


Darfur and the Completion of the Naivasha Negotiating Process: Part 1, January 14, 2005

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Khartoum's genocidal ambitions continue unchecked despite Nairobi signing

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January 14, 2005

January 9, 2005 is without question a signal moment in the history of modern Sudan. The opportunity exists for a meaningful peace to be fashioned if there is sufficient international commitment to what will be an ongoing process, as well as sufficient honesty about the difficulties clearly in evidence. The people of Southern Sudan, who have suffered and died beyond calculation for decades, have seen many of their goals substantially met, with a self-determination referendum guaranteed by the final document. But such a referendum must be guaranteed by much more than paper, as the present Khartoum regime's long history of bad faith, renegeing, and abrogation of various signed agreements should make painfully clear to all.

Tragically, there is little evidence of anything approaching a realistic or sufficiently urgent international assessment of present challenges. The fragility of this past Sunday's achievement is glibly acknowledged, but there is no sign of rapid international response to the immediate challenges at hand. A peace-support operation---of appropriate size, mandate, staffed with sufficiently knowledgeable personnel and provided adequate equipment---remains, inexplicably, merely notional. The UN Security Council is content to "pledge to quickly consider sending peacekeepers to Sudan" following the peace agreement. But given the daunting nature of the operation and the critical demands it will confront, this language suggests a deeply inadequate sense of urgency or understanding of specific requirements (see analysis of these requirements by this writer at <http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=23&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>).

Moreover, the time-frame for deployment, the makeup of personnel, as well as the evident primary basing of forces are all deeply troubling. Radia Achouri, the UN spokeswoman for the UN Advance Mission in Sudan declared yesterday that the UN is expected to deploy 9,000 to 10,000 "observers by mid-March to oversee the implementation of a peace agreement in Sudan." Achouri went on to say that "a Security Council resolution is expected by mid-February after which troops would be deployed within a month" (United Press International, January 13, 2005). Given the prevailing military conditions in Southern Sudan, the rapid rate of return by displaced persons and refugees that can be expected, this seems a perversely delayed time-frame. A provisional Security Council resolution should have been at the ready, with peacekeeping forces already poised to begin deployment. Moreover, the peace support operation should entail much more than mere "observers": there must be a robust, fully-equipped and -armed rapid response brigade deployed in strategic locations in Southern Sudan, especially near potential flash-points in Eastern and Western Upper Nile, the Shilluk Kingdom, and Abyei and northern Bahr el-Ghazal. This force must have a peacemaking mandate and the military capability to ensure that no violations of the permanent cease-fire will be tolerated or allowed to spread.

Equally troubling is a dispatch from Agence France-Presse, reporting that "by mutual agreement between Sudanese and UN authorities, offices and barracks [for the peace-support operation] will be built close to the airport at Kassala, the news reports said." (Agence France-Presse, January 13, 2005). Kassala is a major northern town, with a major airport; but it is also almost 500 miles from Bentiu, epicenter of oil operations in Western Upper Nile; it is even further from Abyei and northern Bahr el-Ghazal. Choosing Kassala simply because it is convenient for Khartoum and for deploying forces shows an extremely poor

appreciation for the requirements of this critical peace-support operation.

Nor is there evidence of international commitments to provide anything approaching adequate emergency transitional aid resources, even as it is clear that many hundreds of thousands of Southern Sudanese are preparing to return from the north (particularly Khartoum) and from nations of refuge. Indeed, many tens of thousands have already begun or completed the return in the past six months. In recent years the National Islamic Front (NIF) regime has handled the problem of displaced Southern Sudanese by forcing them further and further from the national capital city, with increasing callousness and brutality (see the deeply compelling account ["Sudan's forgotten victims live life on the edge"] by Reuters correspondent Opheera McDoom [January 6, 2005] at <http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=ourWorldNews&storyID=7254552>).

With the signing of a peace agreement, we may on the basis of such past behavior reasonably assume that NIF Interior Minister Hussein will be much more aggressive in forcibly pushing Southern Sudanese southward. Hussein is the man directly responsible for many of the regime's most brutal policies of forced expulsions from camps for displaced persons in Darfur.

