

While the need for a protection force beyond the existing African Union (AU) mission is well established, the UN Security Council's authorization of a UN peacekeeping force for Darfur has been paralyzed since August. The Sudanese government has similarly blocked a more recent compromise proposal on a hybrid AU/UN operation. The AU's announcement at the end of November of a further extension of its mandate in Darfur will not change the dynamics on the ground nor will it provide adequate protection to the people of Darfur.<sup>2</sup> Yet this may appear to be the last best option, given the ongoing international stalemate on a UN force.

But the international community has not yet exhausted all of its options on Darfur. As the violence worsens, there is an urgent need for a new approach that can break the deadlock and achieve the necessary robust UN peacekeeping operation to protect the people of Darfur. This represents only the first step on the long road to peace in Darfur, but it is essential to stabilize the situation and to provide security to the people of Darfur in the immediate term.

Africa Action calls for a new U.S. foreign policy strategy, where Darfur is a top tier priority that guides the U.S. in its international relations, and where the U.S. leverages its partnerships with key stakeholders to advance the goal of a UN peacekeeping force for Darfur.

This Africa Action report identifies the most important international actors on Darfur and analyzes how the U.S. can effectively mobilize their support for new action to protect Darfur. It urges the U.S. to put the lives of the people of Darfur above the counter-terrorism concerns that have tied Washington to Khartoum, constraining a more robust U.S. response to the genocide and emboldening the Sudanese government to thwart the will of the international community. It calls on the U.S. to redouble its efforts to convince the international community that a UN force is an essential and attainable next step on Darfur, and to use strategic diplomacy with key countries to overcome remaining obstacles to this goal.

With millions of Darfuri lives now on the line, the U.S. must marshal all of its diplomatic resources to break the deadlock and ensure that a robust international protection force is deployed to Darfur immediately.

## Sudan

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The Sudanese government is the author of the ongoing genocide in Darfur, and it is also the major obstacle to international efforts to deploy a UN peacekeeping force to the region. Sudan has ignored successive UN Security Council resolutions, urging it to disarm its militias and stop the violence in Darfur. It has blocked the implementation of Resolution 1706, which was passed in August and authorized a robust UN peacekeeping force for Darfur. Khartoum continues to express vehement opposition to the deployment of any UN troops in Darfur, even while it continues to participate in deadly attacks against civilians in Darfur.

The Sudanese government must be pressured to accept the international community's will for a UN peacekeeping force that can protect the people of Darfur. The U.S. has unique leverage to achieve this outcome. Khartoum wishes to strengthen its ties with Washington and ultimately "normalize" relations, and there are open lines of communications as a result of an intelligence-sharing relationship in the context of the so-called "War on Terrorism". The Bush Administration must now put Darfur first. It must use all available pressure points to secure the necessary action from Khartoum, and it must engage Sudan's allies in this effort as well.

In the past, U.S. pressure on Khartoum has yielded results, as Africa Action and other organizations have previously pointed out. In the 1990s, as a result of U.S. sanctions and the removal of any American diplomatic presence from Khartoum, the Sudanese government expelled Osama bin Laden and distanced itself from terrorist networks.<sup>3</sup> Time and again, the Sudanese government has acted in response to punitive measures, while it has ignored international pleas and condemnation.

Now, the Bush Administration must make clear to Khartoum that any future relationship between the U.S. and Sudan depends on Khartoum's cooperation with the international community in allowing a UN peacekeeping mission into Darfur. To show that it is serious, the U.S. should immediately push for new sanctions against senior Sudanese government officials responsible for the continuing violence in Darfur, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1591. Thus far, no sitting Sudanese official has been targeted. The U.S. should seek further targeted sanctions through the Security Council, including asset freezes and travel bans. It should offer its cooperation to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in its proceedings against those charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur.

Furthermore, the U.S. should launch new efforts to internationalize pressure on Khartoum in support of a UN peacekeeping mission for Darfur. By working with Sudan's allies and others in the international community, the U.S. should seek to create a united front for new and urgent action to protect Darfur. To this end, the Bush Administration should begin actively encouraging other countries to enact comprehensive bilateral sanctions against Sudan, as the U.S. has had in place since 1997, precluding investment in Sudan's growing oil industry and other such economic relations. Such sanctions would register international outrage at the ongoing crisis in Darfur, for which the Khartoum government must be held responsible, and would pressure Khartoum to cooperate on next steps.

