

Issue Brief for Congress

Received through the CRS Web

Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talks, Terrorism, and U.S. Policy

Updated August 2, 2002

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Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE 02 AUG 2002		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2002 to 00-00-2002	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talks, Terrorism, and U.S. Policy				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress,101 Independence Ave SE,Washington,DC,20540-7500				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 19	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

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Sudan: Humanitarian Crisis, Peace Talks, Terrorism, and U.S. Policy

SUMMARY

Sudan, geographically the largest country in Africa, has been ravaged by civil war intermittently for 4 decades. An estimated 2 million people have died over the past decade due to war-related causes and famine, and millions have been displaced from their homes. According to the United Nations, an estimated 3 million people are in need of emergency food aid. The U.N. has appealed for \$190 million for 2002.

The relief operation is being coordinated by Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), established in 1989 in response to the 1988 humanitarian crisis in which over 200,000 people died of starvation. The OLS, a consortium of U.N. agencies and three dozen non-governmental organizations (NGOs), operates in both government and rebel-controlled territories.

The 19-year civil war has been and continues to be a major contributing factor to recurring humanitarian crisis. There have been many failed attempts to end the civil war in southern Sudan, including efforts by Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia, former President Jimmy Carter, and the United States. To that end, the heads of state from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda formed a mediation committee under the aegis of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and held the first formal negotiations in March 1994. The basis of these talks is the Declaration of Principles (DOP), which includes the right of self-determination, separation of religion and the state (secularism), and a referendum to be held in the south with secession as an option. Although the National Islamic Front (NIF) government reluctantly accepted the DOP in 1994, the government in Khartoum has repeatedly resisted secularism, walking out on peace talks in September 1994 and returning in July

1997 after a series of military defeats. In July 2002, the Sudan government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) signed a peace framework agreement in Kenya.

Relations between the United States and Sudan are poor in part because of Khartoum's human rights violations, its war policy in the south, and its support for international terrorism, although in recent months relations have improved somewhat. In November 1997, the Clinton Administration imposed comprehensive sanctions on the NIF government. President Bush renewed the sanctions in November 2001. On September 6, 2001, President Bush appointed former Senator John Danforth as Special Envoy for peace in the Sudan. In January 2002, Envoy Danforth spent several days in Sudan, his second visit to the region. In April, Danforth submitted his report to President Bush.

On June 15, 1999, the House of Representatives passed H.Con.Res. 75. On November 11, 1999, S. 1453, the Sudan Peace Act, was passed by a unanimous vote in the Senate. On October 24, 2000, the House passed S. 1453 as amended. On January 25, 2001, Senator Bill Frist introduced S. 180, the Sudan Peace Act. Similar legislation was introduced in the House on March 7, 2001. On April 26, 2001, Representative Donald Payne introduced two resolutions on Sudan, H.Con.Res. 113 and H.Con.Res. 112. On June 5, 2001, Representative Tom Tancredo introduced H.R. 2052, the Sudan Peace Act. The House International Relations Committee (HIRC) passed the legislation. On June 13, 2001, the House passed (422-2) the Sudan Peace Act (H.R. 2052) with amendment. On July 19, 2001, the Senate passed S. 180 by unanimous consent.

MOST RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

On July 20, 2002, the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), after five weeks of talks in Machakos, Kenya, signed a framework agreement to end the war in southern Sudan. The Machakos Protocol calls for a 6-year transition period and a referendum on the political future of southern Sudan at the end of the transition period. The Agreement establishes an independent Assessment and Evaluation Commission to monitor and evaluate the implementation of a final peace agreement. The Machakos Protocol also exempts southern Sudan from Sharia laws. The United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway participated as observers in the Machakos IGAD negotiations. The second-phase negotiations are expected to take place in mid-August in Kenya.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

In 1956, Sudan became the first independent (from Britain and Egypt) country in sub-Saharan Africa. For almost 4 decades, the east African country with a population of 35 million people has been the scene of intermittent conflict. An estimated two million people have died from war-related causes and famine in southern Sudan, and millions more have been displaced. The Sudanese conflict, Africa's longest-running civil war, shows no sign of ending. The sources of the conflict are deeper and more complicated than the claims of political leaders and some observers. Religion is a major factor because of the Islamic fundamentalist agenda of the current government, dominated by the mostly Muslim/Arab north. Southerners, who are Christian and animist, reject the Islamization of the country and favor a secular arrangement. Social and economic disparities are also major contributing factors to the Sudanese conflict.

The abrogation of the 1972 Addis Ababa agreement in 1983, which ended the first phase of the civil war in the south, by former President Jaffer Nimeri is considered a major triggering factor in the current civil war. Although the National Islamic Front government, which ousted the democratically elected civilian government in 1989, has pursued the war in southern Sudan with vigor, previous governments, both civilian and military, had rejected southern demands for autonomy and equality. Northern political leaders for decades treated southerners as second-class citizens and did not see the south as an integral part of the country. Southern political leaders argue that under successive civilian and military governments, political elites in the north have made only superficial attempts to address the grievances of the south without compromising the north's dominant economic, political, and social status. In recent years, most political leaders in the north, now in opposition to the current government, say that mistakes were made and that they are prepared to correct them. But the political mood among southerners has sharply shifted in favor of separation from the north. The current government seems determined to pursue the military option. The war is costing the government an estimated \$1-2 million a day. Economic conditions have deteriorated significantly, and millions of southern Sudanese are at risk of starvation due to a serious humanitarian crisis, partly caused by the government's decision to ban United Nations relief flights.

