

## Genocide's Neighbors

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AMONTH AGO President Bush called for doubling the peacekeeping force in the Sudanese region of Darfur and expanding the role of NATO countries in bolstering it. Since then, the case for intervention has only grown stronger: There have been fresh reports of death-squad attacks on civilians in Darfur and of violence spilling into neighboring Chad. But the odds of deploying a serious peace force have receded, despite the president's words. The reason is that Sudan's government, the chief sponsor of Sudan's genocide, has threatened violent resistance to a muscular deployment. And Sudan's bluster carries more weight than Mr. Bush's statements.

How can a weak African government get the better of a U.S. president? By persuading fellow governments to believe, or pretend to believe, that replacing the existing African Union troops in Darfur with a larger United Nations peace force would amount to a neocolonialist infringement of Sudanese sovereignty. Needless to say, this is absurd: The United Nations is not an imperialist front. The peacekeepers' purpose would be to save African lives. And the United Nations already has peacekeepers deployed in southern Sudan with the consent of the northern government. But the Sudanese nonetheless persuaded North African members of the African Union, notably Libya, Ethiopia and Egypt, to oppose a beefed-up U.N. force. Sudan's chief negotiator at the desultory Darfur peace talks accused African governments that supported a U.N. deployment of wanting to create "masters in the West and slaves in Africa."

It's a sobering reflection on rich countries' reputation that this sort of clash-of-civilizations broadside can work; it's outrageous that Egypt, a major recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, should lend a sympathetic ear to it. But Sudan's poisonous rhetoric persuaded the African Union to go back on previous indications that it would embrace an early transfer of responsibility from its own peacekeepers. The Africans now say that the earliest possible transfer of authority to the United Nations would be in September.

So Mr. Bush's call for a more serious deployment has been buried for the moment. No peacekeeping force is going to be strong enough to shoot its way into Darfur to establish peace; it will require some form of assent from Sudan's government. The way to get that assent is to put diplomatic pressure on Sudan, above all by achieving a consensus within the African Union in favor of a U.N. deployment. Now that there is no such consensus, the Sudanese feel free to threaten to turn Sudan into a "graveyard" for foreign fighters, and to underline the message by harassing foreign aid workers in Darfur. In the absence of effective peacekeepers, a senior U.N. official recently predicted "massively increased mortality."

Even if a U.N. deployment is off the table until this fall, the United States and its allies have other options. They can press for the enlargement of the existing African Union force and support it with better equipment and logistics. They can enforce a no-fly zone in Darfur, preventing Sudanese government helicopters from supporting ground attacks by the Janjaweed death squads. And they can demand that neighboring countries such as Libya and Egypt support these actions. Don't these Muslim countries care about the genocidal slaughter of Muslims?