Working with the larger international community, the U.S. must make clear to the Sudanese government that its behavior is unacceptable, and that there are real and serious consequences to its actions. The U.S. has unique capacity to convey this message, and it must now strengthen its efforts to achieve Khartoum's compliance with the international will for a protection force for Darfur.

## China

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China has generally opposed measures to sanction the Sudanese government for its genocidal activities in Darfur. In July 2004, China opposed a Security Council resolution threatening sanctions against the Sudanese government for its violence against civilians.<sup>4</sup> In April 2006, China opposed UN sanctions against four individuals named for inciting violence in Darfur.<sup>5</sup> Although China has expressed concern about the Darfur crisis and has publicly supported the notion of a UN transition,<sup>6</sup> it abstained from supporting Resolution 1706 because Khartoum's consent had not been achieved in advance.

At the core of China's support for Sudan is a profitable economic relationship centered on Sudan's oil wealth. China is the single largest investor in Sudan's oil industry. In 2005, China bought 50% of Sudan's oil exports, and up to one-half of Sudan's daily output of 500,000 barrels now goes to China.<sup>7</sup> Beyond oil, China is Sudan's largest trade partner more broadly.<sup>8</sup> Traditionally, China also opposes the principle of external intervention in the affairs of a sovereign state on human rights concerns. At the same time, it is selling military aircraft and parts, as well as guns and ammunition, to Khartoum.<sup>9</sup>

The U.S. must redouble its efforts to gain China's support for new international action on Darfur. While senior Bush Administration officials have recently stated that they are now seeking Chinese support on this issue, this should have been a priority much sooner, and it must now be pursued with vigor.

Washington has close economic and political ties with Beijing. As of 2005, the U.S. is China's largest trading partner, purchasing over 21% of China's exports.<sup>10</sup> China is also an increasingly important market for U.S. imports. The cumulative value of U.S. investments in China through 2005 was \$54 billion, and China has recognized that this investment is key to its continued economic success.<sup>11</sup> In the past, the U.S. and China have cooperated on a number of international issues, including in response to the North Korean nuclear tests. In this case, where China perceived that its own interests were at stake, it was willing to join the U.S. and the international community in condemning North Korea's actions.

Now, there are a number of ways in which the U.S. can seek China's support for the international goal of a UN peacekeeping force for Darfur. At a basic level, the U.S. must make China's connections with Sudan a factor in U.S.-China relations. While even a decade ago, China's outlook was more isolationist, it has recently become more concerned with cementing a leadership position in international affairs.<sup>12</sup> The U.S. must point out China's unique role with Khartoum, and the leverage it can exert to achieve Sudan's cooperation with the international community. The U.S. must make clear that instability in Darfur undermines China's economic interests in Sudan, and broader international interests in the region. It must further assert that achieving China's support on this matter is a priority for the U.S. and is important to these countries' future bilateral relationship.

On the economic front, the U.S. should urge China to impose sanctions against Khartoum, particularly to halt Chinese investment in Sudan's oil industry, until Sudan consents to a UN peacekeeping force. Though this is perhaps an unlikely prospect, it would exert immense pressure on the Sudanese government, if realized. Even if not, the U.S. request would encourage China to explore leveraging its various other connections with Sudan in this regard.

China has made clear that it supports a UN transition in Darfur, but that Khartoum's consent must be achieved first. Now, the U.S. must work to actively engage the Chinese government in gaining this consent and removing the final obstacles to the necessary peacekeeping force for Darfur.

## Russia

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Russia has often joined China in opposing international sanctions against Khartoum at the UN Security Council.<sup>13</sup> Russia also abstained from supporting Resolution 1706 on the grounds that Khartoum's consent for a UN peacekeeping force had not yet been secured.

