

The Fight for an American Development Policy for Sudan

by Lawrence K. Freeman

July 26—There is a fight going on in the Obama Administration over what will be the future U.S. policy for Sudan. Essentially, it comes down to this: Either we continue to support British-led destabilizations of African nations, or we move forward with a genuine American policy of assisting in the economic progress of the less developed nations, as President Franklin Roosevelt intended after World War II, and President John Kennedy was inclined to follow.

This is the proper context in which to understand the importance of the trilateral Sudan conference, and meetings which took place in Washington June 22-24, engineered by Sudan Special Envoy, Gen. Scott Gration. Gration successfully brought together leaders from the northern-based National Congress Party (NCP), and the southern government party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), under the auspices of the U.S. government, to focus attention on the all-important Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The CPA, signed by the NCP and SPLM in January 2005, ended decades of civil war, and created a unity government that has held the peace for four and half years. There was not a great deal of progress on concrete issues at the trilateral conference, which included 170 observers from 32 countries and international organizations, except the acceptance of international arbitration for the demarcation of the oil-rich region of Abyei. The significance of the event is that it took place with leaders of both sides of the Sudan conflict present.

Prior to last week, senior leaders of the NCP delegation such as Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin Atabani, were not allowed to travel to the U.S. capital, while SPLM members and rebels frequently visited Washington. Most importantly, under Gration's impetus, the agenda centered on the CPA, and not the politically motivated and contrived issue of genocide.

Obama Administration Divided Over Genocide in Darfur

All serious and concerned people know, that if the CPA were to unravel over the final 19 months of the agreement, Sudan would return to war, which would lead to the break-up of the country, with devastating effects on the Greater Horn of Africa region. For the success of these negotiations and the future of the CPA, and therefore, Sudan's existence, the Hollywood-liberal money-making scam known as "Save Darfur" had to be banished from the conference.

A growing faction of scholars, former government and intelligence officials, political activists, along with the LaRouche Political Action Committee and *EIR*, have been countering the provocations of the anglophile UN Ambassador Susan Rice, who still, to this day, contrary to all evidence, even from representatives of the United Nations, lies about "ongoing genocide" in Darfur by the government of Sudan. This was reinforced by a column by Andrew Natsios in the *Washington Post*, entitled, "Obama, Adrift on Sudan," on June 23, the day of the

trilateral Sudan conference.

Natsios, a former special envoy to Sudan under President George W. Bush, was eventually forced out because he refused to go along with the lie of genocide in Darfur. He wrote: "Using the term 'genocide' feeds the International Criminal Court's indictment of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir—which has made meeting him politically explosive. Some advocates insist that no American diplomat talk with him. How do you mediate a peace agreement if you can't speak to one side's leader? At this crucial moment, the long-suffering Sudanese people need unified American leadership behind a pragmatic policy of engagement. Instead, they have campaign rhetoric and diplomatic paralysis. We, and they, are headed toward disaster if we do not change course."

Gration, on June 17, at his first press conference since taking over as special envoy, made clear that there was no ongoing genocide. This immediately produced howls of protest from Rice and the Save Darfur crowd, but Gration stuck to the truth: There is no ongoing genocide in Darfur. The UN reports that there are more tribal killings in Southern Sudan than in Darfur, where 150 die each month, mainly from tribal and inter-tribal conflicts.

Immediately following Gration's remarks, P.J. Crowley, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, was trotted out to counter: "We continue to characterize the circumstances in Darfur as genocide." From this response, it should be obvious that the backing for Gration's initiative is not coming from the State Department bureaucracy, but more likely, he is receiving significant support from the military-intelligence community, who have a more sober understanding of the military danger and strategic consequences of Sudan returning to war, if the CPA were to fail.

The opposition to this saner approach by Gration and his supporters was clear to all in the remarks by James Steinberg, Deputy Secretary of State, who, speaking before the conference, said: "It is important that we remember the ongoing genocide in Darfur [sic] as well. Millions of innocent people have been forced



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U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, Gen. Scott Gration has said he will review the brutal sanctions policy, and focus on implementing the CPA agreement.

from their homes as a result of that genocide." This is the most preposterous of all statements made about Darfur. Millions? That would have to include almost every man, woman, and child, since there were only a total of about 6 million people living in all of Darfur, North, South, and West (2000 census).

Sanctions Must Be Lifted

Imposing U.S. sanctions against Northern Sudan, while promoting the CPA, is itself a contradiction, because it further divides Sudan, making unity even more difficult to achieve. Presently Darfur, Southern Sudan, and the Nuba Mountains are not

under U.S. sanctions, but they are forbidden from coordinating any economic activity with the North. They cannot accept goods that arrive via Port Sudan, conduct any financial transactions that use the Central Bank in Khartoum, nor use any goods produced in the North.

