



**NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE**  
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

**AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THE  
SUDAN**

**FROM ISOLATION TO ENGAGEMENT**

Why the Bush Administration Turned Around U.S. Sudan Policy  
January 2001- December 2002

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THE SUDAN FROM ISOLATION TO ENGAGEMENT**

### **Why the Bush Administration Turned Around U.S. Sudan Policy**

American policy toward the Sudan was redirected in 2000 from the isolationist policies of President Clinton to the intensive engagement of the Bush Administration. In the 1990s, Sudan was perceived as posing a serious security threat to the U.S. Following the 1989 Islamist revolution, U.S. attention focused on Khartoum's support for terrorism, the long running civil war, regular humanitarian crises, and egregious human rights abuses. American security concerns were also raised by regional instability fomented by the Sudan's support for cross-border insurgencies.

The Clinton Administration's effort to isolate the Sudan failed for lack of multilateral cooperation. By 2000, President-elect Bush intended to focus only on U.S. vital interests and core relationships rather than on peripheral areas such as Africa. Candidate Bush even remarked that, "While Africa may be important, it doesn't fit into the national strategic interests." When President Bush entered office he did not view the Sudan as a priority country because no vital U.S. national interests were at risk and Sudan had no capacity to threaten the U.S. Nevertheless,

influences from various constituencies converged to alter this view in the first year of Bush's tenure. These influences resulted in Sudan being designated a priority country for U.S. policy in Africa.

This paper contends that faith-based evangelical activists represented a core constituency group that was instrumental in this change. The Bush administration was responsive to these and other advocates who wanted the U.S. to actively engage the Sudan to address issues related to terrorism, religious freedom, slavery, humanitarian outreach and to lead a peace process to end Sudan's long-running civil war.

Though evangelical advocates influenced the U.S. engagement policy that emerged, they were not the sole influence. Executive level departments that managed Sudan policy also called for more active U.S. engagement in this region, and by necessity with the Sudan. The State Department was unable to attract multilateral cooperation on Sudan initiatives as long as the U.S. was perceived as "self-isolated". The Agency for International Development wanted a framework for coordinating humanitarian with other policy interests, while U.S. Defense and Intelligence communities wanted to reestablish a presence on the ground in Khartoum to facilitate their missions. Influential

Members of Congress held hearings on the Sudan that provided platforms for various constituencies concerned with the Sudan. Congressional staffers also played a major role in keeping Sudan issues high on the policy agenda. Think tanks, non-governmental organizations, religious and missionary groups, and universities were advocates that influenced the environment for Sudan policy. Allies in Europe and Africa sought to influence Bush's emerging Sudan policy. The Sudanese parties, themselves, were also instrumental. White House leaders had to balance these multiple influences and imperatives to fashion a policy that was responsive to their various concerns.

As such, Bush was reluctant to become involved in the Sudanese civil war, but perceived correctly that progress on that issue was essential to achieving positive results on other concerns. His administration was sympathetic to evangelical and other advocacy groups; while at the same time, he was reluctant to take sides in the conflict by arming the rebels -- no matter how passionately some groups wanted him to do so.

In the end, U.S. foreign policy toward the Sudan radically changed between 2000 and 2002. However, he maintained a tactical option of using pressure to contain the Khartoum regime's more objectionable behavior.

President Bush's new approach reversed the isolation policy of his predecessor and re-introduced U.S. diplomatic engagement. This paper will explore how, in less than one year after his inauguration, President Bush's Africa policy elevated the Sudan to be one of four priority countries in Africa and achieved unexpected movement on major issues of war and peace.

### **THESIS STATEMENT**

American foreign policy toward the Sudan changed dramatically in the George W. Bush presidency. From January 2001 to December 2002, the policy of engagement that emerged was in dramatic contrast to policy of isolation of President Clinton. A key constituency that was instrumental in this policy change was the faith-based evangelical or "born again" Christian community that had access to the President and held strong views in common with him regarding the Sudan. The evangelical community called for energetic U.S. leadership and engagement in the Sudan to end religious persecution of non-Muslims, to end the re-emergence of slavery, and to energize negotiations that would end the Sudan's long-running civil war. In less than one year after his inauguration, President Bush elevated the Sudan to the status of one of four priority countries on the African continent -- along with Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria. By the end of Bush's second year in office, the Sudan civil war peace process had gained unexpected momentum and major movement was also achieved on the slavery issue, gaining much freer humanitarian access and curtailing military attacks by both sides against civilians. These developments occurred after more than a decade of strained bilateral relations with this Islamist pariah regime. It is important to note that despite the lack of substantive changes in the political, economic or security context, U.S. foreign policy toward the Sudan was transformed from one emphasizing isolation to engagement.

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Sudan is the largest country on the African continent. It has an area of 967,000 square miles -- as large as the United States east of the Mississippi River -- and straddles the geo-strategic frontier between Arab and Black Africa. With a population of around 36 million it is 52 percent Black Africans, 39 percent Arabized Africans, 6 percent Beja, and 3 percent other. The majority (70 percent) of Sudanese are Sunni Muslims, while 25 percent practice traditional African beliefs with Christians accounting for only 5 percent.<sup>1</sup> Sudan's neighbors include Egypt and Libya to the north; Chad and the Central African Republic to the west; the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Kenya to the south; with Ethiopia and Eritrea to the east, including a portion of Red Sea coastline.

