

U.S. should back German plan on Sudan

Four U.S. legislators appealed on Jan. 30 to the U.S. Congress to support the initiative to promote peace in Sudan which passed the German Bundestag (parliament) by acclamation on Jan. 16. The four, Hon. James Mann, former U.S. Congressman from South Carolina; Rep. Benjamin McGee, Assistant Speaker Pro Tem, Arkansas State Legislature; Rep. Ben Swan, Massachusetts State Legislature; and Rep. Thomas Jackson, Alabama State Legislature, visited Sudan on Sept. 13-23, 1996, on a fact-finding mission initiated by the Schiller Institute. The resolution, "Initiatives to Produce Peace in Sudan," was presented by Count Alois von Waldburg-Zeil, Karl Lamers, and the CDU/CSU faction; Dr. R. Werner Schuster, Joachim Tappe, and the SPD faction; Dr. Uschi Eid and the Alliance 90/Greens; as well as Bundestag members Ulrich Irmer, Dr. Irmgard Schwätzer, and the FDP faction. The resolution came on the initiative of Schuster, who had travelled to Sudan in 1996 on fact-finding missions along with Tappe. The resolution reads in part:

The Bundestag should resolve:

I. The German Bundestag asserts: In the Sudanese civil war, which has been going on since 1956, with only 11 years' respite, 3 million people have died. The war has also led to one of the greatest refugee movements at present. Five million Sudanese have been displaced inside the country, 500,000 of them in the bordering countries.

Every attempt to limit understanding of the civil war to a conflict between the predominantly Islamic fundamentalist North and the predominantly Christian South, misconstrues the multidimensional nature of the problem. The causes are also to be sought in the divergent interests of the many ethnic groups, or the different rates of economic development between North and South. . . .

Regardless of the conflicts, talks with representatives of the South (SPLA, SPLA-United, SSIM), the government in Khartoum, as well as the opposition in the North (UMMA, DUP), have yielded surprising agreement on the following points:

- Neither side can win the civil war by military means. Only a political solution can bring about peace.
- A change of government in Khartoum in the short term is improbable, and would not end the conflict.
- The population desires a peaceful solution. . . .
- All parties to the conflict agree on external mediation, in which the cooperation of the German Federal Republic is explicitly desired.

II. The German Bundestag demands that the German federal government:

1. support the peace process, especially the creation of several, interlocking "Round Tables" [with] . . .

a. the parties to the conflict in Sudan,

b. the states of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) (Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda), and

c. the friends of the IGADD states (U.S.A., Canada, Great Britain, Norway, the Netherlands),

d. [and should seek] a common policy in the context of the European Union, especially with France.

2. work within the United Nations, but especially within the EU, to coordinate initiatives to promote civil society (especially women's organizations) as well as civil structures in Sudan (empowerment). This support should not be in the form of great projects of financial cooperation but primarily in the form of small projects of technical and personal cooperation, carried out especially by the German development service and NGOs [non-governmental organizations].

3. lend more support to the process initiated by IGADD for a peaceful solution to the conflict. In addition, the IGADD initiative should be strengthened in its concern to carry out development in the IGADD countries. . . .

4. work within the international community to create positive incentives through foreign policy and development policy measures, for all Sudanese parties to the conflict, in order to bring about a serious dialogue process, which can be followed over time.

5. organize, with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, for renegotiation of the repayment modalities of Sudan's foreign debt, making terms of repayment depend on progress in the peace process.

6. press for international monitoring of the peace process (and referendum).

7. work to find competent mediators, acceptable to all parties to the conflict. A significant role should be given to the Sudan Working Group of the All African Conference of Churches, in this dialogue process. Communications structures available here should be used.

8. press for continuation of the Barcelona process, begun by Unesco in September 1995.

9. invite appropriate representatives of the Sudanese government, the Parliament, and the National Islamic Front to Europe for a dialogue. . . .

10. promote the potential envisaged by Sudan to build a federal system to solve its internal problems. . . .

11. to work, on an international level, against the creeping genocide of the Nuba people in Sudan.

12. work internationally for an end to the supply of all weapons to the parties in conflict. . . .

13. finally, to initiate a continual and systematic dialogue between Islam and the Western world, in order to eliminate mutual prejudices.