It is well established that Russia is a major supplier of arms to Khartoum. In July 2004, the Sudanese government revealed that it was importing 12 MiG-29 jet fighters from Russia, and this was documented in an Amnesty International report later that year. The contract was said to be worth between \$120 million and \$370 million.<sup>14</sup> As recently as October 2006, it was reported that the Sudanese defense minister met with Russian officials in Moscow to secure an arms loan of more than \$1 billion to obtain military aircraft, namely jets and helicopters.<sup>15</sup>

Russia has also partnered with Khartoum in joint oil development projects. In January 2002, Russia signed a \$200 million deal with Sudan to develop untapped oil fields, as part of a larger program in exchange for aid in building a Sudanese domestic arms industry.<sup>16</sup> Though this deal eventually fell through, a Russian company secured a deal to build an oil pipeline in Sudan in July 2004.<sup>17</sup>

Like China, Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and it represents a powerful voice in the international community on Darfur, particularly because of its relationship with Khartoum. The U.S. must now seek Russia's support for international efforts to break the current deadlock.

The U.S. and Russia share a range of economic and political ties. In 2005, the U.S. imported more than \$15 billion in Russian goods, up 28% from the previous year,<sup>18</sup> and Russian President Putin has said that a good relationship with the U.S. is a strategic priority of his administration. The U.S. must now engage the Russian government on Darfur, requesting strong Russian support for the expressed international goal of a UN peacekeeping force for Darfur.

The U.S. should strongly urge Russia to use its leverage to persuade the Sudanese government on this issue. As part of its broad international strategy, the U.S. should ask Russia to enact bilateral sanctions against Sudan and to end its arms sales to this genocidal government. Washington must make clear that Darfur is a priority in U.S. foreign policy, and that it is therefore an issue in U.S. relations with Russia.

Like China, Russia has cooperated with the U.S. in countering issues of nuclear proliferation, particularly in Iran and North Korea. Russia is also a member of the "Middle East Quartet" and is involved with the U.S. and other allies in peace negotiations in that region. In recent years, Russia has sought membership and influence in a number of international institutions, in many of which the U.S. is an important member. For example, the NATO-Russia Council was formed in 2002, and Russia is also in the process of joining the World Trade Organization.<sup>19</sup> The U.S. should make clear that a closer bilateral relationship, and increased U.S. support for Russian international interests, now require Moscow's support for the international pursuit of a UN force for Darfur.

As with China, Russia considers Khartoum's consent to be a precondition for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force to Darfur. The U.S. must now persuade Russia of the urgent need for this force, and of the importance of Russia's voice in achieving Khartoum's consent on this critical issue.

## Arab League

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Although the Arab League has expressed concern over the violence in Darfur, it has often hesitated to support strong international action against Khartoum. Sudan is a member of the Arab League and has regularly solicited its political support in the face of international pressure on Darfur. In 2004, the Arab League Commission of Inquiry to Darfur condemned the attacks on civilians as “massive violations of human rights,” but this statement was later suppressed after a negative reaction from the Sudanese government.<sup>20</sup> Earlier this year, Secretary General Amr Moussa expressed support for a UN transition in Darfur, though the Arab League continued to urge international patience in dealing with Khartoum.<sup>21</sup>

Among Arab League states, Qatar has been particularly influential in the international response on Darfur this year, as it has held a rotating seat on the UN Security Council. This month, Qatar holds the Presidency of that crucial body. During its tenure on the Security Council, Qatar has consistently aligned itself with the Sudanese government, with whom it declares a “fraternal” relationship, and it has stood in solidarity with Khartoum in opposing the deployment of a UN force to Darfur.<sup>22</sup>

The U.S. has not done enough to engage Arab League countries on Darfur and to convince them of the need for an international peacekeeping force. Such efforts were all the more important given the skepticism and distrust with which Arab League countries (among others) view U.S. foreign policy objectives in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq. U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, Andrew Natsios, said last month that the U.S. had not approached the Arab League for its cooperation on Darfur until recently, which observers emphasized was a mistake in the approach to addressing this crisis. However, Natsios acknowledged that the Arab League was a key body in the pursuit of a solution to the Darfur situation, and that it had been particularly helpful in urging moderation on Sudanese President Bashir’s part.<sup>23</sup>

There is much that the U.S. can and must do to engage Arab League countries in supporting a UN force for Darfur. It is incumbent upon the Bush Administration to make the strongest case possible for these countries’ support and to dispel their suspicions of ulterior motives. Many of the member nations of the Arab League are oil-producing states, with crucial economic ties to the U.S. The U.S. is thus provided with many opportunities to raise the issue of peacekeeping for Darfur in bilateral dialogues.