The Sudan has waged a vicious and debilitating civil war since 1956. This "Forgotten War" -- the longest running war of its kind -- currently pits the Khartoum government against the Muslim and non-Muslim opposition in the north and the south.<sup>2</sup> Since 1983, in the most recent phase of the war, more than two million people have died of war-related causes (e.g., combat, famine and disease); over one million people became refugees in neighboring states;



and more than four million became internally displaced persons. The civil war is not, as it is often portrayed, simply a conflict between the northern Islamist regime and non-Muslim southerners. In fact, in the first phase of the war (1956 to 1972), the Khartoum government, though primarily Muslim, was not an Islamist regime. Nor is this simply a Muslim/Christian conflict, as it is often described, when one considers that many southerners engaged in the conflict are Muslim and a number of key southern leaders (several of whom are former rebels and some are Christian) hold significant offices within the Khartoum government. Additionally, many anti-government opponents in the north, east and west of the country are Arabized Muslims (i.e., members of the National Democratic Alliance), in addition to the primarily Muslim Nuba Mountains rebels and the Muslim Beja of the Red Sea area (Kipling's famous Fuzzy Wuzzies).

The vast majority of southern Sudanese are not Muslims or Christians, but practice traditional forms of African religions. In fact, less than five percent of the Sudanese population are Christians, and many of them live in the north, i.e., the Coptics. A key issue of contention in the civil war relates to Sudan's crisis of national identity

and lack of consensus on the character of the Sudan as a Muslim versus a secular state.

...That conflict has usually been referred to as one between a Muslim north and a Christian south, but that description is highly misleading. Conflict in the Sudan is neither exclusively regional nor exclusively religious given the country's enormous complexity... In this culturally complex situation... contemporary conflict is fueled by vastly divergent historical identities. For the Sudan, there is no unifying identity; diversity is division.<sup>3</sup>

The first export of Sudanese oil in late 2000 exacerbated the negative impact of the civil war. For the first time in its national history, the Sudan has a regular source of income that now makes possible the Khartoum regime's purchase of sophisticated weapons system. The oil wells, by the way, are located in the south where people living nearby have been forcibly displaced by the government in order to make oil production more secure.<sup>4</sup>

It is, therefore, more accurate to describe this conflict as a war of clashing national identities between the center and the periphery. The conflict embodies complex historical, ethnic and cultural overtones complicated by a violent competition for power, land, oil and other resources.

## **U.S. NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE SUDAN**

No American administration since the 1950s considered the Sudan as a country that was vital to U.S. national or security interests. The Sudan did not represent a threat to U.S. national security interests prior to 1990. The dominance of U.S. commercial interests in the Sudan prior to 1990 did not represent a major economic relationship relative to other African countries (i.e., South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria) or other regions (Asia or South America). Nevertheless, the Third World proxy competitions of the Cold War did lead American policymakers to work closely with Khartoum governments to check Soviet influence in the Horn of Africa.

The U.S.- Sudan bilateral relationship has been stormy since Sudan's independence in January 1956. For example, from 1956 to 1989, Cold War security imperatives drove U.S. policy in this country; and the Arab-Israeli conflict in the context of Sudan's Pan-Arab associations often affected this relationship. Indeed, the Sudan broke diplomatic relations with the U.S. in June 1967, following the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli Six Day War. Relations improved after July 1971, when the Sudanese Communist Party attempted to overthrow President Nimeiri, and Nimeiri

suspected direct Soviet involvement. American assistance for resettlement of displaced persons and Sudanese refugees following the 1972 Addis Ababa peace settlement added further impetus to the improvement of relations. However, in 1973, the American Ambassador Cleo Noel, and his Deputy Curtis G. Moore (along with the Dutch Ambassador), were murdered in Khartoum at the Saudi Embassy by radical elements of the Palestinian Black September organization. The next U.S. ambassador to the Sudan was withdrawn in early 1974 in protest after the PLO assassins were extradited to Egypt. Although the U.S. Ambassador returned to Khartoum in November, relations with the Sudan remained static until early 1976, when President Nimeiri mediated the release of 10 American hostages being held by Eritrean insurgents in rebel strongholds in northern Ethiopia. In 1976, the U.S. resumed economic assistance to the Sudan. A decade later, Vice President George Bush oversaw a covert operation with President Nimeiri to transport thousands of Ethiopian Falasha Jews via the Sudan to Israel (1985). In April 1986, relations with Sudan deteriorated again when the U.S. bombed Tripoli, Libya. A Libyan national shot a U.S. embassy employee in Khartoum on April 16, 1986. Immediately following this incident, all nonessential personnel and dependents left Khartoum for 6 months. State-

sponsored demonstrations in Khartoum in support of the Palestinians invariably targeted the U.S. Embassy.

Following the 1974 communist revolution in Ethiopia, the Sudan, for a time, became a major geo-strategic partner for the U.S. From 1975 to 1989, the Sudan received more U.S. military and development assistance than any other sub-Saharan Africa country. From 1983 to 1989, the U.S. presence in the Sudan grew to over 150 officials and thousands of private U.S. citizens.<sup>5</sup> However, after the Islamist coup in 1989, this Cold War relationship came to an abrupt end and the U.S. downgraded Sudan's strategic significance.

