

Britain and France Lead The Attack Against Sudan

by Douglas DeGroot

April 30—President Barack Obama’s Special Envoy to Sudan, Air Force Maj. Gen. Scott Gration (ret.) and Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have signaled a change in approach of U.S. policy toward Sudan, away from confrontation, and toward bilateral diplomatic engagement. After meeting officials at the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 2, Gration said: “The United States and Sudan want to be partners, and so we are looking for opportunities for us to build a stronger bilateral relationship.”

Later, after a three-day trip to Sudan, Kerry said on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” program on April 20: “I found a government that is far more prepared to move on other issues that are of importance to the United States, and I think it’s important for us to deal with those officials. And we’ll have to work around and deal with the complications of the ICC.” (The International Criminal Court is the privately established body, of which the United States is not a member, which issued an “arrest warrant” in 2008 for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.)

Given this shift, the head of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), Rodolphe Adada, was apparently surprised when he was criticized by U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice at a closed session of the UN Security Council on April 27, according to the *Sudan Tribune*. Adada, a former foreign minister

of the Democratic Republic of Congo, told the UNSC, “Darfur today is a conflict of all against all. The armed movements fight amongst each other, or violently purge their own members.”

He countered the anti-Sudan media hype, saying that the situation in Darfur has now become a low-intensity conflict, and provided figures of 2,000 people who died from violence there since January 2008. Adada said that the ICC arrest warrant has complicated prospects for a political solution.

Rice, a dyed-in-the-wool anglophile, questioned his use of the phrase “low-intensity conflict.” She claimed he was not in agreement with his superior, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. However, it is clear that Adada and the Secretary General are collaborating closely on operations in the region. Prior to Adada’s meeting with the UNSC, a UNAMID spokesperson said that Adada intended to review issues affecting the deployment of UNAMID, which “required key enablers to enhance the capacity of the Mission and enable it to carry out its mandate more effectively.” This refers specifically to helicopters, which are desperately needed by UNAMID, and is the precise terminology which has been used by Ban Ki-Moon.

Colonial Powers Push Regime Change

Despite the U.S. shift, the two primary former colonial powers in Africa, the U.K. and France, have re-

mained steadfast in their policy of regime change. On April 21, a high-level Sudanese delegation ended talks in Paris with French officials and Britain's Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, a Foreign Office Secretary, and a key figure in the founding of the ICC. The two ex-colonial powers refused to establish bilateral relations with Sudan, and "reiterated their commitment to international criminal justice and cooperation with the ICC," according to the *Sudan Tribune*. One of the Sudanese participants in the talks, Presidential Assistant Nafi Ali Nafi, called the ICC "a political tool used against African leaders who are viewed to be uncooperative with Western programs in Africa." While speaking at Khartoum University on April 28, Nafi revealed that the proposal put forward to Sudan at the Paris meeting, was for the formation of "a national interim government" headed by

al-Bashir. France would support suspending the ICC arrest warrant against him, if he withdrew as a candidate in the 2010 elections. U.S. anti-Sudan activist John Prendergast had offered Sudan the same deal earlier.

Nafi charged that those who are collaborating with foreign powers to accomplish regime change in Sudan were committing treason. He pointed out that the Darfur rebel group, Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), was not founded to better the lot of the Darfur population, but was merely an arm of the Popular Congress Party led by Hassan al-Turabi, in the latter's fight with the government. Turabi is a long-time member of the British-intelligence-connected Muslim Brotherhood. The JEM's mostly London-based leadership refuses to negotiate agreements with the government on Darfur issues.