There are certain key Arab League countries with which the U.S. shares close relations. Egypt, for example, has a significant interest in maintaining stability in the sub-region, and Egypt is also the second largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid.<sup>24</sup> The U.S. should now leverage its relationship with Egypt to seek its cooperation on Darfur, and to encourage Egypt to work with the international community to challenge Khartoum’s opposition to a UN peacekeeping force. Despite its oppositional viewpoint on Darfur at the Security Council, Qatar, too, has long-standing and generally friendly relations with the U.S., particularly in cooperative security efforts in the Gulf region. Qatar’s forces were used in the first Gulf War, it has recently supported U.S. military operations in Iraq, and it shares growing energy ties with the U.S.<sup>25</sup> The U.S. can and must now build upon these connections to solicit Qatar’s support for international action to protect Darfur.

It is crucial that the response to the crisis in Darfur be truly international, and that Arab and Muslim countries be actively engaged in pursuing the goal of a UN force for Darfur. Their support is important in principle, as well as in practical terms given the close relationships many of these countries share with Khartoum. The U.S. must now expend every effort to engage Arab League members in the effort to break the deadlock and achieve an international protection force for the people of Darfur.

## African Union

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The African Union remains central to the international response on Darfur. The AU has shown important political leadership on this crisis, and its mission in Darfur has provided some measure of protection in some areas. But the AU force has been fundamentally under-resourced and overwhelmed in each stage of deployment, and the Sudanese government's obstructions have further hindered its effectiveness.

On three occasions this year, the AU Peace and Security Council has officially expressed its support for a transition to a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur – in *Communiqués* on March 10, May 15 and June 27.<sup>26</sup> But this goal has repeatedly been denounced and blocked by Khartoum. The three African non-permanent members of the UN Security Council this year (Ghana, Tanzania and Congo-Brazzaville) all voted in favor of Resolution 1706, and have repeatedly asserted the international responsibility to protect the people of Darfur. But the recent decision by the AU to extend its mandate in Darfur came in response to pressure from Khartoum, and represents an inadequate solution to this crisis. The AU continues to struggle to expand its troop size, strengthen its mandate and improve its logistical capacity on the ground, and it urgently needs reinforcement from a larger UN peacekeeping mission.

The U.S. has provided financial and logistical support to the AU operation in Darfur on a number of occasions. However, this has not been sufficient to overcome its fundamental weaknesses or to enable the AU to stand up to Khartoum's pressure. The U.S. must now show stronger and more consistent diplomatic support for the AU, and must work with this critical body to reinforce and realize its request for a UN transition in Darfur.

Senior U.S. and UN officials continue to emphasize the critical role of the AU in Darfur, and their commitment to working together on this crisis. Yet, time and again, the AU has been left vulnerable to Sudan's pressure. The U.S. must now re-engage with the AU leadership and with the countries on the Peace and Security Council to galvanize their support for a UN transition and to encourage them to stand firm, with full international backing, in the pursuit of this goal in Darfur. The U.S. has strong bilateral ties with Nigeria, South Africa and other powerful African countries, and it must work with these countries to pursue a common agenda on Darfur and ensure protection for civilians. The U.S. must seek to amplify African voices at the Security Council and in other international fora, and support their calls for the necessary UN peacekeeping force. This political support will become all the more important with the potential accession of Sudan to the position of AU Chair in January.

Responding to Darfur is not a matter for the AU alone. There is a clear international responsibility to stop crimes against humanity and to protect targeted populations. In the past, the international community has worked with African regional bodies to reinforce their efforts and ensure the success of peacekeeping operations, where African forces took the lead and where many thousands of innocent lives were at stake – in Sierra Leone, in Burundi, in Liberia, and elsewhere<sup>27</sup>. This model, where African forces act as “first responders” and are then supplemented by a larger UN force, is well established and is an appropriate and necessary response now on Darfur.

The U.S. and other members of the Security Council must now work with the AU to overcome blocks to a UN transition and to provide the necessary political and financial support to achieve this goal in Darfur.