The bloodless coup in 1989 expelled Khartoum's last democratically elected government and brought to power the National Islamic Front (NIF), a party that represents less than seven percent of the population. The NIF was an expansionist radical Islamist regime. It was led by the Islamist ideologue Hasan al-Turabi whose stated ambition was "...to Arabize Africa and Islamize the world."

On January 5, 1990 sanctions associated with the Brooke amendment legislation (section 518, Foreign Operations, Export Finance and Appropriations Act of 1989) were invoked which "disallowed assistance to countries in default for more than one year on loans made under foreign

assistance appropriations." Military goods and PL-480 Title I food commodities were also suspended in February 1990 under Section 513, which prohibited aid to governments that seized power by deposing a democratically elected government. However, humanitarian assistance was exempted from this prohibition. Consequently, in response to NIF policies and practices after 1990, issues related to counter-terrorism, humanitarian aid, and human rights emerged as U.S. priority policy concerns.

#### **COUNTER TERRORISM: A STRATEGIC NATIONAL SECURITY INTEREST**

In the 1990s, Sudan posed an increasingly serious national security threat to the U.S. The decade following the NIF's tenure focused U.S. attention on: a) the continuing lethal civil war; b) periodic humanitarian crises caused by drought, famine and man-made disasters; and c) egregious human rights abuses such as religious intolerance, outlawing opposition parties and enslavement of southerners by northern Muslims. Most importantly, long before September 11, 2001, the primary objective of the Clinton -- and Bush -- administration was to contain terrorism and regional insurgencies emanating from the Sudan.

Immediately following the NIF revolution, the Sudan became a major safe haven for international terrorism. Hasan al-Turabi was the driving force behind the radical Islamist philosophy of his NIF and like-minded Muslim adherents. He called for transforming the Sudan into an Islamic state that would be the base for an Islamist revolution in the Middle East and around the world. In support of this objective, he maintained close alliances with the Muslim theocracy in Iran and with radical Islamist groups and individuals, and opened the Sudan to travel and residence by Islamist radical activists and terrorist organizations.<sup>6</sup> Provocatively, the NIF angered the U.S. by opting to support Iraq after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait in spite of the association of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Oman and the Gulf Emirates with the UN-sanctioned coalition in the Gulf War.<sup>7</sup>

In February 1990, al-Turabi established the Popular Arab Islamic Conference (PAIC) with membership by Islamist organizations throughout the Muslim world. By 1991, Muslim radicals and terrorist groups began arriving in the Sudan to the numerous camps and centers set up to train Islamic Mujahideen Holy Warriors. Their goal was to prepare for a grand Islamist coup d'etat throughout the Arab homeland. Al-Turabi also allied with Tunisia's banned Ennahda Party,

Egypt's Islamic Jihad Organization, Arab-Afghan Mujahideen, Lebanon's Hizballah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Al Ittihad al-Islamiyya of Somalia, the Ethiopian Islamic Jihad, the Oromo Liberation Front of Ethiopia, the Eritrea Islamic Jihad, the Tunisian Resistance Party, the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front, the Algerian Renunciation and Repudiation Group, Abu Nidahl Organization, Abu Jihad Group, among other insurgents such as Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army.

Al-Turabi also established: a) the International Islamic Group of Students to attract young people from around the Muslim world; b) the International Islamic Confederation to form an international Muslim trade union confederation; and c) the International Islamic Opinion Institute that opened in Washington, D.C. in 1992. The latter institution was set up in Washington to take advantage of the freedom to print, publish and raise funds from Muslims in the U.S.; and to produce publications that raised the organizational awareness of the worldwide Islamist movement. These activities were designed to globalize and formalize the Islamist revolutionary movement under al-Turabi's leadership.

Links were established by al-Turabi with regional intelligence organizations, such as Iraq's Mukhabarrat,



Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence directorate, and Libyan Special Security Services. Radical Islamist national leaders joined al-Turabi's movement, such as (the blind) Shaykh Muhammad 'Abd al Rahman of Egypt who was instrumental in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center.

Not to go unmentioned, in 1991, the infamous Usama bin Laden moved to Khartoum where he built his terrorist organization and remained until 1996. When he left the Sudan in 1996, due to pressure from the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, bin Ladin settled in Afghanistan where the Al Qa'ida terrorist organization grew to global prominence under the protection of the Taliban regime.<sup>8</sup> In 1994, Venezuelan arch playboy terrorist, Carlos the Jackal, who resided in Khartoum, was rendered up to France by the NIF.

#### **NIF POLICIES HEIGHTEN U.S. SECURITY CONCERNS**

American security concerns in the 1990s were further exacerbated by regional instability fomented by the Sudan via its support for cross-border insurgencies. Between 1991 and 1998, the NIF actively abetted and armed various Islamic insurgencies to overthrow regional governments and replace them with Islamist regimes -- e.g., in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Somalia.

In 1994, the NIF again shocked Washington leaders when a military tribunal in the southern garrison town of Juba executed four Sudanese USAID employees, falsely accusing them of working with southern rebels. That same year, the U.S. designated Sudan as a state-sponsor of terrorism. Throughout this period, U.S. diplomatic officials and dependents were evacuated from Khartoum for security reasons on several occasions.

