

**Current Proposals for Responding to Genocide in Darfur:
A compendium and critique of suggestions from the international
community**

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Various voices within the international community have proposed a number of different responses to ongoing, massive genocidal destruction in Darfur. Whether motivated by shame, human rights commitments, political expediency, or humanitarian concerns, these proposals are now numerous enough and come from enough different sources that they require some critical assessment, both as to efficacy and practicability.

Dismayingly, a number of policy suggestions do not take sufficient cognizance of political realities in Khartoum or the present circumstances defining human destruction in Darfur. Nor is there sufficient understanding of Khartoum's oil sector, or other key features of the economy that the National Islamic Front regime has built over fifteen years of tyrannical rule. Moreover, there seems to be a good deal of ignorance about how Khartoum has acquired weapons in the past and how it intends to provision its armory in the future.

UN proposals, both as embodied in Security Council Resolution 1564 (September 18, 2004) and in statements/reports from the Office of the Secretary-General, seem especially worrisome---both for their generally disingenuous character and their serious miscalculations about the means to provide human security in Darfur. The plan for creating "safe areas" in Darfur---designed by Kofi Annan's special representative to Sudan Jan Pronk---seems particularly ill-considered.

Plans for humanitarian relief in Darfur too often fail to take a longer prospective view of the crisis, and typically don't articulate the larger consequences of the virtually total destruction of traditional African agricultural economy and society. There is no conceptual plan for the ongoing relief efforts that will certainly be required for more than a year, or an articulation of the means by which some portion of the traditional agricultural economy of the region can be rebuilt. African tribal groups must be allowed to return to their lands, with adequate provisions for beginning productive lives again, or they will simply be warehoused in camps for the displaced, or drift towards urban environments where their agricultural skills and knowledge will be useless. Understanding how difficult this task of return will be must define any meaningful plan for a long-term peacekeeping force.

All of these issues should come into consideration during international planning, and in coordination between humanitarian organizations, UN organizations, and responding nations. Human rights groups should do a much better job both in collating their findings and in articulating meaningful advocacy positions. Presently the two most powerful human rights organizations, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, are entirely too timid in making recommendations that are commensurate in power with their highly impressive research on the ground.

PROPOSED RESPONSES TO THE DARFUR CRISIS

[1] An African Union peacekeeping force.

The deployment of a modestly large African Union peacekeeping force is presently the default international policy response to security issues in Darfur. Such a force---discussed in terms of 3,000 to 5,000 troops---would supplement the roughly 300 troops presently deployed to protect the African Union "cease-fire" monitoring team of 120 observers. Such an increased deployment would be of considerable significance, and---with an appropriately robust mandate---could make a substantial contribution to security in the camps.

But there are many obstacles to such deployment and many problems with such heavy dependence on an exclusively African Union force. Few of these have been addressed in comprehensive fashion. Certainly UN Security Council resolution 1564 is hardly an effective means by which to compel Khartoum to accept either a larger force or a change in mandate; the resolution merely "welcomes and supports the intention of the African Union to enhance and augment its monitoring mission" (Paragraph 2), and "welcomes the Government of Sudan's willingness to accept and facilitate an expanded African UN mission" (Paragraph 3).

The word "peacekeeping" never appears in the resolution, and both Kofi Annan and Jan Pronk have studiously avoided an explicit call for a peacekeeping mandate. This, of course, disingenuously skirts the central issue: Khartoum has for two months now repeatedly, adamantly refused to countenance a peacekeeping mandate for any augmented African Union force. Simply eliding this difficult fact from discussions hardly removes the key obstacle. Moreover, there are no explicit calls for a peacekeeping mandate coming from other members of the international community---from the US Secretary of State Colin Powell (in his September 9, 2004 Senate testimony on Darfur), from the European Union, from various other international actors. This convinces Khartoum that there is no will to make such a demand, evidently for fear of being rebuffed. Without much greater international pressure than is presently in evidence, the regime will continue to resist strenuously the deployment of peacekeepers.