Unless there is a substantial increase in both humanitarian assistance and emergency transitional aid, many of those returning to Southern Sudan will live lives of even greater desperation than at present. In a telling sign, the UN has recently appealed for a substantial increase simply for food in Southern Sudan:

"The World Food Programme (WFP) challenged donors to support a southern Sudan peace deal forged on Sunday and appealed for \$302 million to fund emergency food relief for 3.2 million people in the war-shattered south. 'Over the next 12 months, some 268,000 metric tonnes of food will be required for war and drought affected people primarily in south Sudan,' said a statement by the UN programme, the world's biggest food relief agency."

"Peace brings a whole new set of challenges with it,' the statement quoted WFP Sudan Country Director Ramiro Lopes da Silva as saying. 'Many of those who fled their homes during the war have already started returning home, adding pressure to already limited resources available within these communities.'" (Reuters, January 9, 2005)

In order for these people to resume agriculturally productive lives, to reach the point where the Southern Sudanese portion of oil revenues can begin to create a self-sustaining agricultural economy, they must have a great deal of emergency transitional assistance. But despite vaguely generous promises by Colin Powell, there is no Bush administration appropriation, or supplemental appropriation request, for transitional aid. This fact makes a mockery of the promise of a "large peace dividend" for Southern Sudan, and Sudan as a whole, on completion of a peace agreement (made most conspicuously by then-Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Walter Kansteiner in Congressional testimony of May 2003).

It is less than a week since the signing of the final Naivasha peace agreement. But there is already reason to be intensely dismayed by the lack of urgency, the absence of any clear time-line for deployment of the necessary peace-support operation, and the absence of a funding strategy for this moment of critical transitional need in Southern Sudan. But most of all, we should be dismayed at Khartoum's evident conviction that by signing a peace agreement in Nairobi, it is free to continue its genocide in Darfur. The failure of the international community to disabuse the regime of this conviction threatens additional hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths (over 400,000 have already died; see December 12, 2004 mortality assessment by this writer at <http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=8&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>). UN Undersecretary for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland recently warned that the monthly mortality rate could climb to 100,000 if humanitarian organizations are forced by growing insecurity to withdraw (interview reported by the Financial Times, December 15, 2004).

Khartoum's unrebuted genocidal ambitions in Darfur are ultimately a direct threat to the viability of the Naivasha peace agreement: there is no imaginable "national government" that can include a majority National Islamic Front, with its domestic policy of genocide in Darfur, as well the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and representatives of other political opposition groups. "National governance" simply cannot---as SPLM leader John Garang has made fully clear---include a policy of massive, targeted human destruction of the sort endured by the people of Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains for so many years.

DARFUR SECURITY SITUATION CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE

In the past week, Kofi Annan has had the task of not only blessing the peace agreement signed in Nairobi, but reporting to the UN Security Council on conditions in Darfur. Annan's special envoy for Sudan, Jan Pronk, has also had occasion to report on the current situation in Darfur. A critical review of their comments should be sobering for those who now speak vaguely of the Naivasha process serving as a "model" or "inspiration" or "template" for resolution of the catastrophe in Darfur. And let us not forget that the so-called "Naivasha process" began with the Machakos (Kenya) Protocol, signed by Khartoum in July of 2002. Is this an appropriate time-frame in which to contemplate diplomatic resolution to genocidal destruction in Darfur?

Jan Pronk, who has so often functioned expediently, ineffectively, and disingenuously, has for once demonstrated some political foresight in assessing Khartoum's calculations. The UN's Integrated Regional Information Networks reported yesterday on Pronk's warning to the UN Security Council that:

"Sudanese government forces might be tempted to think the conclusion of the north-south peace accord would provide a brief window of immunity from international criticism on their actions in Darfur, [said Pronk]." (UN IRIN, January 13, 2005)

Pronk also reported in his monthly briefing that:

"Conflict was spreading outside Darfur. [] The violence, he added, was affecting humanitarian work more frequently and more directly than bureaucratic restrictions ever did, 'with fatal and tragic consequences.' []

'Large quantities of arms have been carried into Darfur in defiance of the Security Council decision taken in July,' Pronk said. 'December saw a build-up of arms, attacks of positions, including air attacks, raids on small towns and villages, increased banditry [and] more looting.'" (UN IRIN, January 13, 2004)

The patent inadequacy of the current African Union monitoring force grows daily more evident. In mid-January 2005, deployment of the contemplated force of 3,500-4,000 has stagnated at around 1,000 personnel. Western nations have not done nearly enough to assist the AU forces, and the AU for its part has been politically and militarily highly ineffective. Neither the present force nor the larger force that is supposedly deploying begins to address the rapidly growing security concerns of humanitarian organizations or the desperate protection needs of well over 2 million Darfuri civilians.