In 1995, members of Egyptian Islamic Jihad attempted to assassinate Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Sudanese officials allegedly facilitated this assassination attempt, and protected the suspects who fled from Ethiopia to Khartoum. In 1996, the U.N. Security Council placed multilateral sanctions on the Sudan as a result of its alleged complicity in the failed Mubarak assassination attempt.

During 1996, the security situation for Americans in Khartoum became so untenable that U.S. Embassy operations were suspended until March 2000 for security reasons based on the presence of numerous terrorist groups. When the U.S. Embassy initiated this suspension of operations, Ambassador Timothy Carney and his severely reduced staff were removed from Khartoum and managed embassy operations from Nairobi, Kenya and Cairo by way of occasional visits to Khartoum.<sup>9</sup>

The following year (November 1997), the U.S. imposed comprehensive financial and economic sanctions on the Sudan, proscribing all transactions between Americans and Sudanese nationals. After the 1998 al-Qa'ida terrorist attacks on the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the U.S. launched cruise missile strikes against a Khartoum pharmaceutical plant suspected of producing precursors for chemical weapons.<sup>10</sup> As a consequence of these developments, from August 1998 until March 2000, no U.S. official visited Khartoum, no high level official bilateral contacts took place, and the U.S. held high profile diplomatic consultations with Sudanese opposition and rebel groups as a part of a policy to contain and isolate the NIF.<sup>11</sup>

In this period, bilateral relations drastically deteriorated due to security related concerns. As late as 1999, the Department of State's annual report, Global Patterns of Terrorism, noted:

Sudan in 1999 continued to serve as a central hub for several international terrorist groups, including Usama bin Ladin's al-Qa'ida organization. The Sudanese Government also condoned Iran's assistance to terrorist and radical Islamist groups operating in and transiting through Sudan. Khartoum served as a meeting place, safe haven, and training hub for members of the Lebanese Hizballah, Egyptian Gama'at al-Islamiyya, al-Jihad, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and Abu Nidal organization. Sudan's support to these groups included the provision of travel documentation, safe passage, and refuge. Most of the groups maintained

offices and other forms of representation in the capital, using Sudan primarily as a secure base for organizing terrorist operations and assisting compatriots elsewhere.<sup>12</sup>

These trends solidified U.S. policy animus toward the Sudan in the 1990s. Dr. Susan Rice, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs during the second term of the Clinton Administration, reported, "our policy is to isolate the Government of Sudan and to pressure it to change fundamentally its behavior. At the same time, we seek to contain the threat that it poses to U.S. interests, to neighboring states, and to the people of Sudan."<sup>13</sup>

#### **CLINTON'S ISOLATION POLICY**

The Clinton Administration sought to isolate the Sudan for several years, but neglected to build and lead the necessary multilateral coalition to support this goal.<sup>14</sup> However, the U.S. did successfully build a coalition to block Sudan's attempt to gain a seat on the Security Council in 2000, and rebuffed several attempts to lift U.N. multilateral sanctions against Khartoum. The designation in 2000 of former Florida Congressman Harry Johnston as Special Envoy also failed to move the peace process forward or gain traction on other critical issues.<sup>15</sup> The mission of Special Envoy Johnston, however, positively signaled the

U.S.'s preparedness to directly engage the NIF regime. Another such signal was the deployment in May 2000 of a U.S. Counter Terrorism Dialogue Team to Khartoum with a mandate to assess whether the Sudan was sincere in its claims that it had renounced support for terrorist groups and wished to cooperate with the U.S. on counter-terrorism.

In the weeks prior to Bush's inauguration, the Khartoum regime initiated a "charm offensive" to remove long-standing obstacles to improving relations with the U.S. The regime offered to:

- a) unilaterally declare a comprehensive ceasefire as a basis for reviving the IGAD peace process<sup>16</sup>;
- b) cease aerial bombings that harmed civilians; and
- c) permit humanitarian access closed areas to provide needed assistance to vulnerable groups.

However, because similar claims and unfulfilled promises were made previously by the Khartoum regime, there was little trust in Washington in these offers.

As complicating mixed signals, a number of highly charged events occurred in late 2000 further suggested that the NIF was not sincere about improving conditions for bilateral relations with the U.S. These events included:

- Sudanese aircraft bombed UN relief centers and a hospital owned by Samaritan's Purse (an evangelical

- NGO) three times between November and January -- killing numerous civilians;
- Government-led protests in Khartoum in support of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (Days of Rage) in October and November damaged the U.S. Chancery;
  - Sudanese security forces took an American NGO worker into custody in November and beat and tortured him after northern rebels attacked the city of Kassala;
  - President Clinton renewed bilateral economic sanctions and led an effort to deny Sudan a seat on the U.N. Security Council; and
  - An unauthorized visit to rebel-held southern Sudan by Dr. Susan Rice led to the temporary suspension of visas for U.S. diplomats and the expulsion of the U.S. political officer.<sup>17</sup>

Critically assessing President Clinton's Sudan policy, analyst Terrence P. Lyons wrote, "Clinton's...high profile strategy did little to advance the causes of a negotiated peace." Lyons noted that Clinton's policy to contain and isolate Khartoum employed bilateral and leveraged multilateral sanctions that ultimately alienated the NIF. However, he judged, the U.S. failed to achieve its policy goals, did little to weaken the NIF, failed to cut off Sudan's economic ties, did nothing to strengthen the

opposition or mobilize peace negotiations. Lyons declared, "as European states and Sudan's neighbors steadily normalized relations with Khartoum, the United States found itself conspicuously self-isolated, with few achievements to show for its efforts."<sup>18</sup>