Dr. Ghazi reported that John Danforth, Bush's first special envoy, had promised that sanctions would be lifted if the government of Sudan agreed to resolving the conflict in the Nuba Mountains, but it was not done. Again, Secretary of State Colin Powell promised that the U.S. would lift sanctions and normalize relations with Sudan, if it signed the CPA, but sanctions have been kept in force. And Sudan has remained on the list of countries sponsoring state terrorism, even though it has been acknowledged that Sudan has in fact helped the U.S. in fighting terrorism. After the signing of the CPA, there should have been full normalization of relations, but, because of the rantings about genocide by Bush's evangelical base, together with the liberal ideologues, it didn't happen.

When Gration was asked at a U.S. Institute for Peace (USIP) forum, when sanctions would be lifted, he responded positively, saying that he "would take a good look at sanctions." He acknowledged that "sanctions make it difficult for Sudan to develop," and that "sanctions are hurting the people we are trying to help." But, he said that he can't do anything about sanctions until room to do so is politically created. As an example, Gration thanked Dr. Ghazi for helping to create a better situ-

ation on the ground in Darfur. Contrary to claims that conditions are perilous in Darfur after the 13 NGOs left, the distribution of aid has returned to its previous levels, which Gration and Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) helped to negotiate.

A spokesman for the SPLM, representing the government of the South, also spoke out against sanctions: "Sanctions are not good for anyone in Sudan."

Yesterday's Enemies Are Today's Friends

Gration's final remarks at the USIP forum were optimistic. He said, "Yesterday's enemies are today's friends," adding that he believed Sudan could become a politically stable, prosperous nation, at peace with its neighbors.

While those sentiments may be noble, for Sudan to be stable and to help stabilize the entire region of the Greater Horn, which is vitally urgent, a great deal more is required than normalizing relations, although that is an obvious necessary first step. Beyond that, what is required is:

First, the U.S. government must break completely from the British depopulation, resource-control policy, which it adopted in the early 1970s, with Henry Kissinger's National Security Study Memorandum 200 (NSSM 200), as the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy towards the under-developed sector. It is a scandal, and antithetical to the anti-colonial principles of President Franklin Roosevelt, that, for the last four decades, the U.S. has failed to help African nations develop their economies. The lack of investment in large-scale infrastructure projects, in vital categories of water management and desalination, high-speed rail, and nuclear energy, has been the single biggest failure of U.S. foreign policy; it is responsible for the horrific living conditions in Africa today. This failure is a direct result of the prescriptions of NSSM 200, which opposed the industrialization of developing nations, for fear that those resources deemed valuable to the West, would be consumed by those nations for their own growing population.

Now, there is an opportunity to take bold action, and to leapfrog over the sterile sanctions-vs.-normalizing-



Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin Atabani reported that former Sudan Special Envoy John Danforth had promised that sanctions would be lifted, if the government of Sudan agreed to resolving the conflict in the Nuba Mountains, which it did. But the sanctions remained.

relations debate, to a higher level of foreign policy, one that locates the self-interest of the United States in cooperating with Sudan to develop its enormous untapped potential. Having recently traveled several hundred kilometers by bus to inspect the Merowe Dam, north of Khartoum, it was more than obvious to this author that Sudan needs three areas of assistance from the U.S.: infrastructure investment in rail, water management and desalination, and energy, especially, nuclear. Nothing, I repeat nothing, would do more to develop the Sudanese economy, and stabilize a very unstable region, than this kind of investment. Sudan has vast amounts of land ideally suited for agriculture, if water can be provided. It has already been documented that Sudan is capable of

feeding the entirety of Africa, if its agricultural sector is sufficiently developed.

Dr. Ghazi stated the obvious about the conditions in Darfur, when he said: people in Darfur live miserably; people live miserably everywhere in Sudan. It is time to demonstrate what a real American foreign policy for Sudan should be, the kind that President Franklin Roosevelt outlined for Africa over 65 years ago, when he lectured then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on the evils of British free-trade colonial policy, which is continued in the form of "globalization" today.

There will be a follow up trilateral conference in Sudan next month, where more progress is anticipated. Two crucial questions remain to be answered. Will General Gration have enough support to act independently of the British anti-Khartoum faction in the Obama Administration, and continue to focus on the CPA to insure peace in Sudan? Secondly, will the U.S. adopt a visionary, yet practical foreign policy approach of securing development in the whole of Sudan, through mutual cooperation for economic growth? Of course, even though events in Sudan will not take place outside the current unprecedented collapse of the global financial system, it is important to insist on this new orientation for what the U.S.-Sudan relationship must become, as a model for Africa, and the rest of the world.