Sudan's Reaction to the September 11th Terrorist Attacks

Sudan's reactions to the September 11th terrorist attacks and U.S. military actions against Taliban and Al-Qaeda have been mixed. The leader of Sudan's National Islamic Front government, President Omar el-Bashir, who provided a safe haven to Osama bin Laden between 1991-1996, condemned the terrorist attacks and expressed his government's readiness to cooperate in fighting terrorism. Secretary of State Colin Powell called Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustapha Ismail several days after the terrorist attacks, the first high-level contact between U.S. and Sudanese officials. Secretary Powell stated that Sudanese officials offered to cooperate with the United States and appear eager to join the coalition. According to press reports, U.S. officials confirmed that the NIF government has given U.S. officials unrestricted access to files of suspected terrorists and suggested that they might be willing to hand over some of these individuals to U.S. authorities.

Sudanese officials are sending mixed signals about their level of cooperation with the United States. According to Secretary of State Powell, the NIF government has been "rather forthcoming in giving us access to certain individuals within the country and in taking other actions which demonstrate to us a change in attitude." The Foreign Minister of Sudan, on the other hand, downplayed the extent of the cooperation described by U.S. officials. He stated that "Washington has not so far presented Sudan with any list of wanted people ... and we have not turned over any suspects." In late September, State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher told reporters that Sudanese authorities "recently apprehended extremists within that country whose activities may have contributed to international terrorism."

Government reaction to U.S. military attacks against Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan has been critical. In early October 2001, the government of Sudan issued a statement criticizing the U.S. military action against Afghanistan, after a cabinet meeting chaired by President Bashir. The National Assembly of Sudan also criticized the U.S. military attacks against Afghanistan as "unjustified and lacking legitimacy." Meanwhile, anti-American demonstrations in Khartoum have become more frequent in recent weeks. On October 9, 2001, Islamic clerics led several thousand protestors in an anti-American demonstration in Khartoum. The demonstration was dispersed by police after protestors attempted to storm the U.S. embassy in Khartoum.

Special Envoy Danforth's Mission

On September 6, 2001, President Bush appointed former Senator John Danforth as Special Envoy for peace in the Sudan. During a White House ceremony, President Bush stated that "for nearly two decades, the government of Sudan has waged a brutal and shameful war against its own people. And this is not right, and this must stop." President Bush affirmed his Administration's commitment to "bringing stability to the Sudan." In response, Envoy Danforth stated that "the effectiveness of America's efforts for peace in Sudan will depend on our communication and cooperation with other interested countries, including the European Union and countries neighboring Sudan, especially Egypt and Kenya." In late November 2001, Danforth made his first visit to Sudan and other neighboring countries to assess the Sudan peace process and humanitarian conditions. In

Khartoum, he met with President Bashir of Sudan and senior government officials. In opposition-controlled southern Sudan, he met with senior officials of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). In Nairobi, Kenya, he met with President Moi and in Egypt Danforth met with President Hosni Mubarak and senior government officials.

Danforth was given the mandate to ascertain if there is a role for the United States to play in the peace process. As part of his mandate he first sought to test the parties to the conflict to determine if they were serious about a negotiated settlement. He proposed four confidence building measures. These included: (1) a ceasefire in the Nuba Mountains region to facilitate relief assistance; (2) the creation of "days tranquility" to administer immunizations and provide humanitarian relief assistance; (3) an end to aerial bombardment of civilian targets; and (4) the creation of an Eminent Persons Group on slavery in Sudan.

The Danforth Report: Analysis

In April 2002, Danforth submitted his report to President Bush. He made a number of recommendations and gave his assessment of the situation concerning the peace process. Danforth concluded that there is a role for the U.S. in the peace process. The Danforth report recommends that the U.S. support the IGAD peace process and help coordinate it with other initiatives. Some observers interpreted his recommendation as an endorsement of constructive and energetic U.S. engagement in the peace process, currently spearheaded by President Moi of Kenya. Others saw a rejection of a unilateral or U.S.-led peace initiative. The Danforth recommendation reaffirms continued U.S. support of and preference for the IGAD peace process, which had been pursued by the Clinton Administration for several years. The policy to remain engaged in support of the IGAD peace process does not represent a change in U.S. policy, although the levels of engagement and financial and political support are expected to be robust.

Another conclusion by Danforth is that the war is not winnable by either side to the conflict. Thus, a negotiated settlement is the only option. This conclusion echos the long-standing conventional wisdom that the war is stalemated. Some observers had suggested that the new oil revenue could tilt the military balance of power in favor of the government. Indeed, the government of Sudan has been acquiring new weapons, especially helicopter gunships and fighter planes, from Russia and other countries. Critics maintain that the government of Sudan is using these newly acquired weapons to terrorize civilian populations, especially in the oil fields. Sudan observers have witnessed a rise in the deadly use of air power against civilians, as witnessed in the bombings in Bieh and Rier in Western Upper Nile in the past several months. The government, however, has not been able to reverse gains made by the SPLA in recent years. In fact, the most recent government offensives in Bahr el-Ghazal and Western Upper Nile have been quashed by SPLA forces. Some observers contend that while the SPLA and its allies may not be able to march into Khartoum, it is plausible that the government of Sudan could be defeated in southern Sudan, since the government's presence in the south is limited to a handful of garrison towns.

Danforth and Bush Administration officials consider the Nuba cease fire agreement a success and suggest that the four confidence building measures should be seen as an indication of the parties continued commitment to a negotiated settlement. Danforth and Bush Administration officials suggest the Nuba ceasefire agreement is a model that can be utilized to reach a comprehensive ceasefire agreement and as a breakthrough in the stalled

peace efforts. SPLA officials are suspicious, however, that they might be coerced into a comprehensive ceasefire without an overall political settlement of the conflict. Some Sudan observers assert that while the Nuba ceasefire agreement paves the way for a much-needed humanitarian assistance to the most neglected region of Sudan, the agreement does not bring the parties any closer to a political agreement nor does it contribute to the IGAD peace efforts. Since fighting between the SPLA and the government of Sudan in the Nuba has not been as intense or active as has been in Bahr el-Ghazal or Western Upper Nile, signing of the agreement was a minor concession for both sides. The most serious problem in the Nuba has been the denial of humanitarian assistance by the government of Sudan, as it had been off-limits to international relief efforts. Moreover, the Nuba, though contested by SPLA forces, is not considered by the government and the mediators as part of southern Sudan.