It remains the case, as this writer has argued for over a year, that only substantial humanitarian intervention can forestall ongoing, massive genocidal destruction. For months now it has been all too clear that the African Union is simply not capable of taking on this task, though it could serve as a bridgehead for a larger international effort. It has been equally clear for many months that UN auspices for any humanitarian intervention will be blocked by China (with abundant diplomatic assistance from Russia, Pakistan, the Arab League, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference).

Faced with these deeply constraining realities, those countries with the military resources to stop the genocide have chosen to pretend that an adequate response comprises diplomatic engagement with Khartoum, security from the African Union, and the largely meaningless threat of sanctions (which China

has vowed explicitly to veto at the UN Security Council). As Human Rights Watch declares in its annual report (January 13, 2005):

"A large UN-authorized military force is needed to protect Darfur residents and to create conditions of security that might allow them to return home safely. The United States and other Western governments, [HRW Executive Director Kenneth Roth] contends, are wrong simply to hand the problem to the African Union, a new institution with few resources and no experience with military operations of the scale needed. 'Darfur is making a mockery of our vows of "never again,"' said Roth." (Human Rights Watch News, January 13, 2005)

What Roth does not acknowledge is Human Rights Watch's unexplained failure to use the term "genocide," which is of course the crime that is "never again" to be allowed to occur. Instead, HRW continues to content itself with the much vaguer term "ethnic cleansing," a euphemistic half-way house between genocide and crimes against humanity," as Samantha Power argues in "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide." Georgette Gagnon of HRW's Africa Division declared in an early December interview with Radio/TV Jamaica that the discussion of a genocide determination "continues within HRW"---though the evidence is overwhelming and unchanging in character. Significantly, Roth, the executive director of HRW, is reliably reported to be convinced that genocide is the appropriate term.

But terminological dithering continues, even as the issue of a genocide determination is disingenuously characterized by HRW: the Financial Times (UK) reports that the organization says "debating the definition of atrocities in Darfur has detracted from a key issue: action by the international community to help end the violence and ensure those response are brought to justice" (Financial Times, January 5, 2005). There is of course not a shred of evidence that "debating the definition of atrocities in Darfur" has had any effect on decisions, either of action or inaction, on the part of the international community---not a shred. On the contrary, HRW is simply excusing its own lack of moral and intellectual clarity in characterizing the realities in Darfur.

Roth declares that "a large UN-authorized military force is needed to protect Darfur residents and to create conditions of security that might allow them to return home safely." What he refuses to do is acknowledge the radical implausibility of such a "UN-authorized military force." This refusal mirrors the weakness and lack of resolution that pervades so much international thinking about Darfur in the wake of the US-led war in Iraq. Indeed, in an all too revealing irony, the HRW cover release also report highlights "the Abu Ghraib scandal." Of course such a shameful scandal should be fully and vigorously investigated, but this particular feature of a war conducted without UN auspices should not translate into a generalized unwillingness to contemplate international military action without UN auspices---it should certainly not leave Darfur at the mercy of a Chinese veto in the Security Council.

But Roth at least "names names" of those international actors who have also failed to respond meaningfully to Darfur:

"Human Rights Watch said that the crisis in Darfur cries out for involvement by the major military powers, but they have chosen to be unavailable. The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia are bogged down in Iraq, with the United States going so far as to say that 'no new action is dictated' by its determination that the killing in Darfur amounts to genocide. France is committed elsewhere in Africa, and Canada is cutting back its peacekeeping commitments, despite promoting the 'responsibility to protect.' NATO is preoccupied in Afghanistan; the European Union is deploying forces in Bosnia. 'Everyone has something more important to do than to save the people of Darfur,' said Roth." (Human Rights Watch News, January 13, 2005)

Evidently we must settle for important, if very partial truths from Human Rights Watch.