There are also exceedingly few discussions of the logistical and transport requirements for 3,000 to 5,000 AU troops. We must remember that the AU has virtually no logistical or troop transport capacity of its own, and any augmented force would be deploying to one of the most remote and difficult environments imaginable. Logistical and transport problems for the approximately 400 troops and observers now in Darfur have proved thoroughly formidable, and Khartoum has easily managed to keep the observers grounded when necessary by denying fuel and creating other obstacles. Communications gear is woefully inadequate as well, and this obliges the AU force to utilize helicopters to ferry reports and intelligence rather than concentrate on investigating atrocities.

A force ten times the size of the present one, deployed to multiple locations throughout Darfur (a region the size of France), would create very substantial needs. In addition to transport and logistics (including an independently controlled fuel supply), the force would require food, water, and other provisions, as well as significant communications equipment. Breakdowns in transport vehicles and other equipment must be anticipated. The costs over many months of deployment will be large. To be sure, the willingness of the African Union is clear, as are declarations of support from the UN and various. But this by itself is not enough, as African Union

Commission Chairman Alpha Oumar Konare told the Associated Press:

"The African Union is ready to send 4,000 to 5,000 troops 'very soon---within days, weeks,' African Union Commission Chairman Alpha Oumar Konare [said].' But Konare said movement depends on logistical help from 'Europe, America and the United Nations especially.' So far, he said, there has been just talk about assistance." (Associated Press, September 22, 2004)

Until there are formal financial and material commitments, to a force that has a clear peacekeeping mandate, the "African Union solution" to the Darfur crisis is merely notional. Moreover, even the 3,000 to 5,000 troops presently being discussed are very far from constituting a force adequate to the desperate security needs for Darfur as a whole. Authoritative military assessments of what would be required to secure the camps, provide protection to humanitarian relief efforts, and begin to secure the rural areas are in the range of 50,000 troops. No one is talking about this kind of deployment, which is to say that even the deployment of the presently contemplated number of African Union forces, with a yet-unsecured peacekeeping mandate, would be at best a very partial response to the larger security issues in Darfur.

[2] Sanctions and embargoes

Various and typically vague proposals have been made to threaten the intransigent Khartoum regime, which still gives no sign of reining in the brutal Janjaweed militia force or curtailing its own genocidal ambitions. Indeed, as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour has confirmed during her recent assessment trip to Darfur, the Janjaweed are now being recycled into the "police" forces for the camps and the so-called "safe areas" that were negotiated by Jan Pronk, Kofi Annan's special representative to Sudan:

"[Arbour] said that during a visit to North Darfur that refugees told her that among the police guarding their camps were former members of the Janjaweed militia that forced them to flee their homes. Arbour also accused the Sudanese government of failing to do enough to protect refugees. 'There is a total sense of impunity,' she said." (Agence France-Presse, September 21, 2004)

Here it should be noted that Arbour's finding has been widely reported previously. And while it is important symbolically that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights travel to Darfur, Arbour found nothing that has not been repeatedly and authoritatively reported before. Her visit thus inevitably creates the impression of UN temporizing for lack of a more effective response. We might note that Arbour was accompanied by Kofi Annan's so far irrelevant special adviser on the prevention of genocide, Juan Méndez. But lest the world think that the UN might be in the process of actually determining whether genocide is occurring, "Annan stressed [that Arbour and Méndez] are not determining whether or not genocide has taken place" (UN News Center [New York], September 20, 2004).

But Darfur doesn't need additional human rights reporting for purposes of the most robust and urgent action. The evidence, including overwhelming evidence of genocide, is in hand. The nominal reason for the visit of Arbour and Méndez was "to examine how to shield beleaguered civilians there from further militia attacks" (UN News Center [New York], September 20, 2004). But the answer has long been clear: a robust peacekeeping force with

a mandate to protect civilians. Such investigative trips add nothing to our understanding of the tasks at hand, and indeed work to convince Khartoum that there are no real consequences for continuing human destruction and abuse.

Can the Khartoum regime be pressured into accepting a peacekeeping force? Are threats of an arms embargo or an oil embargo credible and efficacious? The answer is clearly not. An arms embargo, of the sort recently called for by Amnesty International and others, is particularly unlikely to change perceptions in Khartoum. First, we should note that Khartoum is now largely self-sufficient in the small- and medium-sized arms that have been provided to the Janjaweed in such great quantities. Dual-use production facilities, such as the giant GIAD complex outside Khartoum, have been constructed with petrodollars, and have had the benefit of extensive Chinese and Russian military engineering expertise. Arms production continues to grow rapidly; and as former National Islamic Front ideological leader Hassan el-Turabi predicted in 1999, even Russian model T-55 tanks are now produced by Khartoum using oil revenues.