### **EVANGELICAL ACTIVISTS AND SUDAN POLICY**

It is relevant to the thesis of this paper that President Bush describes himself as a "born again Christian." The "religious right" emerged as an active political constituency on domestic and foreign policy in recent decades, with a special concern in the 1990s for the Sudan. Conservative editorialist Nicholas C. Kristof observed that born again evangelical groups "moved from the fringe to the mainstream, and this is particularly evident in (Bush's) administration." In a recent Gallup Poll, Kristof noted, 36 percent of the respondents described themselves as evangelicals or born again Christians. Furthermore, according to him, "It is impossible to understand President Bush without acknowledging the centrality of his faith."<sup>19</sup>

By 2000, the incoming Bush team signaled their "realist" intention to focus only on U.S. vital interests and core relationships (i.e., in Europe and Asia) rather than on peripheral areas such as Africa. Candidate Bush

even remarked that, "While Africa may be important, it doesn't fit into the national strategic interests."<sup>20</sup> The Bush administration initially had a very limited policy focused on Africa. It focused on the need to:

- a) meet security challenges to U.S. interests,
- b) resist involvement in African internal affairs, and
- c) avoid direct involvement in conflict prevention and peacekeeping operations.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the Sudan initially fit into Bush's national security policy concept only as a source of instability and humanitarian crises.

When President Bush was sworn in January 20, 2001, opinion leaders in Khartoum were ambivalent about what to expect. Khartoum observers recalled former President Bush, the father, fondly, as it was during that administration that U.S.-Sudan relations were at their warmest. Others hoped that because the new president was a Texas oilman, he would reverse U.S. sanctions policy and return American petroleum corporations to the Sudanese oil fields and U.S. companies to their former prominence in the local economy.

The NIF elite worried about Bush's closeness to Reverend Franklin Graham, the son of evangelist Billy Graham, who was an acerbic critic of the NIF. Franklin Graham gave the convocation prayer during the presidential



inauguration ceremony. Of greater import to the NIF, President-elect Bush's participation in a spiritual retreat with Rev. Graham the month before his inauguration sparked headlines and editorials in Khartoum daily newspapers. Graham, the founder of the faith-based NGO Samaritan's Purse, was well but very unfavorably known to the NIF. A serious point of concern by the U.S., UN and the NGO community was the Khartoum regime's military strategy of attacking relief centers, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure in rebel held territory as a means of denying services that might benefit the rebels and their supporters. Samaritan's Purse operated the only hospital in Lui, southern Sudan, which was bombed by government aircraft seven times in 2000.

Franklin Graham expressed the opinion that running the Samaritan's Purse hospital persuaded him that Sudan's Islamist government was "genocidal" and that Islam itself is "evil and wicked."<sup>22</sup> In the first two months of his presidency, Bush made three public references to the Sudan expressing concern about the lack of respect for human rights, the lack of religious freedom and ongoing humanitarian conditions. President Bush was alleged to have been "hijacked by the religious right."

Surprising to many, President Bush initiated a review of U.S./Sudan policy in late January 2001 as one of his first substantive areas of foreign policy consideration. The policy review addressed the following issues:

- international terrorism and regional stability;
- Sudan's humanitarian crisis and the need for access to vulnerable populations;
- pervasive and egregious human rights abuses;
- the lack of freedom and democratic processes;
- the role and impact of oil in the civil war;
- religious intolerance, persecution and imposition of Sharia' law on non-Muslims;
- abduction and enslavement of southerners;
- aerial bombardment of non-combatant civilians;
- lack of progress toward a comprehensive negotiated settlement to the civil war; and
- lack of bilateral U.S. engagement and the need for U.S. leadership.

As a direct response to this policy review, many evangelical and other interest groups intensively raised their often single-issue concerns in the Sudan with administration officials. These groups represented public agencies, private institutions, churches and non-

governmental and faith-based organizations. The Sudan policy review was seized upon as an opportunity to encourage President Bush to increase pressure on the Sudanese parties, especially the NIF.<sup>23</sup>

An unexpectedly aggressive campaign by a wide array of groups concerned with the Sudan targeted the new administration. After more than a decade of NIF control of the Sudanese government, the battle lines on Sudan policy were starkly drawn in Washington and across the U.S. Jane Perlez, a New York Times reporter, depicted this context when she editorialized,

...But suddenly the spotlight is on (the Sudan civil war), in a place where America has traditionally felt little national interest. It is, in a way, a case study in how a curious combination of events can suddenly turn a distant, nearly forgotten conflict into a burning issue in Washington's eyes. In this case, the Bush administration finds itself paying increasing attention to Sudan because it involves two of its most important domestic constituencies: oil interests and religion.<sup>24</sup>

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (CIRF), a leading voice in this advocacy campaign, proposed in April 2001 that the Bush Administration impose harsh economic measures against Sudan. They called for prohibiting foreign companies from raising capital in U.S. securities markets "as long as (they are) engaged in the development of oil and gas fields in Sudan."<sup>25</sup> The U.S.