Returning to the reports of Kofi Annan and Jan Pronk over the last week, there are other extremely

ominous findings:

"Pronk said arms were pouring into Darfur and fighting was spreading, cautioning that the bloodshed could intensify despite a peace accord between the government and rebels in the south. 'We may move into a period of intense violence unless swift action is taken,' Pronk said." (Agence France-Presse, January 11, 2005)

Perhaps Human Rights Watch and others feel the luxury of waiting for meaningful UN-sponsored action in the midst of such accelerating violence, and with such horrific rates of ongoing civilian casualties (now on the order of 35,000 and poised to climb rapidly in light of growing food deficits throughout Darfur; again, see mortality assessment by this writer at <http://www.sudanreeves.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=8&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>). But this is to enter a morally surreal realm, one that we may be sure the people of Darfur are desperate to see avoided.

Equally surreal is the political calculus that leads to recent declarations concerning UN sanctions from US ambassador to the UN, the soon-to-be retired John Danforth:

"Ambassador John Danforth of the United States, which has failed to get a reluctant Security Council to impose sanctions to end the violence, said that option was still on the table. 'It's important for all parties in Darfur, the government and the rebels, to understand that there is a limit to tolerance,' Danforth told reporters. 'While it is clear that sanctions are opposed by some members of the Security Council, as a matter of principle...it may be possible to fashion something that would be agreed to,' he said." (Agence France-Presse, January 11, 2005)

Amidst this intellectually flabby rhetoric, Ambassador Danforth seems conveniently to have forgotten that he was not able to secure agreement from the UN Security Council even to use the word "sanctions" in Security Council Resolution 1556 (July 30, 2004). He seems with equal convenience to have forgotten the very explicit threat from the Chinese ambassador to the UN following the passage of a second Security Council resolution (No. 1564, September 18, 2004): China would veto any UN measure sanctioning Khartoum, China's partner in vital off-shore oil production.

Most significantly and distressingly, Danforth simply ignores Khartoum's continued impunity in flouting the only "demand" of Security Council Resolution 1556---viz., that the regime disarm its brutal Janjaweed militia allies and bring militia leaders to justice. Half a year after the "demand" was made there has been no progress on this score. Indeed, even Kofi Annan---who along with Pronk has done most to ease non-compliance by Khartoum---is forced to report to the Security Council:

"At the weekend, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the government had started a massive build-up of forces and logistics in Darfur and said they were still using the Janjaweed Arab militia in their operations rather than bringing them to justice." (BBC, January 11, 2005)

MILITARY REALITIES

There can be little doubt, as Pronk suggests, that Khartoum plans to use its signature in Nairobi, and an elaborately contrived celebration of the peace agreement, in order to proceed with its genocidal ambitions in Darfur. Other reports make clear that Khartoum is moving not only light and heavy weaponry into Darfur and massively augmenting its military logistics, but also continues to use aerial military assets in indiscriminate assaults on civilians and combatants.

Indeed, in some of the most brazen mendacity of the entire genocidal campaign in Darfur, Khartoum goes so far as to justify these aerial attacks, even though it formally committed in Abuja (Nigeria) to stop them. Citing a UN resolution to the effect that Khartoum had primary responsibility for protecting the

citizens of Darfur, Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail preposterously told reporters in Cairo that this entailed using the very military aircraft that have repeatedly and authoritatively been implicated in attacks on civilians:

"If the African forces there cannot protect routes and protect civilians, then the Sudanese government must undertake that,' he said, adding that the government had a right to use planes in an area larger than France."

The African Union has of course itself repeatedly confirmed Khartoum's use of military aircraft in attacks on civilian targets. There would be many more such confirmations if Khartoum had not actively disrupted the monitoring activities of the AU, particularly in denying aviation fuel for AU helicopters.

