



**Testimony before the
Committee on International Relations
United States House of Representatives**

**“SUDAN: PEACE AGREEMENT
AROUND THE CORNER?”**

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A Statement by

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Chairman Royce and ranking minority member Congressman Payne, I commend you for calling this timely hearing on a subject of such importance to U.S. foreign policy in Africa, namely, what are the near-term prospects for concluding a durable and just negotiated settlement to Sudan's protracted civil war. Your leadership has been, and remains, essential in informing debate here in Washington on what is happening in the Sudan peace process, and more important, what is possible and what more needs to happen to achieve peace in Sudan.

I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to these deliberations, both on personal grounds, and on behalf of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, which has in the past four years become significantly invested in Sudan and intends to remain intensively engaged into the future.

We are proud of the Center's record on Sudan.

In late January, the CSIS Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project, headed by Rick Barton and Sheba Crocker, with substantial input from Dina Esposito and myself, issued a detailed analysis of the critical challenges that will lie ahead, should a peace agreement be concluded in Sudan. It is titled "To Guarantee the Peace: An Action Strategy for a Post-Conflict Sudan" and is available on the CSIS web site. In my comments here today, I will draw upon the major findings of this excellent work.

In early October of last year, CSIS brought to Washington senior health officials of both the Government of Sudan and the SPLM to discuss the challenges they confront, especially in terms of infectious diseases, and how they intend to collaborate in post-war Sudan. A little over a year earlier, CSIS fielded an expert team to the Machakos negotiations to present an analysis of the present and future of Sudan's energy sector, along with models for wealth sharing. Finally, as the Bush Administration was just settling into office in early 2001, CSIS issued its Sudan Task Force report, "U.S. Policy to End Sudan's War," which laid out a strategy by which sustained, high-level U.S. leadership might bring Sudan's war to a just, negotiated conclusion.

I will confine myself to brief comments here today. I can elaborate, as needed, during the question and answer period.

First, we need to remind ourselves that vital U.S. national interests are at stake in Sudan.

U.S. interests are concentrated in humanitarian values, religious and cultural tolerance, democratic norms, counter-terrorism, regional stability and economic growth. The U.S. engagement in pursuit of peace in Sudan is neither a charitable nor an ill-conceived act. It is a clear-eyed pursuit of results that can benefit the United States.

A failed peace effort that reignites Sudan's devastating war between the North and South will hurt the Sudanese people profoundly, set back its neighborhood, encourage a radicalization in north and south, and damage U.S. interests. A successful peace effort holds the promise of changing the history of Sudan, restabilizing the Horn, and advancing U.S. interests. It could test the viability of a unified, liberalized Sudan, facilitate the reconstruction of society in north and south, demonstrate multilateral success in ending a chronic war that has pitted Muslim and

Christian, Arab and African, populations against one another, remove Sudan from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, and normalize Sudan's international status. If successful, it would be the Bush administration's signature diplomatic achievement in Africa.

Such a peace, and only such a peace, can create an environment in which it becomes possible to tackle Sudan's other formidable governance problems – and they are many and severe.

Stated otherwise, we need to keep our eye on the prize -- the successful conclusion of a Sudanese peace accord between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/SPLA. Will a negotiated settlement between the SPLM/SPLA and the Government of Sudan resolve all Sudan's ills? No, but it is an absolutely critical first step and we cannot afford to become distracted, nor squander the important progress made so far in realizing this first step.

Second, we need to remind ourselves that the Sudanese parties are indeed very close to a final framework agreement.

They have completed three major agreements: the breakthrough Machakos framework, which separated church from state and granted the south the right of a referendum after six years; the security accord of late September 2003; and the wealth-sharing agreement of early January 2004.

While the issues surrounding Abyei are complex and highly contentious, and power-sharing arrangements still have to be concluded, I don't believe these remaining hurdles are insurmountable, certainly not if the consequence of failure is a return to war and the collapse of the peace process. With sufficient will on both sides, and concerted pressure applied to both sides by key external partners, there can be closure on these issues.

Third, we need to remind ourselves that sustained, high-level U.S. leadership is essential.