The only real point of military import pressure might be for servicing of the helicopter gunships that have been used to such deadly effect in Darfur and southern Sudan. But the Russian companies that supplied the helicopters are committed contractually to service them, and Russia has recently made clear that it is actually intent on expanding arms sales to Africa, including Sudan:

"Russia has been criticised for supplying warplanes to Sudan, where Arab militias are attacking African villagers in the Darfur region and displaced villagers say government aircraft have bombed their homes. Russia's arms export agency said it wanted to do more business with Sudan and other African nations. 'One of the key points of the Rosoboronexport Corporation marketing strategy is the extension of the volumes, diversity and geography in defence sales to African nations,' the agency said in a statement."

(Defence News, September 22, 2004 at Defencetalk.com, at:

http://www.defencetalk.com/news/publish/article_001927.shtml)

Moreover, long-time arms supplier China will certainly not observe an arms embargo and would veto any UN resolution proposing such an embargo. And there are other nations to pick up any unlikely slack: Bulgaria, Yemen, Ukraine, and others. An arms embargo is a proposal with only symbolic value, and no chance of being implemented.

Is an oil embargo practicable? Certainly there can be no doubting its efficacy: Khartoum, with a huge level of external debt, is critically dependent on oil revenues provided by the state-owned oil companies of India (ONGC), Malaysia (Petronas), and China (China National Petroleum Corp.)---all operating in southern Sudan. But there is not a shred of evidence that any of these Asian countries would participate in an embargo, or that a UN resolution authorizing an embargo would not be vetoed by China. Indeed, one only need consider the nature of China's investment in Sudan and its growing dependency on foreign oil to see how thoroughly impracticable an embargo is.

China controls between 40 and 50% of total oil operations in southern Sudan (Western and Eastern Upper Nile). China now imports huge quantities of oil for its rapidly growing economy, and consumption increases 10% annually. Sudan is China's premier source of off-shore oil production. Even if every

other country in the world were to participate in an embargo, China alone could provide a market for all of Sudan's current total export production (approximately 270,000 barrels/day). But China has partners in Malaysia and India that are just as eager for oil, and just as willing to overlook massive human rights abuses. Malaysia in particular has proved as much in southern Sudan for years.

An oil embargo (or "boycott") will not work, and it is disingenuous for world leaders like Secretary of State Colin Powell and various senior officials in the European Union to suggest otherwise. It is yet another example of an apparently tough position that is transparently meaningless as a means of increasing pressure on Khartoum.

OTHER MEASURES

Targeted sanctions---sanctions directed against particular members of the National Islamic Front regime---have been proposed by several organizations, including the International Crisis Group. While such sanctions (restricting travel abroad, freezing foreign assets, suspending commercial relations with businesses owned or controlled by the regime) would have some effect, it is doubtful that by themselves they would have a serious impact on thinking in Khartoum. Assets abroad have already been largely sequestered into inaccessible or invisible accounts, and this process would accelerate if targeted sanctions appeared imminent. And Khartoum's leaders have previously faced travel restrictions: following the 1995 assassination attempt on Egyptian President Mubarak (the UN established that the regime was deeply involved), diplomatic sanctions were officially imposed. These were to have included travel restrictions, but observance quickly disappeared. Khartoum has not forgotten.

UN Security Council Resolution 1564 speaks of "an international commission of inquiry" (Paragraph 12), a morally and historically essential task. But the resolution merely "calls on all parties [in the Darfur conflict] to cooperate fully with such a commission." Khartoum has heard, and ignored, many previous "calls" from the UN. There is no evidence that the regime will "cooperate" now. Rather, it will make symbolic gestures, but at the same time work relentlessly (as it has for months) to obscure the sites of atrocities and mass executions. The regime is brutally intimidating those in Darfur who attempt to speak with outside investigators, and will continue to obscure evidence even as it stalls any meaningful work by a commission of inquiry. The regime rightly fears the findings of any such investigation, but this is not the same as feeling pressure to change its present genocidal course of action. On the contrary, the prospect of such a commission of inquiry provides incentive to accelerate the obliteration of evidence and to consolidate the effects of months of vast civilian destruction and displacement.