Ismail's explanation of the use of aircraft flies directly in the face of numerous investigations conducted by human rights groups, the UN, the International Crisis Group, and many news reporters:

"When we use aircraft, we do not use aerial bombardment. We do not use planes that drop bombs. This is different from helicopter gunship aircraft,' he said." (Reuters, January 13, 2005)

But let us simply accept that Khartoum is habitually committed to the most outrageous lies and cleave to the essential truth of Pronk's remarks about ominous nature of military developments in Darfur:

"The violence, Pronk added, was affecting humanitarian work more frequently and more directly than bureaucratic restrictions ever did, 'with fatal and tragic consequences.'" (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, January 13, 2005)

This is precisely the point. From late 2003 through summer 2004, Khartoum worked most assiduously to halt humanitarian aid by means of direct obstruction, including blocking humanitarian supplies and refusing to grant visas and travel permits to international humanitarian aid works. Following a substantial (but far from complete) "opening of humanitarian access" in mid-summer 2004, Khartoum simply counted on the heaviest months of the torrential seasonal rains (July through September) to obstruct humanitarian aid. Unsurprisingly, the rains did in fact create what Jan Egeland and others called a "logistical nightmare," with many populations cut off from food and other forms of humanitarian assistance. Now, the regime's primary means of obstructing aid is to create intolerable security conditions for humanitarian workers and convoys.

To be sure, Khartoum is receiving perverse and unconscionable assistance from the increasingly undisciplined insurgency movements. But these movements have grown deeply suspicious of the AU for a variety of reasons; they see that there is no international will to confront Khartoum for its much more widespread, systematic, and consequential violations of the merely notional cease-fire negotiated in Abuja (November 9, 2004). The AU forces are impotent, without a truly meaningful presence on the ground or a peacekeeping mandate. Moreover, the Janjaweed are still not a party to any negotiated cease-fire and their savage predations are thus not officially within the purview of AU monitoring.

None of this is lost on the insurgents, and their present military actions are as much a function of this despairing knowledge as of a desperate need for supplies and weak command-and-control. Further factionalizing of the insurgency campaign is also in evidence, as is a spread of fighting to neighboring Kordofan Province (east of Darfur). Moreover, as Alex de Waal warned in a column in yesterday's Financial Times:

"[There is also a] threat of war in eastern Sudan. The Beja people of the Red Sea Hills took up arms 10 years ago, protesting against marginalisation. There has been little fighting for five years, but Beja guerrillas are still in neighbouring Eritrea. Darfurian fighters are there too, drawn from the more than 1 million Darfurians who migrated to find work in eastern Sudan. All is quiet now, but the tinder is dry. A

conflagration could be easily triggered by an embittered rebel commander, perhaps encouraged by Isseyas Afewerki, the capricious Eritrean president, or by a government clampdown." (Financial Times, January 13, 2005)

Precisely in order to forestall a legitimate assertion of rights and grievances in other marginalized regions of Sudan, Khartoum continues to make clear that genocide remains a staple tool of domestic security policy. We have seen this regime commit genocide in the Nuba Mountains, in the oil regions of Southern Sudan, in Darfur; there is nothing in the way of international responses to these previous genocidal actions will prevent similarly targeted human destruction elsewhere in Sudan.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has also recently highlighted the dangers de Waal cites:

"Perhaps most seriously [among the threats to the Naivasha peace accord], armed conflict and extensive human rights abuses continue in many parts of Sudan, including Darfur, West Kordofan, and Beja areas of the northeast, threatening to destabilize the north-south peace." (The International Rescue Committee press release, January 11, 2005)

Extraordinarily, in this context of reports from the UN, the IRC, news reports, and others accounts, retiring US Secretary of State Colin Powell declared of Darfur on the day of the Nairobi peace signing:

"We still see people being pushed out of their homes. We still see the conflict under way. The conflict has slowed down a bit, but it is not over by any means." (Reuters, January 9, 2005)

It is an obscene distortion of the truth to say that conflict in Darfur "has slowed down a bit." On the contrary, as Annan and Pronk make clear in their reports of the past week, the conflict is clearly accelerating, and may soon turn into a cauldron of violence so severe that humanitarian access will be completely compromised.