Conference of Catholic Bishops, on the other hand, urged the administration to deal more even-handedly with all parties in the Sudan in order to quickly end the war.

American evangelical leaders took the opportunity to press the president to "get tough" with the NIF and to "arm the Christian rebels" and support their "fight for separation" from the northern Islamic government.<sup>26</sup> The administration tried to remain sympathetic, but simultaneously as non-committal as possible while it came up with a policy. At the same time, he resisted some of the most controversial constituency advice, such as taking sides and arming the rebels, during the policy review.

James Phillips of the conservative Washington think-tank the Heritage Foundation argued the position of many evangelicals for "not just ending the war but ending the Sudanese government's genocidal policies" though "regime change."<sup>27</sup> Phillips claimed that Sudan's "radical Islamic regime" was guilty of "systematic bombing of civilians, starvation, slavery, ethnic cleansing, religious persecution, and other human rights abuses to break the will of the opposition, composed predominantly of Christians and animists living in the south." He criticized "even-handedness," claiming it "suggests a moral equivalence" and ignored the "evil" role played by the NIF

in "repressing its own people and supporting international terrorism against the United States and many other countries."<sup>28</sup>

Phillips argued further that the presence of oil "shifted the military balance" in favor of Khartoum, and consequently, a limited U.S. diplomatic approach would allow the NIF to "buy time to score a military victory." He suggested that the Bush administration should not approach the Sudan crisis even-handedly or simply as a humanitarian crisis, but should

...oppose any regime in Khartoum that insists on imposing strict Islamic law (Sharia') on non-Muslims in the south, because this will only prolong the fighting. The U.S. goal should be not just stopping the civil war, but to help transform Sudan into a stable and peaceful state that does not use terrorism and subversion as instruments of foreign policy.<sup>29</sup>

The issue of slavery struck a chord of disgust and opposition among evangelical constituencies. Many anti-slavery advocates believed the existence of slavery in the Sudan was a direct affront to American values and sensibilities that demanded a visceral response. Philips articulated this view in vivid terms when he described:

...an appalling...revival of historic patterns of tribal warfare in which (Arab) tribal militias take (Black African) women and children as war booty and force them into slavery. The radical Islamic (Khartoum) regime has encouraged Muslim tribes allied with the government to target racial, ethnic and

religious minorities, particularly Dinka tribes that are a base of militia for the southern resistance.<sup>30</sup>

Raising the issue of direct military assistance to the rebels, an option never adopted previously by the U.S., Phillips suggested that an "even-handed approach" weakened U.S. leverage by ruling out "stronger multilateral economic sanctions or military aid for the southern resistance." For Phillips, rather than ruling out military support for the opposition, the U.S. should "rule out military victory by the regime" by working with Sudan's neighbors and others to provide "increased food supplies, economic aid, diplomatic support, and military aid if necessary... The U.S.," he declared, "should help to arm, train and support the opposition, but not do it's fighting for it."<sup>31</sup>

Jerome Lyons, like these advocacy groups, perceived opportunities for U.S. policy change regarding the Sudan in early 2001 "where more intensive, high-level engagement... (could) have a positive impact..." He said a "vocal and aggressive coalition of domestic constituencies" converged to urge the Bush administration to "come up with a (new) strategy on the Sudan." Lyons noted that by mid-2001, the outlines of the Bush policy emerged whose primary objective was to push for negotiations to achieving peace in the

Sudan as a basis for resolving many other outstanding problems. "However," he averred, "doubts remained as to whether this approach could attract sustained support from Congress and interest groups, particularly hard-line elements that strongly preferred a policy of containing and pressuring Khartoum while continuing lethal and non-lethal support to the southern opposition." <sup>32</sup>

### **BUSH POLICY ENGAGES WITH THE SUDAN**

The Bush Administration entered office predisposed to allow Sudan to languish on the periphery of U.S. global policy concerns. However, it was motivated to treat this "rogue state" as a policy priority. Bush was clearly loath to be drawn into the lead role for resolving the civil war, but perceived correctly that progress on this intractable conflict was central to achieving momentum on other issues of significant concern to one of his core constituencies. The Financial Times editorialized that,

The White House search for a coherent Sudan policy is hobbled by an important Republican Party constituency, the well-organized and vocal religious right. Their decibel level has drowned out more moderate voices. They portray the Sudan as a new crusade.<sup>33</sup>

Bush's Sudan policy review was complete by May 2001, and implementation was well underway before the al-Qa'ida terrorist attacks of 09/11/01. Central to this policy was

the appointment of a Presidential Special Envoy for Peace in the Sudan. Special Envoy John C. Danforth (a former Senator, a lawyer and an ordained Episcopal priest) was sworn in on September 3, 2001 in a Rose Garden ceremony a week before the September 11 terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World trade Center. Unlike his predecessor Envoy, Harry Johnston, Danforth had direct access to the President who defined the framework for his mission. In October and January 2002, Danforth made his first trips as Special Envoy to Khartoum, Cairo, Nairobi and New York; and in December he visited London, Oslo, Paris and Rome. In these meetings, he discussed his mission with interested parties, including the Presidents of Kenya, Sudan, Egypt and Uganda; opposition leaders of the northern and southern rebel factions; and members of the EU and IGAD Partners Forum.<sup>34</sup>