Danforth's other three confidence building measures show limited progress. The agreement on "days of tranquility" has been stalled in large part due to the government of Sudan's humanitarian flight denials and rejection of a humanitarian ceasefire in the south. In late May 2002, the SPLA signed a one-week ceasefire agreement at the request of the United States, but the government of Sudan rejected the ceasefire request. The civilian protection agreement, which was designed to protect civilians from deliberate military attacks, is also not being respected by the government of Sudan. Moreover, the monitoring mechanism is not yet operational, even though the agreement was signed in March 2002. Observers are concerned that the government's continued military offensive in the south would make the agreement meaningless and could further complicate the IGAD peace efforts. The Eminent Persons Group, led by the United States with other members of the international community to investigate slavery in Sudan, submitted its findings and recommendations in May 2002, as called for as one of the four confidence building measures. The Group concluded that "in a significant number of cases, abduction is the first stage in a pattern of abuse that falls under the definition of slavery in the International Slavery Convention of 1926 and the Supplementary Convention of 1956." The Group also affirms the widely held view that the government of Sudan provides direct support to armed groups engaged in abduction and slavery. The Group makes sweeping recommendations to address the problem, but did not make specific proposals for an enforcement mechanism.

The two most contentious issues in the Danforth report are the Envoy's personal observations on self-determination and oil revenue sharing. Some observers of Sudan took issue with Danforth's apparent linkage of self-determination and secession and his seeming rejection of self-determination with an option of secession for the people of southern Sudan. Danforth argues that secession would be strongly opposed by the government of Sudan and therefore it is not desirable to pursue that option. He suggests that southerners should settle for a democratic but united Sudan. He contends that "a more feasible, and, I think, preferable view of self-determination would ensure the right of the people of southern Sudan to live under a government that respects their religion and culture."

Supporters of the SPLM strongly reject this view and argue that even the government of Sudan has agreed to the right of self-determination in IGAD and southern right to self-determination is included in the country's constitution. Danforth's view on self-determination with an option of secession sharply contradicts long-held U.S. policy of support for this right. Many argue that his view also contradicts his own endorsement of the IGAD peace process in which the Declaration of Principles (DOP), adopted by IGAD as the foundation for negotiation, endorses self-determination for southern Sudan. Although

Danforth has presented his view as a personal observation, this issue has become contentious and has raised doubts in the minds of southerners about U.S. commitment to self-determination. Some observers argue that Danforth's position is practical in light of the strong opposition to independence by Egypt and other Arab countries. They also note that the DOP, while endorsing the right of self-determination, stressed that unity should be given a chance to work. Some observers doubt that southern Sudan would be economically viable on its own. Others argue that with oil resources largely found in southern Sudan, an independent south Sudan could become economically viable, despite the enormous development challenges.

Another contentious issue is the Special Envoy's assertion that a fair "allocation of oil resources could be the key to working out broader political issues." The recommendation has been formally rejected by the government of Sudan, but also opposed by supporters of the SPLA for a different reason. The government of Sudan's rejection is based largely on the assumption that the government alone is responsible for the management of the country's resources. The SPLA and its supporters reject the Envoy's recommendation because Danforth links the sharing of oil revenues to a cessation of hostilities between the government and the SPLA without a comprehensive political settlement. The SPLA has consistently rejected a ceasefire agreement without a negotiated settlement. It argues that the only option left for the Movement is the threat of continuing its armed struggle. From this perspective, the government of Sudan would have little incentive to seriously engage in a peace process if it secured a ceasefire agreement without a political settlement. The government has consistently pushed for a ceasefire agreement in IGAD and the Egypt-Libya Initiative. Danforth argues that no peace process will succeed without taking the oil issue into consideration.

President Bush asked Senator Danforth to stay on as his Envoy, although the level of his activity is uncertain. The Administration has an Inter-Agency Group working on the implementation of the Administration's Sudan policy. The State Department has sent a senior diplomat to Khartoum and is expected to increase the number of diplomats at the embassy. Moreover, the Administration intends to be active in the Troika (Norway, Britain, and the U.S.) in support of the IGAD peace secretariat. President Moi has appointed his former Army Chief of Staff as his own Special Envoy. Meanwhile, other U.S. government agencies are expanding their activities in Sudan. USAID has significantly increased its development programs in southern Sudan and U.S. counter-terrorism experts continue their dialogue with their counterparts in Khartoum. These multiple engagements give the appearance that progress is being made in U.S.-Sudanese relations, even though fighting has escalated and humanitarian conditions seem to be worsening in the South. Bilateral relations between Khartoum and Washington seem to have improved somewhat, despite the fact that the Bush Administration has kept the government of Sudan on its State-Sponsored Terrorist list, and these developments worry the SPLA and its supporters.

Current Developments

In early June 2002, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) captured Kapoeta, a garrison town near the Kenyan border. The government of Sudan acknowledged the loss of Kapoeta to the SPLA. Kapoeta is the capital of the Eastern Equatoria province and had been under the government control since 1993, when government forces captured the town from

the SPLA. The government of Sudan has accused the SPLA of violating a humanitarian ceasefire and has threatened to walk out of the IGAD peace talks. In May 2002, government forces captured a small garrison town, Gessan, in Blue Nile province from SPLA forces.

In April, the government of Sudan intensified its military attacks in Western Upper Nile province, near the oil regions, killing scores of civilians and displacing thousands in the process. United Nations and relief officials have warned that humanitarian conditions are deteriorating. The government of Sudan has banned relief flights in Upper Nile and Bahr el-Ghazal, despite repeated calls by relief officials to allow flights to resume. According to United Nations officials, the government of Sudan has denied access to “more than 40 locations” in southern Sudan since late March 2002.