U.S. leadership has been, from the very beginning of the Sudan peace process, essential to achieving the results seen thus far, and remains essential to closing a deal.

Without President Bush's direct engagement, that of Secretary Powell, and that of Special Envoy Senator Danforth, the Sudan peace process would not be at the advanced point it is today. And that progress has been secured through the perseverance of a very committed interagency team, led by Acting Assistant Secretary Charles Snyder, and including USAID Assistant Administrator Roger Winter, Ambassador Michael Ranneberger, former Assistant Secretary Walter Kansteiner, and former Ambassador Johnnie Carson.

Congress, advocacy groups, and others should insist upon high-level U.S. engagement and carefully avoid any steps that might weaken it. If U.S. high-level leadership were to slacken or be withdrawn at this delicate moment, the Sudan peace process would likely collapse. Neither the other troika members, the UK and Norway, nor regional partners will be able to sustain the peace process, without U.S. leadership.

To close a peace deal will require additional innovative, high-level U.S. diplomacy.

Secretary Powell has repeatedly been in direct communication with Sudanese President Bashir and Dr. John Garang, head of the SPLM, and we commend him for his tireless engagement.

President Bush too has at important moments communicated his views to the parties. In the near term, well-timed telephone calls from President Bush to President Bashir and Dr. Garang may prove essential as a peace deal approaches.

At the same time, the United States should aggressively encourage other key partners – British Prime Minister Blair, heads of state of Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya, and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan – to publicly and privately communicate to the Sudanese government and the SPLM that the time has come for them to reach a workable compromise on Abyei, finalize power-sharing arrangements, and expedite a final framework document. Their common message: we have entered a phase in which the longer the stalemate in the Naivasha peace talks persists, the higher the probability that the will and coherence of the two sides will fray and the process break down.

Fourth, the United States needs to continue confronting the recent, steep escalation of horrific violence against civilians in Western Sudan.

U.S. leadership should emphasize sustained action to quell violence, open humanitarian access, encourage political dialogue, and consciously ensure that events in Darfur do not destabilize the Sudan peace process.

It is not altogether surprising that Sudan should experience an upsurge of violence as the possible endgame to the peace process approaches. In many other similar situations, that has been the pattern. Spoilers come forward in hopes of destabilizing the process. Aggrieved parties left out of the process come forward suddenly, seeking to win a place at the negotiating table through armed violence.

In the case of Darfur, government-backed militias are behind most of the scorched-earth violence. The government has allowed only limited humanitarian access and resisted genuine political talks. Armed rebel movements reflect multiple factors: the brutal disenfranchisement and neglect of Western Sudan's citizens by the government in Khartoum; longstanding local ethnic rivalries; and a meddling by neighbors and by the radical Islamist Hassan Turabi, each of whose actions has significantly stoked the violence.

The situation in Darfur is fluid, murky, and dangerous. It hangs over the Naivasha talks, and has contributed directly to the stall seen there. It has the potential to rapidly escalate, to destabilize neighboring Chad, and to create dramatic new space for radical Islamic influence.

We should resist facile characterizations, and instead focus aggressively on expanding humanitarian access, curbing weapons flows, improving intelligence, and pressuring the parties to enter renewed political talks. In concert with UN Special Envoy Amb. Vraalsen, the EU, and neighboring states, the United States, to its credit, recently dispatched a senior U.S. interagency team to Khartoum and Western Sudan. Follow-on investigative missions and further innovative diplomacy, bilateral and multilateral, will be essential.

Fifth, the United States needs to prepare more systematically now for the peace implementation phase in Sudan, especially with regard to security, normalizing Sudan's relations with international and donor institution, and ensuring a balanced, dynamic reconstruction effort.

Insecurity will be the gravest immediate threat to a peace accord: from Sudan's multiple armed militias; from breakaway military elements within either party; from rebel or proxy forces supported by Sudan's neighbors; or internal spoilers such as Hassan Turabi.

It is not inconceivable that outside terrorist groups will be attracted to assault the UN operation and expanded Western donor programs.

