

because if you could do that, then they could depend more on Sudan's ports, rather than getting their goods from western Africa. So, we want to extend to the neighboring countries, by extending our rail in that direction. At the moment, we have a program of trying to develop the rail system, in a way that will make it more efficient than it is now. Sometimes you find a line being used once a week; that is a waste.

We are trying to separate the infrastructure from the operational side. In other words, the infrastructure, the rail system, the communications, the stations—that was owned by the government. We want to open up the operation of the railways to the private sector; whoever is ready to invest in running a rail system between Khartoum and Port Sudan, they can use that line. Anybody who wants to use the line from Kosti to the west, can also do that, and so on. Because it is very expensive for the government to run this. At the same time, the government needs to set up strong infrastructure for the private sector to be able to operate. Of course, it is easier for them to run a railway system than for them to pay for extending the rails.

## Washington war dog takes diplomatic tack

by Linda de Hoyos

At a one-man seminar at the U.S. Institute for Peace on April 28, John Prendergast presented a three-part policy for a diplomatic offensive by the United States government against Sudan, now that military operations against the Khartoum government have definitely stalled—in short, a policy of war by diplomatic means. Prendergast, formerly with the National Security Council, had been contracted by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) to revamp U.S. policy toward Sudan, and had just returned from a tour of southern Sudan and Uganda.

Prendergast has nearly made his career as a crusader against the government of Sudan, working with Roger Winter of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Ted Dagne of the Congressional Research Service. In September 1997, the three had dominated a U.S. Institute for Peace forum in which they called for a U.S. policy of total war against the National Salvation Front government of Sudan. Assuring attendees that this would not involve U.S. ground troops, they called for total support from Washington for John Garang's Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). This was their answer at the time to the April 1997 peace accords between the Sudan government and all other factional leaders in southern Sudan, with the sole exception of Garang. This war, said Roger Winter, was required, "even though I know it will bring about a

humanitarian catastrophe."

Prendergast noted that now with Susan Rice as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and David Dunn as head of the East Africa desk, the team was assembled that could implement such a war policy. That is precisely what happened after a debate that went into November among Washington policymakers.

However, war failed. Not only did the SPLA, along with Ugandan tank divisions, fail to make serious headway in Sudan in two separate offensives in 1997, but the back-up to Garang from Eritrea and Ethiopia collapsed in May 1998, when Eritrea invaded Ethiopia.

Hence, Prendergast was charged with devising a "diplomatic" fallback.

His proposal hinges on a three-track plan with the aim, he said, of bringing about a "progressive change in the Sudan government, through a comprehensive settlement or as a result of new realities on the ground," meaning a more favorable military situation.

The first track is to be through the talks sponsored by the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), comprised of the countries in the region, and which has been the sponsor for talks between the Sudan government and Garang's SPLA for the last two years under the chairmanship of Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi. Prendergast noted that the IGAD talks must somehow arrive at a "comprehensive settlement," and that the National Democratic Alliance, the coalition of northern opposition parties and Garang's SPLA cobbled together by Baroness Caroline Cox, Deputy Speaker of the British House of Lords, must be involved. This "comprehensive settlement" is therefore the goal for bringing about a "restructuring" of the government in Khartoum.

Prendergast also called for the IGAD talks, with the next round possibly beginning on May 20, to become the focus of attention from the "international community." Pressure must be brought to bear against Sudan, through IGAD, said Prendergast, who had just met with the IGAD Observers Forum, the grouping of "donor" countries which are to use IGAD as a focus for international attention against Sudan.

Second, Prendergast called for "grassroots" peacemaking in southern Sudan. He cited the late-February conference of the Dinka and Nuer chiefs as an example. That conference, sponsored by the Sudan Council of Churches and coordinated by Presbyterian church leader William Lowery, was funded by the U.S. AID. Garang, a Dinka, has been relying on a base within the Dinka community, particularly from region of Bor, while Riak Machar and other leaders in the Southern Sudan Coordinating Council are often from the Nuer community. Prendergast said that such "grassroots" meetings are important to establish greater unity in southern Sudan, where civil war has been going on since 1991 when many SPLA leaders split with Garang. However, Prendergast emphasized that the principal motivation for holding "grassroots" peace conferences is "to pressure Khartoum."