In late April 2002, Sudanese Defense Minister, Major General Bakri Hassan Saleh, visited Russia and met with senior Russian officials to discuss a military cooperation agreement with Russian defense officials. The Sudanese government has intensified its purchase of Russian made weapons system over the past several years. In January 2002, Sudan reportedly purchased a dozen advanced Mig-29 fighter jets from Russia. The Sudanese armed forces still hold large quantities of Russian made weapons, including T-62 and T-72 tanks, BMP-1 combat infantry vehicles, and Mi-4 and Mi-8 helicopter gun ships.

In March 2002, Sudan and Uganda reached agreement, which allowed Ugandan forces to go after Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels inside Sudan where LRA is most active. In April 2002, Khartoum and Kampala agreed to restore full diplomatic relations. Ugandan forces are expected to pull out of southern Sudan by mid-May 2002, although some observers have suggested that Ugandan forces could extend their presence beyond the May deadline.

In early March 2002, the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Dr. John Garang, came to the United States for talks with Bush Administration officials. On March 15, 2002, Garang met with Secretary of State Colin Powell and with senior officials at the White House. Garang also met with members of Congress, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios, and other senior Administration officials.

On March 19, 2002, the Washington Post reported that a top Al-Qaeda member was captured in Sudan and sent to Egypt. According to the Post article, Abu Anas Liby, wanted for the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, is one of the 22 most wanted terrorists by the Bush Administration. A senior Sudanese official said the story about Liby was inaccurate. Sudanese officials, while offering to cooperate with the United States on counter terrorism, have consistently denied the presence of terrorist groups or individuals in Sudan.

In late February 2002, Sudanese army helicopters fired several rockets into a crowd of civilians waiting for food distribution by United Nations officials. An estimated 17 people were killed in the attack, and several hundred were wounded. The government of Sudan initially denied that it had targeted civilians but apologized later after strong international condemnations. The United States suspended peace talks with the government, pending full explanation. Talks resumed after the government of Sudan signed an agreement to protect civilians from such attacks.

In January 2002, Special Envoy Danforth met with senior government officials in Khartoum and with Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) officials in rebel-controlled Rumbek in southern Sudan to discuss his proposed initiatives. Envoy Danforth's mission succeeded in securing a ceasefire agreement in the Nuba and received the support of the parties on his other two proposals. The parties agreed to the creation of a commission to investigate allegations of slavery and endorsed a proposal to create "zones of tranquility" for humanitarian purposes.

In early January 2002, the leader of the Sudan People's Democratic Front (SPDF), Riek Machar, and the leader of the SPLA/M, John Garang, signed a declaration of unity in Nairobi, Kenya. In 1991, Riek Machar split from the SPLA and formed his own faction, and in 1997 he joined the Sudan government as Assistant Vice President, after signing a peace agreement with President Omar Bashir. In late 2000, Machar left the government and began to negotiate with the SPLA. Many observers consider the agreement key to reconciliation efforts between the two main ethnic groups in southern Sudan, the Nuer and Dinka.

On September 28, 2001, the United Nations Security Council lifted sanctions against Sudan, which were imposed in 1996. The sanctions reduced the number of Sudanese diplomats and restricted the entry and transit of Sudanese officials. The sanctions were imposed to force Sudan to handover three suspects in the assassination attempt of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 1995 in Ethiopia. The vote was 14-0 with the United States abstaining. The Clinton Administration rejected the lifting of these sanctions in late 2000, arguing that the Sudanese government had not fully cooperated in the fight against terrorism. In reaction to the lifting of the sanctions, the Foreign Minister of Sudan, Dr. Mustafa Ismail, stated that "its timing was a proof that Sudan's land is free of any terrorist elements."

In July, a high-level American delegations, headed by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Andrew Natsios, visited Khartoum as well as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)-controlled areas in southern Sudan. The delegation pledged additional humanitarian assistance to north and south Sudan. In early June 2001, the heads of state from Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea met in Kenya to reactivate the stalled IGAD peace process. Both the leader of the SPLA, John Garang, and President Omar Bashir of Sudan attended the talks. The talks failed to produce an agreement. A press release after the talks stated that there were serious disagreements between the parties on a wide range of issues.

On June 2, 2001, shortly after the IGAD talks ended, Garang announced the capture of Raga, an important town in western Bahr el-Ghazal, by SPLA forces. In recent weeks, SPLA forces have captured several garrison towns in a series of battles in Bahr el-Ghazal and Blue Nile province. On June 6, 2001, President Bashir ordered the mobilization of forces and vowed to defeat SPLA forces.

On February 21, 2001, the former Speaker of Parliament and the one-time leader of the People's National Front (PNC), Turabi, was arrested with many PNC leaders accused of collaborating with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The Minister of Information described the PNC and SPLM agreement to work together for peace as a "declaration of a political alliance to fight the government, an alliance which does not use legalized methods and an alliance with a military movement that continues to fight the state and the Sudanese people and whose agenda and principles are known."

The Humanitarian Crisis

The current humanitarian crisis in southern Sudan is considered one of the worst in decades. According to the World Food Program (WFP), southern Sudanese “are facing serious food and water shortages due to the combined disruptions of civil war and drought.” (World Food Program website, [<http://www.wfp.org/index.asp?section=2>].) According to WFP, more than 2.9 million people in the south of the country are “severely affected” by the civil war, and an estimated 800,000 people are affected by drought in the north. Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), which is the U.N.-coordinated relief effort, was established in 1989 in response to the death of 250,000 people due to starvation in southern Sudan. The OLS is a consortium of UN agencies and more than 40 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provides emergency relief for civilians living in drought and war-affected areas.