President Bush conferred upon Danforth a mandate to "test the seriousness" and commitment of the Sudanese parties to move towards a negotiated peace settlement. The approach Danforth employed -- after his consultations with the Department of State, USAID, the Congress and the National Security Council -- presented four "confidence building" proposals to the Sudanese parties that were



designed to test this proposition. A core group of officials from State, USAID, NSC and DOD was designated to support the Danforth Mission. The four proposals included:

- 1) Negotiating an internationally monitored ceasefire in the Nuba Mountains as a prelude to carrying out comprehensive humanitarian and development activities;
- 2) Achieving "Days of Tranquility" to cease armed conflict in particular times and places to allow for immunization of children for polio and Days and Zones of Tranquility to allow for immunization against bovine rinderpest;
- 3) Establishing an International Commission of Imminent Persons to investigate allegations of slavery and abduction to make recommendations to end this practice; and
- 4) Establishing an international monitoring mechanism to investigate allegations of military attacks against civilians with the goal of eliminating attacks against non-combatants by all parties.

Negotiations in Khartoum and southern Sudan on the Danforth Proposals took place in December 2001; and successful negotiations in Bern, Switzerland in January 2002 achieved an early and unexpected consensus on the Nuba Mountains ceasefire agreement. Those familiar with the Sudan were surprised at how quickly Danforth's mission appeared to garner successes. There was profound skepticism that this apparent progress was meaningful or that the parties' expressions of commitment could be trusted. Particularly in the wake of the 09/11 terrorist attacks, and NIF regime's apparently active cooperation

with the U.S. in the Global War on Terrorism, there was deep skepticism, doubt and worry expressed by members of Bush's evangelical constituencies.

The November 2001 decision by President Bush to abstain, thus allowing the Security Council to lift the U.N. multilateral sanctions against the Sudan related to the 1995 Mubarak assassination attempt, generated heated denunciations from evangelical groups.<sup>35</sup> The Bush administration justified its decision by pointing out that Sudan cooperated with the U.S. and rounded up foreign extremists and suspected terrorists after 09/11. Secretary of State Colin Powell indicated the U.S. would enlist further Sudanese assistance to "eliminate all forms of international terrorism." U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, James Cunningham, told the Security Council, "Sudan has recently apprehended extremists ... whose activities may have contributed to international terrorism" and was seriously discussing ways to combat terrorism with U.S. officials. "We welcome these steps and expect this cooperation to continue....," Cunningham continued. "We expect the Government of the Sudan to demonstrate a full commitment to the fight against

international terrorism by taking every step to expel terrorists and deny them safe haven.”<sup>36</sup>

Powell noted that via the bilateral counter-terrorism dialogue that had been underway since May 2000, the NIF government, which was quick to condemn the 09/11 attacks, continued to work with U.S. counter terrorism specialists. Sudan’s Permanent Representative to the U.N., Fatih Irwah, responded that the lifting of UN sanctions “represents a strong impetus for my country to proceed forward and to cooperate in order to eliminate terrorism, and to engage with the mainstream international community’s work and its organs. I can assure you,” declared Irwa, “that anything that’s of concern to the U.S., or is helpful to them to track these perpetrators, Sudan will be glad to help.”

The fact that the Sudan remained on the U.S. State Sponsors of Terrorism list, and U.S. bilateral sanctions remained in place, was not sufficient to mollify the President’s detractors and critics. Michael K. Young, of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, urged President Bush not to abandon the goal of religious freedom in the Sudan as he prosecuted the war on terrorism. “The United States has sought cooperation from several governments that are among the world’s most egregious

violators of religious freedom and other human rights...

The Commission is concerned," he wrote,

...that in forging alliances against terrorism, the U.S. not compromise its commitment to human rights, including religious freedom and democracy. We oppose such policy trade offs... The U.S. government should not, in effect, signal to these governments that it is indifferent to the violent persecution they inflict on their own populations as long as they stop exporting terrorism to the United States... Cooperation in the fight against terrorism does not grant them license to abuse the rights of their own people. The U.S. Government should continue to press human rights both publicly and privately and to protect human rights worldwide."<sup>37</sup>

In November 2001, a coalition of more than 100 religious and civil rights leaders signed a three-page letter urging President Bush to take a tougher and harder stance toward the Sudanese government. In this letter, the signers cautioned the president that his "efforts to forge alliances with certain countries against terrorism" could "so compromise basic commitments to religious freedom and human rights that our national credibility and security will be undermined." The letter reminded the president that he, himself, acknowledged on May 3, 2001 that the regime in Khartoum had committed "monstrous crimes" and referred to the human toll in death and displacement from the civil war.<sup>38</sup>

Sudan's civil war became a major issue in Congress where an unlikely coalition of conservative Republican Christian lawmakers and the Democratic Congressional Black Caucus joined to co-sponsor the Sudan Peace Act (SPA). This legislation aimed to put pressure on Khartoum to end the war while providing U.S. support to the rebels. A controversial aspect of the SPA sought to prevent foreign companies involved in Sudan's oil industry from selling stock in U.S. capital markets. The Bush administration strongly opposed capital market sanctions, claiming this would set a bad precedent.<sup>39</sup> Religious leaders criticized the president for blocking the Sudan peace Act that was passed in June by the House of Representatives by a vote of 422 to 2.<sup>40</sup>

Expressing optimism over the doubts of his detractors, Danforth reported to President Bush in early 2002 on the progress of his mission to test the commitment to peace by the parties of the Sudan conflict, and to recommend whether the United States should participate further in efforts to achieve a just peace. Danforth reported, "I decided to test the parties' commitment by submitting to them a series of concrete proposals that would challenge them politically

while at the same time reduce the suffering of the Sudanese.”

