

Spreading Genocide to Chad

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Editorial

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After the Holocaust, the world vowed it wouldn't stand back and allow genocide to happen again. Bosnia, Cambodia and Rwanda showed how empty that promise was. Darfur was yet another reminder that when it comes to standing up to stop the slaughter of entire peoples, the nations of the world remain pitifully inadequate.

And now, as if the hundreds of thousands of Africans killed in Sudan weren't enough, the Arab militias financed by the government of Sudan to "cleanse" Darfur of blacks are moving across the border into neighboring Chad. Our colleague Nicholas Kristof reports that the janjaweed — the name given to the Arab militias — have unleashed their fury on villages in Chad, riding in and killing and raping, accompanied by their standard shouting of racial epithets like "black slaves."

Mr. Kristof is one of the few journalists willing to venture into the lawless region. He took along NBC's Ann Curry of the "Today" show on his trip this month, and wrote about a market town in Chad near the Sudan border called Koloy, where villagers were actually waiting to be massacred. There was no one to help them. Chad's government sent a handful of troops, but when the soldiers realized that they would be facing more than 500 janjaweed armed with heavy machine guns, they fled. Diplomats don't dare visit because it's not safe. Ditto for United Nations aid groups. Only one organization, Doctors Without Borders, goes to Koloy, Mr. Kristof reported, "sending in a convoy of intrepid doctors three days a week to pull bullets out of victims."

Is this really what we have come to? The United Nations has described the carnage in Darfur as the world's biggest humanitarian crisis but continues to prove itself completely useless at doing anything to stop it. In the Security Council, China protects Sudan. Europe, for its part, has been inert.

That leaves the United States, where the Bush administration has made a few strides. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick appears to be close to getting the United Nations to supplement, if not replace, the woefully ineffective African Union peacekeeping force in the region with United Nations peacekeepers. The United States should also commit to providing specialized reconnaissance and air support for the United Nations force. Sudan's government doesn't like the idea of a multinational peacekeeping force, and has even organized demonstrations in the capital against the idea, although the protesters tend to look suspiciously like government military types.

The African Union soldiers have done their best, but they are poorly equipped for one thing, and low in numbers for another — there are only 7,000 of them in an area the size of France. They

don't have much in the way of intelligence capability and they are lightly armed. That's a recipe for stalemate, and stalemate is the last thing villagers waiting to be massacred need.