The 18-year civil war, drought, and raids by government-backed militias and rebel groups have disrupted the distribution of food aid and obstructed assessments of need in severely affected areas. The crisis has escalated dramatically in recent years. The scorched-earth techniques used by pro-government militias have decimated fields and homes and forced tens of thousands of people to flee the war-torn areas. According to reports from the scene, the government of Sudan (GOS) routinely and deliberately denies access to areas of southern Sudan to the OLS, according to U.N. relief officials. The government of Sudan has denied access to WFP relief flights to 43 locations in southern Sudan, according to WFP. Many relief centers and hunger-stricken areas are inaccessible by ground transportation because roads were destroyed, did not exist or are impassible due to rain and mud. Moreover, deliberate aerial bombardment of civilian centers has led to serious humanitarian crisis. In February 2002, government helicopter gunships bombed Bieh in Western Upper Nile, while civilians were lined up at a food distribution center. Seventeen people were killed and many more injured.

U.S. Response. The United States contributed more than \$231.1 million in humanitarian assistance in fiscal year (FY)1999, \$93.7 million in FY2000, and \$154.7 million in 2001. As of May 2002, the United States has provided an estimated \$83.9 million in humanitarian assistance in the current fiscal year. Moreover, the United States is providing development aid in opposition-controlled areas to build the capacity of civil administration, conflict resolution, and assist indigenous non-governmental organizations. The Sudan Transition Assistance for Rehabilitation (STAR) was increased from \$2 million in FY1999 to \$4.25 in FY2000, and the STAR budget for FY2001 was \$4 million. In 2002, the Bush Administration announced two major development programs for southern Sudan and significantly increased the development budget. According to USAID, the Southern Sudan Agricultural Revitalization Project provides \$22.5 million for a five year program to improve agricultural production. The Sudan Basic Education Program is a five-year \$20 million program designed to improve access to quality education.

Peace Talks

Peace efforts to end the civil war in Sudan have not succeeded in part because of irreconcilable differences on fundamental issues between the “Arabized” north and southern rebels. The strong belief by the NIF regime that it could resolve the conflict through military

means has been and continues to be a major impediment to peaceful efforts. Another major obstacle is NIF's inflexible position on the role of religion in politics and government. The government seems to show interest in talks when it is weakened militarily or to buy time to prepare for another military offensive.

The IGAD Peace Process

Alarmed by the deepening crisis and multiple failed attempts by outside mediators, members of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), a regional organization that promotes cooperation and development, formed a mediation committee consisting of two organs: a summit committee of heads of state from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda, and a standing committee composed of their mediators. Preliminary talks were held in November 1993 and January 1994, and formal negotiations began in March and May of the same year. Presented at the May meeting, the Declaration of Principles (DOP) included the following provisions: the right of self-determination with national unity as a high priority, separation of religion and state (secularism), a system of governance based on multiparty democracy, decentralization through a loose federation or a confederacy, respect for human rights and a referendum to be held in the south with secession as an option. The NIF government initially resisted the DOP, particularly self-determination and secularism. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) accepted the DOP and the government was later persuaded by the mediators to accept the DOP.

The IGAD peace process began with the view that the Sudan conflict was having serious repercussions not only in the country but also in the region, and sought to deal with the root causes of the conflict. Conditions were ripe for talks since both sides were exhausted from years of fighting and some members of the IGAD committee were seen by Khartoum as allies. In 1994, however, relations between IGAD member Eritrea and Sudan began to deteriorate largely due to Sudan's support for an Eritrean opposition group, the Eritrea Islamic Jihad. Meanwhile, serious opposition to the DOP began to emerge from the NIF government. The most contentious issues were secularism and self-determination, which the Khartoum government refused to concede. In July 1994, the polarization of the two sides intensified after the Khartoum government appointed a hard-line NIF member to its delegation. The Khartoum delegation professed the government's commitment to Islamic law as part of a religious and moral obligation to promote Islam in Sudan and throughout the continent, and refused self-determination as a ploy to split the country. In September, President Moi of Kenya convened a meeting of the committee's heads of state, Sudan's President al-Bashir and the leader of SPLA. The Khartoum government walked out of these peace talks, rejecting the DOP. Loss of military ground and intense international pressure forced the government to the negotiating table in Nairobi in 1997 and formally accepted the DOP. The return to the IGAD process was, in part, in recognition of its failed effort to attract other mediators, who might have been more supportive of NIF positions.

Further meetings in 1997-1998 sought to narrow divisions between the two sides with the government of Sudan formally agreeing to self-determination for the south. The government of Sudan also appeared willing to compromise on some other issues. In May 1998, the parties, despite some progress earlier, disagreed on which territories were considered part of the south. The Khartoum delegation defined the south as the three provinces of Bahr el Ghazal, Equatoria, and Upper Nile, established at independence in January 1956. The SPLM/A argued that Southern Kordofan and Southern Blue Nile and

other areas on the margins of the three core provinces were also part of the south. There were also serious disagreements on the duration of the interim period before a referendum on self determination, and issues relating to interim arrangements were shelved by the mediators in part to avoid failure. The question of religion and state remained unresolved.

The United States and the European Union praised Khartoum's acceptance of self-determination as a major step forward. However, some observers saw the agreement on self-determination as a small step in the right direction after years of stalled efforts. The most contentious and difficult issues are yet to be tackled by IGAD mediators, including the separation of religion from politics and interim arrangements prior to the referendum. Some observers believe that it is too soon to judge whether the concession on self-determination represents a change in Khartoum's position or a tactical move to buy more time. A follow-up meeting between the parties took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in early August 1998. The talks collapsed due to differences on the role of religion in politics. The parties also disagreed again on the territorial definition of southern Sudan for the purpose of referendum. In February 2000, the parties met in Nairobi but failed to make progress. In early June 2001, President Moi reconvened the stalled IGAD peace talks in Nairobi. No progress was made, according to a press release issued at the conclusion of the talks. In January 2002, IGAD mandated President Moi to merge the IGAD peace process with the Egypt-Libya Initiative (ELI), a peace initiative launched by the governments of Egypt and Libya in 2000. A peace summit is expected to take place in mid-June 2002.