RESPONSES ON THE GROUND IN SUDAN

[1] Kofi Annan's/Jan Pronk's plan for "safe areas"

In a "Joint Communiqué"---signed by Kofi Annan and Khartoum on July 3, 2004---the groundwork was laid for what has developed into an extremely unfortunate plan to create so-called "safe areas" in Darfur. The idea, broached in general terms in the Joint Communiqué, was formalized in the August 5, 2004 "Plan of Action," signed again by the Khartoum regime and by Jan Pronk, representing Kofi Annan. This plan has been previously analyzed

by this writer in considerable detail (September 3, 2004; available upon request).

According to the exceedingly brief, but immensely destructive "Plan of Action for Darfur,"

"the Government of Sudan would identify parts of Darfur that can be made secure and safe within 30 days. This would include existing IDP camps, and areas around certain towns and villages with a high concentration of local population. The Government of Sudan would then provide secure routes to and between these areas. These tasks should be carried out by Sudan police forces to maintain confidence already created by redeployment of the Government of Sudan armed forces" (text from "Plan of Action for Darfur," August 5, 2004 [Khartoum]).

As became clear only with Secretary-general Annan's report to the UN Security Council on Darfur, the "safe areas" in the "Plan of Action" were conceived as entailing "the securing and protection of villages within a 20-kilometer radius around the major towns identified" ("Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to [] Security Council Resolution 1556," August 30, 2004).

What does this language mean on the ground in Darfur?

Most ominously, the creation of "safe areas" not only threatens to consolidate, indeed institutionalize the effects of Khartoum's campaign of ethnic clearances and genocidal destruction, but it is being deliberately manipulated by Khartoum for offensive military advantage. Human Rights Watch notes that, "These safe areas could become a form of 'human shield.' This would allow the government to secure zones around the major towns and confine a civilian population that it considers to be supporting the rebels" ("Darfur: UN 'Safe Areas' offer no Real Security," Human Rights Watch, September 1, 2004).

These "safe areas" are, as Human Rights Watch has also reported, "only a slightly revised version of the Sudanese government proposal in early July [2004] to create 18 'resettlement sites' for the more than 1.2 million displaced Darfurian civilians" ("Darfur: UN 'Safe Areas' offer no Real Security," Human Rights Watch, September 1, 2004). We should be suspicious of any such plan emanating originally from the Khartoum regime. And we should be especially concerned about the nature of the security that underlies "resettlement sites" or "safe areas."

For in fact, the "police" that have been deployed to the "safe areas," nominally to replace redeployed regular military forces of the regime, are not the "credible and respected police force" the Joint Communiqué stipulates: they are soldiers and other militarily trained personnel in the uniforms of "police." And given the geographic latitude provided by the 20-mile radius stipulated in the Plan of Action, these "police"/paramilitary forces have been extremely active: not in securing the areas and protecting civilians but in consolidating and expanding areas under Khartoum's military control.

Civilians, already vulnerable to the ongoing predations of Janjaweed militia forces, have now---by virtue of these various UN negotiations---been made even more vulnerable to violence from those "policing" the "safe areas." Moreover, as Amnesty International points out, the very notion of "safe

areas" suggests that civilians not in these areas are somehow without protections. The entire plan is a ghastly error in judgment, deriving from a wholly unjustified willingness to believe that by demanding a "credible and respected police force," Khartoum will somehow feel obliged to provide one. The fact that these "safe areas" are little different from what Khartoum originally called "resettlement sites" suggests that what Khartoum is "enforcing" is a permanent displacement and destruction of the agricultural way of life of these African tribal peoples.

