

US advocacy group attempts to ward off Sudan envoy pick
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By the Sudan Tribune



As the Obama administration prepares to nominate a new special envoy to Sudan, a major Sudan advocacy organisation has urged secretary of state John Kerry not to nominate former US ambassador to Sudan Tim Carney, who is reportedly being considered for the post, according to US foreign policy blog site *The Cable*.

In a rare move, Act for Sudan is attempting to head off Carney's possible nomination before it materialises amid concerns his stance on US policy on Sudan could undermine peace efforts in the region. NGOs usually wait until a nomination is announced before they express public opposition.

Act for Sudan is a coalition of activists working to end genocide and mass atrocities in Sudan.

The Washington-based group's action reflects a broader ongoing frustration with the administration's Sudan policy and the enduring legacy of Obama's first Sudan envoy, Scott Gration, who clashed with advocates who saw him as too solicitous of the regime in Khartoum.

Informed sources told *The Cable* that Carney is one of two finalists being considered to replace Princeton Lyman, the special envoy who followed Gration. The other finalist is former ambassador to Indonesia Cameron Hume.

The post has been vacant since Lyman's abrupt departure was announced by the White House last December for what sources said was due to health reasons.

During his tenure Lyman, who was appointed in March 2011, worked to mediate between Khartoum and Juba to resolve outstanding issues especially pertaining to border demarcation, oil, the status of Abyei and the insurgency on the Sudan-South Sudan border.

In a letter to Kerry dated 19 March and quoted on *The Cable*, Act for Sudan expressed concern that Carney's "publicly stated advice and guidance with regard to US policy on Sudan will prolong the suffering of the Sudanese people and will undermine US objectives to support a just peace and stable democracies in Sudan and South Sudan, which ultimately are in the best interest of the US and the international community."

Act for Sudan referenced a February 2009 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, chaired by Kerry, where Carney argued for several measures that the group feels would reward and benefit Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir, who has been indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

During the hearing, Carney opposed efforts to isolate Bashir. He proposed instead to defer the ICC warrant, sending an ambassador to Khartoum and removing Sudan from the state department's list of state sponsors of terrorism.

At a recent Act for Sudan conference, the founder and president of Genocide Watch, Gregory Stanton, who has known Carney for 30 years and worked with him when Carney was a desk officer in Bangkok

for Cambodia, also criticised his possible nomination, saying “This is not the man who should be our special envoy to Sudan”.

Hume, the second contender for nomination, served as ambassador to Indonesia after diplomatic posts in Italy, Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon, the United Nations, and the Holy See. More recently he served as ambassador to Algeria and to South Africa, as well as chargé d'affaires to Sudan.

Last December, a coalition of Sudan advocacy groups wrote to the US president, asking him to take several additional steps to combat ongoing violence in Sudan.

“Given the serious human rights violations and national security concerns the US has with regard to Sudan and given the opportunity for positive democratic change that is developing among Sudanese opposition groups and civil society, the new special envoy should reflect a more robust policy”, Act for Sudan wrote on Monday. “We strongly believe that ambassador Carney is the wrong man for this critical job”.

The advocacy group cited former Democrats senator Russ Feingold, lawyer and diplomat Richard Williamson, former California congressman Howard Berman and former Virginia congressman Tom Perriello as other more suitable alternatives for the post.

Last month US representative Frank Wolf called for appointing a new envoy who can reinvigorate the north-south peace process.

“Tensions between Sudan and South Sudan are on the rise and nearing a tipping point. Thousands are starving in the Nuba Mountains. Refugees fleeing violence and seeking aid pour over the border into South Sudan. Low-grade genocide persists in Darfur. An internationally indicted war criminal remains at the helm in Khartoum and travels the globe with virtual impunity,” Wolf wrote.

“Our approach to Sudan and South Sudan needs reinvigorating. It demands a renewed sense of moral clarity about who we are dealing with in Khartoum - namely genocidaires. It necessitates someone who can speak candidly with our friends in South Sudan about their own internal challenges, including corruption, and shortcomings as a new nation”.

“While an envoy alone does not a policy make, a high-profile special envoy, from outside the department, with the knowledge and mandate to aggressively pursue peace, security and justice for the people of Sudan and South Sudan, is an important step in the right direction”,

Last week the two countries reached agreement on withdrawing their troops from the buffer zone and restarting South Sudan's oil exports which was hailed as a major accomplishment in the history of the tense relations between the two ex-foes.