Sudan and Terrorism

Sudan is considered a rogue state by the United States because of its support of international terrorism, although in recent years it has taken some measures to improve its record. The State Department's 2002 *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report said that Sudan "has stepped up its counter terrorism cooperation with various U.S. agencies, and Sudanese authorities have investigated and apprehended extremists suspected of involvement in terrorist activities." According to the same report, "Sudan, however, remained a designated state sponsor of terrorism. A number of international terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Egyptian al-Gama' al-Islamiyya, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and HAMAS continued to use Sudan as safe haven, primarily for conducting logistics and other support activities." Counter-terrorism cooperation began in mid-2000, but the government of Sudan did not offer significant assistance until after the September 11th terrorist attacks. In November 2001, President Bush renewed U.S. bilateral sanctions on Sudan and the State Department kept Sudan on the terrorism list.

The United States placed Sudan on the list of states that sponsor terrorism in August 1993 after an exhaustive interagency review and congressional pressure. Sudan has been a safe haven for major terrorist figures. A particularly noteworthy example is Osama bin Laden. He used Sudan as a base of operations until mid-1996 when he returned to Afghanistan, where he had previously been a major financier of Arab volunteers in the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The GOS claims that it expelled bin Laden from Sudan due to pressures from the Middle East and the United States. In August 1996, the State Department said that bin Laden was "one of the most significant financial sponsors of Islamic extremist activities in the world today."

Sudan and Oil Development

The government of Sudan earns an estimated \$500 million annually from oil since it began to export in August 1999. Chevron began oil exploration in the mid-1970s and made its first discovery in 1979. Large reserves in the Upper Nile region of southern Sudan were discovered in the 1980s. Chevron interrupted its work several times in the mid- and late 1980s after attacks by the SPLA. In 1990, Chevron halted operations and sold its concessions to Arakis, a Canadian oil company. Arakis was not able to raise the necessary capital for its projects in Sudan, and due to company financial troubles, it was taken over by another Canadian oil company, Talisman Energy. In March 1997, Talisman Energy, Petronas Carigali of Malaysia, PetroChina, a subsidiary of China National Petroleum Company (CNPC), and Sudapet, Sudan's national petroleum company, signed an agreement and created a consortium, the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC) for oil production and construction of a 1,000-mile pipeline. PetroChina holds a 40% share, Petronas 30%, Talisman Energy 25%, and Sudapet 5% in GNPOC.

The government of Sudan and the oil companies involved in oil development have come under severe criticism from human rights groups and NGOs. Human rights groups accuse the government of Sudan of a scorched-earth policy. In a March 2001 report, Christian Aid, a British-based NGO, declared that "in the oil fields of Sudan, civilians are being killed and raped, their villages burnt to the ground." (*Christian Aid*. "The Scorched Earth: Oil and War in Sudan, March 2001" [<http://www.christian-aid.org.uk>].) The report blames foreign companies for assisting the government of Sudan's war effort by helping "build Sudan's oil industry, offering finance and technological expertise and supplies." According to press reports and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the government of Sudan has doubled its military budget since it began exporting oil. Some observers believe that because of these new oil revenues, the government may not be interested in negotiating seriously to end the war.

Members of Congress and Sudan advocacy groups have called on the Bush Administration to impose capital market sanctions on companies involved in the oil industry of Sudan. The Sudan Peace Act, passed by the House in October 2000, contained a sense of Congress language for such measures. On April 26, 2001, Representative Payne introduced H.Con.Res. 113 (for more see legislation section). On June 5, 2001, Representative Tom Tancredo introduced H.R. 2052, the Sudan Peace Act. On June 13, 2001, the House amended and passed (422-2) H.R. 2052. H.R. 2052 is similar to H.R. 931, introduced in March by Representative Tancredo. H.R. 2052 condemns the government of Sudan, calls for the appointment of a Special Envoy, and requires foreign companies doing business in Sudan to disclose their activities to the public if they seek access to U.S. capital markets. The amendment, which passed by voice vote, prohibits companies engaged in oil exploration and production related activities in Sudan from "raising capital in the United States." Companies are also prohibited from trading securities "in any capital market in the United States." The Bush Administration opposes the disclosure as well as the capital market sanction provisions of the Sudan Peace Act. (*Washington Post*, August 15, 2001)

Human rights groups and Sudan advocacy groups have launched a concerted campaign to pressure oil companies involved in Sudan. Since late 1999, a divestment campaign has been underway targeting Talisman Energy. As of April 2001, several U.S. institutions have divested from Talisman Energy, including the State of New Jersey, the State of California

Public Employees Retirement System, the State of Texas Teachers Pension Plan, and the State of Wisconsin (late April 2001).

Sudan: Religious Persecution and Slavery

Of the estimated Sudanese population of more than 35 million, Sunni Muslims comprise 70%; animists 25%; and Christians 5%. The NIF government in Khartoum views itself as the protector of Islam in Sudan. Political opponents are viewed as anti-Islam and the civil war in southern Sudan is considered a *jihad*, or Holy War. For the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the war is to free southerners from political domination and religious persecution. According to the 2002 State Department human rights report,

in prisons and juvenile detention facilities, government officials and government-supported Islamic NGO's pressured and offered inducements to non-Muslim inmates to convert. Some persons in the government-controlled "Peace" camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) reportedly were subject to forced labor and at times pressured to convert to Islam. Children, including non-Muslim children, in camps for vagrant minors are required to study the Koran, and there is pressure on non-Muslims to convert to Islam. There are credible reports that some boys in vagrant camps and juvenile homes have been circumcised forcibly. There were credible reports that some children from Christian and other non-Muslim families who were captured and enslaved were forced to convert to Islam.