"In a 16-page report on Friday, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said conditions in Darfur were deteriorating. He charged the Sudanese government of doing nothing to disarm and prosecute Arab militias called the Janjaweed who have committed some of the worst abuses in Darfur. The instability, analysts say, could undermine Sunday's accord." (Knight Ridder news service [Nairobi], January 9, 2005)

"Six months after the Sudanese government promised to make efforts to end attacks on the Darfur population by pro-government militias, Annan said: 'The armed groups are re-arming and the conflict is spreading outside Darfur. Large quantities of arms have been carried into Darfur in defiance of the Security Council decision taken in July. A build-up of arms and intensification of violence, including air attacks, suggest the security situation is deteriorating.'" (Agence France-Presse, January 8, 2005)

These are the elements of the nightmare scenario Jan Egeland warned of as long ago as July 2004, and what leads him to predict the possibility of civilian mortality up to 100,000 per month---with no means at hand to stop the human destruction.

But even the terrifying plausibility of Egeland's assessment will evidently not move Powell and the Bush administration away from its policy of expediency and disingenuousness in responding to Darfur:

"Asked what further action can be taken on Darfur, [Powell] said: 'The United Nations still has options before it, including sanctions, and we cannot take any of those options off the table. And we will have to examine what further action the international community can take in the form of actions on the part of the Security Council,' [Powell] added." (Agence France-Presse, January 8, 2005)

Of course the Bush administration's companions in expediency are numerous, both in Europe and Canada, as well as at the UN. Jan Pronk shows his truer colors in his own comments on sanctions against

Khartoum:

"Pronk said sanctions, while still an option, should not be imposed now as Khartoum had just responded to international wishes by signing the peace agreement in the south ending Africa's longest civil war." (Reuters [United Nations], January 12, 2005)

Pronk, who declared the obvious---

"Sudanese government forces might be tempted to think the conclusion of the north-south peace accord would provide a brief window of immunity from international criticism on their actions in Darfur, [said Pronk]." (UN IRIN, January 13, 2005)----

nonetheless feels free to encourage Khartoum in this very thinking by holding off on recommending sanctions. To be sure, sanctions---even targeted sanctions---are of very limited value against a regime that does not believe they will ever be carried out with any effectiveness, and has thoroughly insulated itself from most of the effects of targeted sanctions.

But if there is no willingness to push even for UN sanctions, what is the likelihood that we will see UN debate about Human Rights Watch's urging of "a large UN-authorized military force is needed to protect Darfur residents and to create conditions of security that might allow them to return home safely"? The likelihood is of course so utterly remote that to moot such a "force" as a policy option is an exercise in disingenuousness.

For a voice of honesty, we must once again turn to the comments of Lt. General Romeo Dallaire, UN force commander in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide:

"In searing remarks after the screening [of "Shake Hands with the Devil: The Journey of Romeo Dallaire"] at the Canadian Museum of Civilization on Monday night, Dallaire said there was no excuse for the failure by Canada's leaders to lead an international effort to assist in the Darfur region of Sudan. 'I applaud the enormous work that we're doing and we must do with the catastrophe that is going on in Asia. But I am guilty and distraught by our ability to totally abandon a whole other group of humans,' Dallaire said."

Dallaire---who has been fully explicit in declaring the realities of Darfur to be, like those in Rwanda, genocide---went on to say:

"As we pour ourselves into the great sense of commitment to humanity in Asia...we must also have that same courage and determination, and demand of our politicians the same commitment to areas where the crisis is not by natural catastrophe but by human catastrophe,' Dallaire said. 'And the absence of Canada in the forefront of Darfur, in Sudan is a travesty.' []"

"Dallaire urged [] audience members to 'harass our politicians' until they address the Darfur crisis. 'We must...respond even at the risk of having to spill blood to help. That is where a courage and a determination and a focus and a vision of a nation comes from. And right now, we don't have that,' Dallaire said." (The Toronto Star, January 12, 2005)

Tragically, Dallaire refers to a "courage and determination" that are now here in evidence among any of the international actors who can make a difference.

[End Part I; a relatively briefer Part II ("In the Absence of Intervention: Current Humanitarian Issues in Darfur") to follow]

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