## European Union

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In September 2004, the European Union (EU) declared that the violence in Darfur was “tantamount to genocide.”<sup>28</sup> Since then, individual European leaders, such as French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy, German Defense Minister Peter Struck, and British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, have referred to the situation in Darfur as genocide, but their comments have not prompted new action from the European Union to address the crisis.<sup>29</sup> The EU has provided humanitarian assistance to Sudan, including over \$142 million in 2006.<sup>30</sup> However, it has stopped short of full diplomatic engagement in the pursuit of a UN peacekeeping force that can protect the people of Darfur.

The EU comprises a number of influential countries on the Security Council and beyond, many of which are U.S. allies. They must now be encouraged to engage more actively in resolving the crisis in Darfur. All European countries on the UN Security Council voted in favor of Resolution 1706, and Britain has shown particular leadership on this crisis. In early October, British Prime Minister Tony Blair cited Britain, the European Union, and the U.S. as the parties that would need especially to work towards a solution to the Darfur crisis, and he called on European leaders to exert “maximum pressure.”<sup>31</sup>

While the European Union suspended cooperation with Sudan in 1990, it resumed “political dialogue” in 1999, and formalized a new relationship in January 2005,<sup>32</sup> following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and the peoples of southern Sudan. The new framework agreement signed between the EU and the Sudanese government was considered a first step towards the normalization of European relations with Sudan, and was to pave the way for new EU contributions to the reconstruction of Sudan. These closer ties now provide the EU with leverage in its relationship with Khartoum, which the EU must use to break the deadlock on a peacekeeping force for Darfur.

Given the strong economic and political ties between the U.S. and European countries, there is a good deal of room for greater cooperation and collaboration in responding to the crisis in Darfur. The U.S. should make Darfur a real issue in its relations with its European allies. It should encourage Britain, France and other economic powers in Europe to institute bilateral sanctions against the Sudanese government, such as those currently in place by the U.S. It should urge all European Union countries with ties to Khartoum to make clear to the Sudanese government that its compliance with the international community on the issue of a UN force for Darfur is not just expected but required. These countries should also be convinced to engage their own international allies on this issue, and particularly those that may, in turn, have particular influence on Khartoum.

Those EU members on the UN Security Council, and particularly those who are permanent members, should be encouraged by the U.S. to reiterate their support for Resolution 1706, in principle and in practice. In this context, they should be engaged in the active pursuit of a solution to the current deadlock on a protection force.

The U.S. and its European allies have a history of working together to address international crises and to promote peace and security, and Darfur should now represent a central focus of this relationship.

## Conclusion

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Last week, in an address to mark International Human Rights Day, outgoing UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan decried the failed international response on Darfur. He noted,

*“There is more than enough blame to go around. It can be shared among those who value abstract notions of sovereignty more than the lives of real families, those whose reflex of solidarity puts them on the side of governments and not of peoples, and those who fear that action to stop the slaughter would jeopardize their commercial interests.”<sup>33</sup>*

Annan added,

*“The truth is, none of these arguments amount even to excuses, let alone justifications, for the shameful passivity of most governments. We have still not summoned up the collective sense of urgency that this issue requires.”<sup>34</sup>*

It has been two years and three months since the U.S. declared what’s happening in Darfur to be genocide, and it must accept a great share of the blame for the inadequate international response to this crisis.

In the pursuit of its foreign policy priorities, the U.S. constantly leverages its relationships with countries around the world, either to enlist their support in securing shared objectives, or to pressure a change in stance when perceived interests are threatened. But the Bush Administration has not treated Darfur as a top tier foreign policy priority, and it has not done enough to overcome the obstacles to the deployment of a robust UN peacekeeping force.

The U.S. must now activate its relationships with all stakeholders, starting with the Sudanese government and its allies, and including the members of the UN Security Council and the larger international community, to engage them in finding a peacekeeping solution for Darfur. Africa Action asserts that the U.S. has unique leverage to break the current deadlock, and it must employ strategic diplomacy with key parties to advance the international responsibility to protect the people of Darfur.

In February 2006, in a televised interview, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney said on Darfur, “I am satisfied we are doing everything we can do.”<sup>35</sup> But since this time, hundreds of thousands more lives have been lost or destroyed in Darfur, and there is still no adequate protection force on the ground.

Until the U.S. takes every step available to achieve an international peacekeeping force that can protect Darfur, it cannot claim to be doing all it can to stop the ongoing genocide.



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