The NIF government's practice of 'holy war' is reflected in attacks on civilians in the south. Some attackers are wooed in part by the tradition that during a *jihad* they can keep their booty. The result reportedly has been widespread institutionalized slavery and massive dislocation. Captured slaves reportedly are forced to attend Quranic schools, change their names, and sometimes indoctrinated to fight their own people. Through the government plan of "forced acculturation," thousands of children are abducted and forcibly converted to Islam or face harsh beatings and torture. According to the State Department's 2001 human rights report,

there were reports that during raids on civilian settlements, government and government-allied militias abducted persons, particularly women and children. In the last 15 years, between 5,000 and 15,000 Dinka women and children have been abducted; between 10,000 and 12,000 persons, most of whom are Dinka, remained unaccounted for at year's end. Although reliable statistics generally are unavailable, observers believe that the number of abductions increased during the year. Observers believe that some of the abductees were sold into slavery, while others were used as forced labor or drafted into the military.

Since 1995, an estimated 40,000 slaves have been redeemed by Christian Solidarity International (CSI), according to press accounts and CSI.

The United States has repeatedly condemned the Khartoum government and in some cases the SPLA for human rights abuses. But American complaints have had little success in convincing the government to improve human rights conditions. The State Department's March 2002 *Country Reports on Human Rights* reiterated criticisms of Sudan:

The Government's human rights record remained extremely poor, and although there were some improvements in a few areas, it continued to commit numerous, serious abuses. Citizens do not have the ability to change their government peacefully. Government security forces and progovernment militias continued to act with impunity and were responsible for extrajudicial killings. There were reports of government responsibility for disappearances. There were at least eight confirmed abductions of NGO workers by government forces and progovernment militias during the year. Government security forces regularly beat, severely flogged, harassed, arbitrarily arrested and detained, and kept in incommunicado detention opponents or suspected opponents of the government. Reports of torture were less frequent than in previous years primarily in response to increased critical scrutiny by the international community.

Aerial bombardment of civilian targets has emerged as one of the most serious human rights issues in U.S.-Sudanese relations. In 2000, the government of Sudan bombed civilian targets 167 times, according to the U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR), a Washington-based NGO. In November 2000, the government dropped several bombs at a market in Yei, killing an estimated 18 people and wounding dozens. The State Department has condemned such attacks by the government of Sudan on a number of occasions, but to no avail. The government claims that it is targeting the military bases of the SPLA and that the SPLA deliberately surrounds its bases with civilians. But human rights groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Sudan argue that the government is destroying hospitals, schools, and feeding centers. Media have reported that in February 2002, government helicopter gunships killed 17 civilians and wounded scores of people at a U.N. feeding center in Bieh, Upper Nile province; that in May 2002, over a dozen people were killed and over 50 wounded after government war planes dropped 16 bombs in Rier, Upper Nile.

The United States and Sudan

Relations between the United States and Sudan continue to deteriorate because of Khartoum's human rights violations, its war policy in the south, and its support for international terrorism. In 1967, Sudan broke diplomatic relations with the United States because of American support for Israel in the Arab-Israel war. Relations were restored after several months. In 1973, the U.S. Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission were assassinated in Khartoum by members of the Black September group, who were tried and sentenced to life imprisonment in Sudan. Relations were further strained when Sudanese President Nimeri commuted the sentences of the assassins. In response, Washington recalled its new ambassador. In the mid-1970s, in the face of Soviet expansion in the Horn of Africa and the fall of Ethiopia into the Soviet sphere of influence, relations with the Nimeri regime began to improve. Nimeri's support during Operation Moses, in which an estimated 7,000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel through Sudan, further strengthened U.S.-Sudanese relations, but later contributed to the ouster of Nimeri from power. Relations became strained once again when the democratically elected government of Sadiq el-Mahdi was ousted in a military coup in 1989. Since the military takeover, human rights abuses by the military junta have become a major source of tension between the two countries. The war in the south has also been a thorny issue in U.S.-Sudanese relations.

Another issue in U.S.-Sudanese relations is Sudan's role in support of international terrorism. Some Members of Congress have been instrumental in pushing a tougher Sudan

policy and played a key role in the decision to put Sudan on the list of states that sponsor terrorism and to appoint a special envoy for Sudan. The State Department rejected congressional calls for a special envoy in December 1993. The Department argued that a U.S. special envoy would undermine regional and former President Carter's peace efforts. In a December 6, 1993 letter to Members of Congress, the Administration said the appointment of a special envoy "would send the erroneous impression that the U.S. is becoming directly involved, since Khartoum has made it clear that it rejects a role by the U.S. in the peace process." However, persistent pressure by some Members of Congress led to a reversal of State's position in early 1994, at the insistence of the National Security Council (NSC) at the White House. The Clinton Administration appointed former Representative Harry Johnston in late 1999. The Bush Administration appointed former Senator John Danforth in September 2001.

The Bush Administration and Current Policy Debate

In late 2000, Washington defeated efforts to lift United Nations sanctions on Sudan and prevented Sudan from becoming Africa's representative in the United Nations Security Council. Senior U.S. officials met with Sudanese government officials in 2000 to inform Sudanese officials what it would take to improve relations. U.S. security officials also spent several months in Khartoum talking with Sudanese security officials on terrorism. President Bush has mentioned Sudan twice in his speeches in the last 2 months, condemning human rights violations by the Bashir government. In early March 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell told members of the House International Relations Committee that Sudan is a priority to him and the Administration.