Third, Prendergast called for the U.S. government, particularly through AID, to support the creation of “civil administration” in southern Sudan in areas controlled by Garang’s SPLA. “The civilian capacity of the SPLA must be enhanced,” he said. This has been a longtime concern of Garang’s boosters in Washington. First, such civil structures are designed to counter the work of the Southern Sudan Coordinating Council, led by Dr. Machar, which functions as the de facto government of southern Sudan. Second, the creation of civilian institutions in Garang-held territory provides a new channel for the funneling of money into Garang’s operation, Prendergast lamented, in answer to one question that Congress would never permit U.S. covert military support to Garang. Even as early as 1995, Winter et al. have been attempting to corral Garang’s operation into a civilian mode, so as to provide a credible repository for money, and also to boost Garang’s flagging credibility internationally.

The overall problem, Prendergast indicated, is that given the military stalemate, “there is no pressure on Khartoum in the absence of external stimulus.” He averred that the Sudan government is “comfortable” with the situation as it is.

In answer to questions, Prendergast left no equivocation that peace is not the aim of the policy he put forward, but pressure on Khartoum. He summarily rejected the idea of a special U.S. envoy to bring about meaningful negotiations between the SPLA and the Sudan government, as had been called for by Reps. Tony Hall (D-Ohio) and Frank Wolf (R-Va.) in June 1998. He summarily rejected as meaningless the provision in the April 1997 accord between the Sudan government and all other southern factions for an internationally supervised referendum to be held in the south on the question of southern secession. No one could possibly believe that the Sudan government would permit such a referendum, he argued, although he could not say why all other southern faction leaders *did* believe it strongly enough to lay down their arms and work for peace in southern Sudan.

“The aim is to change the nature of governance in Sudan,” Prendergast said. “The end result [of the IGAD process] would be geared toward a framework for the changing the nature of the government in Sudan. It is in no one’s interest to see a partial solution where only the south is addressed.”

In plain English, the issue of the south has been cynically used by Prendergast and company merely as a means to “pressure Khartoum,” to destabilize the nation-state of Sudan, to destroy the Sudan government.

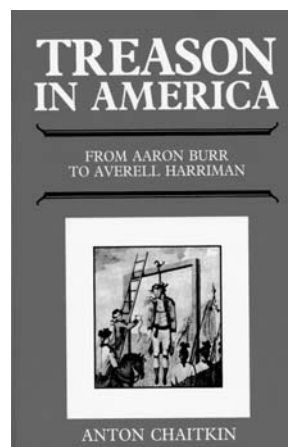
The actual reality in the south, that the population of southern Sudan is being destroyed by this war—wracked by disease and famine, close to the brink of social and physical annihilation—is not a concern for Prendergast et al. For Prendergast, a career-theorist of relief agency work, the fact that up to 200,000 people or more died in the 18 months in which war policy was unsuccessfully carried out, is not a concern. The reality of the south, that the southern leaders and their people seek peace among themselves and with their neigh-

bors, including in northern Sudan, is not only not a concern to Prendergast, but is in fact *a threat* to the strategic interests he represents, who are determined to turn Sudan, where a functioning highly educated elite is committed to building a nation, both in the north and in the south, into yet another “failed state” in Africa.

Most southern leaders see through the game: that the war in the south has been used as a battering ram against Khartoum, not for the people of the south. Only Garang appears to be unable to figure this out. Prendergast’s policy is not in the interests of the United States, and is incoherent with President Clinton’s vision of a partnership with Africa, but it does suit the geopolitical aims of British intelligence and their complicit allies in the United States, such as Rice, and their protector, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. These aims not only include the domination of the River Nile by Israeli interests, and but also the grab of Sudan’s tremendous wealth in natural resources by British Commonwealth extraction companies. The primary aim is the destruction of Sudan through war—continued war in the south and new civil war in the north—so that no effective government in either northern or southern Sudan can ever again threaten British and allied interests. Now that the military “timeline is slipping,” as Prendergast noted, he and his gang are shifting to diplomatic terrain.

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