We will invite disaster – and risk repeating the initial UN peacekeeping failures in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo -- if we assume the Sudanese parties themselves will have the will or capacity to police themselves adequately, or that a light UN peacekeeping force with a Chapter VI mandate simply to monitor events will be adequate.

A large UN peacekeeping force will be required – Secretary Powell has spoken of 8-10,000 troops – with a robust Chapter VII mandate. That force should include a small, quick-reaction force, possess strong intelligence capacities, and should be led by a core force from an industrial power. It will need careful forward planning, sufficient funding, a strong focus on advising and training the joint/integrated units of Sudan's armed forces, and an international civilian police element with sufficient means to train Sudanese police.

None of these pieces are in place today. Further, what is proposed here will be a tough sell: with the Sudanese parties themselves, internally within the Administration, within Congress, and within the UN Security Council. Unfortunately, there are no good, credible alternatives.

The administration should move expeditiously to lead on these issues: it should work with Congress to line up adequate funding; press within the UN Security Council for a robust mandate; enlist a lead troop-contributing country, and offer extensive logistical, intelligence, and other forms of support.

A second formidable challenge will be normalizing Sudan's status with the United States, international financial institutions (e.g. IMF, World Bank, Africa Development Bank) and other major bilateral donors. That will involve clearing accumulated arrears (in excess of \$1 billion), concluding multilateral agreement on a debt relief/debt forgiveness package (Sudan's debt is estimated at \$21 billion, of which it can be reasonably expected to afford payback on \$3 billion), and lifting U.S. sanctions.

This process promises to be highly complicated and contentious, will require intensive, protracted multilateral negotiations – for which U.S. leadership will be essential -- and will carry substantial financial costs for the United States and other bilateral and multilateral donors. Each step will require extensive consultations with Congress.

Though some promising interagency work on these issues has accelerated in recent months within the administration, the administration has not settled upon a clear road map detailing how it intends to manage arrearages, treatment of debt, and sanctions. The administration has made clear it has no plans for a supplemental appropriation in 2004; hence, if a peace agreement is concluded soon in Sudan, and arrearages and debt become urgent priorities, it will be incumbent upon Congress to lead.

Finally, the United States will need to lead on the diplomatic and reconstruction fronts.

It will be important that the high-level, multilateral engagement that helped drive the negotiations forward be sustained during the peace implementation phase. That will require a strong, and well-staffed U.S. embassy in Khartoum, the appointment of a prominent, respected personality to be the Secretary General's Special Representative, and the structuring of an international implementation body, linked to external powers, key international bodies such as the World Bank, and the Sudanese parties themselves.

It will be critically important that the United States be able to act quickly to support reconstruction in both the north and south alike. Substantial U.S. emergency, transitional and development funds are already flowing to southern Sudan (some emergency relief also goes to the north.) In FY04, USAID is intending to allocate \$210 million to Sudan; that figure could rise if the situation in Darfur worsens. The request for FY05 is \$386 million. The administration has yet to present a reconstruction strategy and budget to Congress that spells out how it would enlarge its programs in the north and south alike. At present, no monies for postwar reconstruction are in the FY05 request and, as indicated earlier, the administration has no plans for a supplemental in 2004. Hence, should a peace be concluded soon, a U.S. reconstruction package will become an immediate, urgent priority, which will require proactive Congressional initiative.

In closing, I wish to reiterate that through the leadership of President Bush, Secretary Powell, and others the United States has made a substantial investment in the pursuit of a just, negotiated peace in Sudan. This commitment attests to the vital stakes--both humanitarian and strategic--that the United States has in a stable, peaceful, well-governed Sudan. U.S. leadership has been the key pivot to achieving the three breakthrough agreements concluded thus far. Now we are at a delicate moment, when a final framework accord is within reach, but when break down is also quite possible. Again, careful use of U.S. leadership will be essential. And if an accord between the SPLM and the government of Sudan is realized, continued U.S. leadership will be needed to guarantee security, normalize Sudan's relations with international donors and financial institutions, and bring quick reconstruction benefits to all Sudanese.

Thank you.