Advocates of a tough U.S. policy towards the NIF government seem prominent in the policy debate and appear to have the sympathy of senior Administration officials and Members of Congress from both parties. In recent months, senior congressional leaders joined Sudan advocates in condemning the government of Sudan. At a recent press conference on Capitol Hill, Majority Leader Richard Armey (R-TX), Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY), and the NAACP announced the formation of a bipartisan Sudan Caucus. Advocates of a tough Sudan policy favor additional sanctions, appointment of a high-profile Special Envoy, and active U.S. engagement in peace efforts. They oppose the staffing of the U.S. embassy in Sudan and some favor support for opposition forces. These advocates would like the United States government to take specific measures to address slavery and aerial bombardment of civilian targets. Some who favor a policy of engagement argue that the policy of containment and isolation has failed to produce tangible results and that the United States itself is now isolated.

A report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) argues that the United States should focus on ending the war and engage the government of Sudan in dialogue.¹ The report argues that "in the past 2 years, Sudan's rising oil production has shifted the balance of military power in the government's favor at the same time that significant internal rifts have surfaced in Khartoum." The report contends that "in this fluid context, the United States possesses significant leverage. Among the major powers, it is the lone holdout in renewing a dialogue with Khartoum." The authors of the report support the

¹ *U.S. Policy to End Sudan's War*. Report of the CSIS Task Force on U.S.-Sudan Policy, Feb. 2001.

full staffing of the U.S. embassy, a U.S.-supported peace process, and a “One Sudan, Two Systems” formula to preserve the unity of the country. The CSIS report drew fire from Sudan activists and has triggered a sharp debate on U.S. policy toward Sudan.

The Clinton Administration and Sudan

In May 1996, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, reportedly called Sudan “a viper’s nest of terrorism.” The United States closed its embassy in Khartoum in February 1996 and moved the remaining embassy personnel to Nairobi because of security concerns. Moreover, the U.S. government has imposed a series of sanctions on the NIF regime over the years. Washington suspended its assistance program after the NIF-led coup in 1989, placed Sudan on the list of states that sponsor terrorism in August 1993, and supported United Nations Security Council sanctions on Sudan. The Clinton Administration expelled one Sudanese embassy official, who had been based in New York, for suspected links to an alleged plot to bomb the United Nations. (Goshko, John. “Sudanese Envoy at U.N. Ordered to Leave U.S.” *Washington Post*, April 11, 1996. A17.) Another Sudanese diplomat, who was a suspect in the plot, left for Sudan.

On November 22, 1996, President Clinton announced the Administration’s decision to ban senior Sudanese government officials from entering the United States as called for in Security Council Resolution 1054. On September 28, 2001, the United Nations Security Council lifted these sanctions. The Administration actively supported allies in the region affected by an NIF-sponsored destabilization campaign. The United States has provided an estimated \$20 million in surplus U.S. military equipment to Uganda, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. The non-lethal military assistance such as uniforms and communications equipment to the “frontline states” was intended to support them in fending off NIF’s campaign of destabilization. Observers interpret U.S. support to these countries as a measure to contain, punish, and facilitate the downfall of the fundamentalist government in Khartoum.

In November 1997, the Clinton Administration imposed comprehensive sanctions on the NIF government after an exhaustive policy review. The sanctions restrict imports or exports from Sudan, financial transactions, and prohibit investments. In making his case for the sanctions, President Clinton stated that “the policies and actions of the government of Sudan, including continued support for international terrorism; ongoing efforts to destabilize neighboring governments; the prevalence of human rights violations, including slavery and the denial of religious freedom, constitute extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.” (Text of the executive order can be found at the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control Web site at [<http://www.ustreas.gov/ofac/legal/sudan.html>].)

LEGISLATION

107th Congress

H.Con.Res. 112 (Payne)

Calls for an end to slavery in Sudan. Introduced April 26, 2001.

H.Con.Res. 113 (Payne)

Condemns the government of Sudan and urges the Administration to deny foreign companies doing business in Sudan U.S. capital market access. Introduced April 26, 2001.

H.R. 931 (Tancredo)

Calls for a comprehensive peace solution to the war in Sudan. Introduced March 7, 2001.

H.R. 2052 (Tancredo)

Calls for a comprehensive peace in Sudan, condemns the government of Sudan, requires foreign companies doing business in Sudan to disclose their activities to the SEC if these companies are seeking access to U.S. capital market, and prohibits companies engaged in the oil and gas sector in Sudan from raising capital and trading securities in any capital market in the United States. Introduced June 5, 2001; referred to Committee on International Relations. Passed House, amended (422-2), June 13, 2001. (Similar to H.R. 931, introduced in March by Representative Tancredo.)

S. 180 (Frist)

Calls for a comprehensive peace in Sudan and condemns the government of Sudan for human rights abuses. Introduced January 25, 2001. Passed Senate July 19, 2001, by unanimous consent.

Selected 106th Congress Legislation

P.L. 106-113 (H.R. 3422/H.R. 3194). *Brownback Amendment*: the amendment provides the President the authority to provide food aid to “groups engaged in the protection of civilian populations from attacks by regular government of Sudan forces.” H.R. 3422 was incorporated into an consolidated appropriations bill, H.R. 3194; it was enacted by cross-reference when H.R. 3194 was signed into law November 29, 1999.

P.L. 106-570/S. 2943 (Helms). A provision in the bill provides the executive branch additional authorities to use ESF funds for programs in opposition-held areas of southern Sudan. The provision also provides exemption for exports in opposition-held areas, notwithstanding the 1997 executive order. Signed into law December 27, 2000.

H.Con.Res. 75 (Payne). Condemns the National Islamic Front government for its genocidal war in southern Sudan, support for terrorism, and continued human rights violations, and for other purposes. Introduced March 24, 1999, passed the House on June 15, 1999.

H.R. 2906 (Watts). Calls for a comprehensive peace solution to the war in Sudan and codifies existing sanctions. Introduced September 21, 1999.

S. 1453 (Frist). Calls for a comprehensive peace solution to the war in Sudan and codifies existing sanctions. Introduced July 28, 1999. Passed Senate November 19, 1999. Passed House October 24, 2000.