As Human Rights Watch declared in a more recent press release speaking to the Pronk/Annan plan for "safe areas":

"The [Human Rights Watch] letter [to the UN Security Council] also charged that proposed 'safe areas' could impede the return of civilians to their homes and consolidate forced displacement and 'ethnic cleansing' initiated by [the government of] Sudan." (Human Rights Watch press release, September 13, 2004)

Put another way, the "safe areas" and the camps that define so many of them are in danger of becoming what UN Undersecretary for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland recently referred to "as concentration-camp like areas" (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, September 1, 2004). In fact, we must see this terrible reality as already too fully realized. This assessment has been echoed by Andrew Natsios, administrator of the US Agency for International Development, who declared: "The displaced people in Darfur told us repeatedly [] that the cities and displaced camps have become prisons, concentration camps."

[2] Kofi Annan's/Jan Pronk's "hortatory strategy" in Khartoum

Reuters reports today that Jan Pronk has declared Khartoum "is obliged to ask for international support if it cannot protect the nearly 1.5 million people displaced [in Darfur]":

"'If you cannot do it (protect your population)...then you have to ask international support. It's an obligation,' Jan Pronk told reporters in Khartoum. 'Are you serious, are you sincere in requesting adequate international support?'" (Reuters [Khartoum], September 23, 2004)

This recourse to moral exhortation, an urging of "obligations to protect," is at this point in the crisis both shamefully disingenuous and deeply destructive of diplomatic credibility. All this should highlight the significance of a genocide determination and the importance of communicating with Khartoum in the context of such a determination. For what could be more ludicrous than to urge upon Khartoum's genocidaires a "moral obligation" to protect the very people the regime has been systematically destroying for well over a year, both by means of its regular armed forces, the Janjaweed militia, and the deliberate obstruction of humanitarian relief?

The strategy that Annan and Pronk are evidently following is one of "engagement," with the implicit assumption that Khartoum can be "engaged" in good faith. This entirely unjustified assumption presumably accounts for Pronk's recent declaration that a genocide determination in Darfur is "premature" (Reuters, September 18, 2004). For of course determining that genocide was being committed by Khartoum would make "engagement" with the regime transparently what it is: an expedient, weak, and dishonest refusal

to confront Darfur's realities.

Human Rights Watch recently found it "startling" that Kofi Annan's report to the UN Security Council,

"fails to acknowledge what several UN agencies and scores of independent reports have documented: the government of Sudan is responsible for these attacks against civilians, directly and through the Janjaweed militias it supports." ("UN Darfur Deadline Expires: Security Council Must Act," September 3, 2004 [New York])

But finally, given the course of expediency and "engagement" that Pronk daily makes more evident, there is nothing "startling" about this deliberate omission: it is essential to the Annan/Pronk strategy. And Khartoum knows precisely how to construe such expediency---for expediency offers the clearest signal that there is no real pressure available through the UN, which in responding to the Darfur crisis has become little more than a platform for exhortation. We catch a glimpse of Khartoum's contempt for such weakness in a dispatch today from Agence France-Presse, which reports comments by National Islamic Front (National Congress) secretary general Ibrahim Omar:

"A top official from Sudan's ruling party says the Government will not disarm 'Arab tribes' in the troubled Darfur region, saying they were not all members of the Janjaweed militia." (Agence France-Presse, September 23, 2004)

But this is simply nonsense. Nobody has declared that all "Arab tribes" are part of the Janjaweed. In fact, the consensus figure for the number of Janjaweed active in the Darfur genocide and coordinating militarily with Khartoum is roughly 20,000. But there can be no doubt that the Janjaweed exist, and that they are directly responsible (along with the Khartoum regime) for destroying perhaps 75% of the villages in all of Darfur, for displacing 2 million human beings, and for the deaths of more than 200,000 innocent civilians. The Janjaweed are operating in concert with Khartoum, and more recently have increasingly filled the ranks of "police" in the camps (see above).

But though Ibrahim Omar's comments may have nothing to do with the truth, they do reveal how far Khartoum is from responding to its various commitments to the UN, most conspicuously including the commitment made almost three months ago to "immediately start to disarm the Janjaweed and other armed outlaw groups," and "ensure that no militias are present in all areas surrounding IDP camps" ("Joint Communiqué between the Government of Sudan and the United Nations on the occasion of the visit of the UN Secretary-General," July 3, 2004).

HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

The ineffective international political response to the catastrophe in Darfur brings heightened pressure to bear on humanitarian operations. Present humanitarian requirements for displaced persons in Darfur and refugees in Chad are well in excess of 40,000 metric tons for food and non-food items (medicine, shelter, water purification supplies, cooking fuel). This exceeds by more than 100% present logistical and transport capacity. Moreover, funding for humanitarian operations has been shamefully laggard, and at least two breaks in the "food pipeline" are now forecast.

But most troublingly, humanitarian relief will have to continue for the foreseeable future, or the international community will be consigning hundreds of thousands of people to slow death from starvation. For agricultural production has come to a halt in Darfur. There was no spring planting, and thus is no fall harvest. No seeds have been culled for the next planting, and the prospect of yet another missed planting season in spring 2005 is all too distinct. The secondary planting season, which should already be underway in parts of Darfur, will almost certainly be missed, creating yet greater food dependency.

Looming over this entirely grim situation is the difficulty of seeing how African agricultural societies can be re-established in areas that have seen unspeakable genocidal violence, village destruction, and a breakdown in African-Arab relations and patterns of co-existence. Given present emergency conditions, the absence of a reconstruction plan is entirely understandable. But the humanitarian community must soon begin to address the question of how aid can be sustained for next six months to a year, and how the agricultural economy of Darfur can again become self-sufficient. The challenges can hardly be overstated.

MEANINGFUL ACTION

The only response that can change the fundamental dynamic of ongoing human destruction is humanitarian intervention, in either a permissive or non-permissive environment, with all necessary military support. A non-UN consortium of nations, acting in concert with the African Union, must issue an ultimatum to Khartoum demanding that it allow the deployment of a substantial peacekeeping force, ideally of at least 20,000 troops initially, with more to follow. This will require nations such as the US, Britain, Sweden, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Norway and others to commit the financial and material resources that will permit the African Union to deploy. Rwanda, Nigeria, and Tanzania have offered to commit the necessary troops, but they will require massive logistical and transport assistance, and very substantial materiel.

Perhaps Canada, so long disgracefully immobilized in responding to Sudan's crises, can also be brought along. To be sure, it is troubling that Prime Minister Paul Martin yesterday baldly lied at the UN, declaring that the international community "should have intervened last June when Canada called for it." Canada made no such "call." But it is encouraging that Mr. Martin is now so emphatic, even though his UN remarks contained no specifics about the nature of such intervention, or precisely how it would be guided by the notion of a "responsibility to protect," a Canadian-funded product that has so far had no impact on Canadian foreign policy in Africa.

But the broad goals of a humanitarian intervention are clear, and these in turn dictate the nature and mandate of any intervening military force, as well as the degree to which transport and logistical capacity must be enhanced. The situation on the ground will be determined to a very considerable extent by whether Khartoum decides to create a permissive or non-permissive environment for intervention. No environment will be completely "permissive" and in either event, deployed troops must have robust rules of engagement with the Janjaweed, "police" forces, other paramilitary forces, and Khartoum's regular army forces.

[1] Sufficient troops in an initial deployment to protect approximately 200

camps and vulnerable concentrations of displaced persons; all Khartoum's "police" and security forces, including the Janjaweed, must be removed from the camps and the camp environs;

[2] Concomitant deployment of sufficient troops to protect vulnerable humanitarian workers and key humanitarian transport corridors;

[3] Dedication of transport and logistical resources to bring monthly capacity for food and non-food items to 40,000 metric tons;

[4] A commitment to substantial repairs of the rail line running from Port Sudan to Nyala; the rail line should be internationalized, and dedicated exclusively to enhancing humanitarian transport capacity (without such augmented rail capacity, transport costs over the next year and more will be exorbitant);

[5] Secondary deployment of troops sufficient to begin to secure villages and farm-land that have been ravaged by the predations of the Janjaweed and Khartoum's regular military forces; the return of displaced persons must be voluntary, and robust protection must be provided to early returnees;

[6] Seeds, agricultural implements, donkeys, and sustaining food supplies must be provided to returnees.

This is but an outline of the international response demanded by Darfur's catastrophe. But even in outline, such a plan should oblige those proposing other responses to explain how they will achieve the goals articulated here---or why such goals can be allowed to go unmet. Humanitarian intervention is expensive, difficult, and politically risky. In the face of massive genocidal destruction, the world must ask if these are reasons enough for inaction.

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