Further, he reported:

We devised four proposals, all based on three basic premises. The proposals focused first and foremost on protecting ordinary Sudanese civilians who often find themselves caught between the two opposing parties. Second, they obliged the parties to change past patterns of behavior and to make tough political choices. Third, the proposals provided for international involvement and monitoring so as to maximize the chances of being respected...

The four proposals addressed specific areas of human suffering in Sudan. I presented the outlines of these proposals to the parties during my November visit to the region. Three weeks later a joint State/USAID/DOD team returned to Sudan to follow up. The negotiations were intense because we were asking both sides to put the well-being and protection of the people and the prospects of peace above considerations of short-term military advantage. After eighteen years of war, this was not easy. Nevertheless, by dint of persuasion, pressure and perseverance, we were eventually able to secure agreement to all four of the proposals... During my first trip, however, we received only vague verbal commitments on three of the four proposals. We encountered stiff resistance to our proposal to end intentional military attacks against civilians, particularly bombing by Sudanese Government aircraft and use of helicopter gun ships. Both sides were prepared to commit themselves verbally to not attacking civilians, but the Government resisted setting up an international mechanism to ensure compliance. It took over three months of intensive, painstaking negotiations, but in late March we were also successful in reaching agreement on this proposal.<sup>41</sup>

## **SUDAN STRATEGY AND POLICY**

President Bush was encouraged enough by Danforth's optimistic report that he intensified bilateral engagement with the Sudan while holding his evangelical constituents in check. The administration did not agree to apply too much pressure on the NIF regime, or to provide lethal or direct assistance to the rebels. That approach would have undermined his highest priority goal of fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Walter Kansteiner, described the new Sudan policy to the Congress in June 2002. He prefaced his remarks with a statement that could have been directed toward the evangelical constituency that, "Those who have seen the misery of that country's people know that the United States of America cannot ignore what is going on there. Sudan must be a priority in America's foreign policy."

In his report, Kansteiner said the Administration's Sudan policy "is multifaceted in its approach to key U.S. strategic interests and its support for the ideals and compassion of the American people." He emphasized the key policy concerns and U.S. interests when he said, "We will

seek to deny Sudan as a base of operations for international terrorism even as we work to bring about a just and lasting peace, push for unhindered humanitarian access, and improved human rights and religious freedom. These goals represent a complex balancing act." He said the appointment of Special Envoy Danforth was a major component of the strategy. He noted that Danforth advised President Bush that the parties to the conflict "have shown sufficient will to engage in a peace process." Encouraged by these trends, Kansteiner said, "We must now work diligently to demand deeds rather than mere words, and in this regard the government in Khartoum will have much to prove. President Bush has asked Senator Danforth to continue on as his envoy for peace in Sudan as we push for a just peace..."

President Bush's approach focused on "an immediate need for relief for the millions of Sudanese who suffer needlessly." Kansteiner raised the appointment of USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios as Special Humanitarian Coordinator and noted the President "tasked him with developing and implementing strategies that would alleviate the dire humanitarian situation at hand..." Kansteiner



then expressed the objectives of the Administration in the following terms:

...We seek sustained and measurable achievements in pursuing:

1. A cease-fire and humanitarian access to the Nuba Mountains area;
2. Zones and periods of tranquility for humanitarian access;
3. The introduction of an international commission to investigate slavery, abductions and forced servitude; and
4. The cessation of attacks on civilians. <sup>42</sup>

#### **CONCLUSION AND OBSERVATIONS**

President Bush entered office predisposed not to consider a country like the Sudan as an important focus of foreign policy. The Sudan was not initially a primary or secondary focus -- if a focus at all -- for the new administration. It was a pariah regime on the far periphery of Bush's strategic policy focus on relations with the great powers and protecting vital U.S. interests. No vital U.S. national interests were at risk in that poor African country; it possessed no military capabilities that could threaten the U.S.; it was not a regional anchor state; it was a perennial victim of humanitarian crises; and it was not desirable to involve the U.S. in its protracted civil war.

What forces, then, could have intervened to convince the President to designate the Sudan as a policy priority and reverse a decade of isolation policy? How did it happen that the Sudan's Forgotten War became a cause celebre among American constituencies and the first target of a Bush policy review in Africa, of all places?

Several influences tended to converge to dramatically alter U.S. policy in the first year of Bush's tenure. Clearly, evangelical and like-minded advocates for a more pro-active Sudan policy influenced the U.S. commitment to engagement that emerged in 2002. However, it would not be accurate to suggest that this was the sole influence, though it was an undoubtedly major one.

A key source of influence was resident in the executive level departments that managed Sudan policy. Policy leaders in the State Department who focused on the East Africa Region called for more active U.S. engagement in this region, and by necessity the Sudan. Ambassador Johnny Carson and his Sudan Watchers at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi recommended taking a leadership role in the peace negotiations while strongly opposing providing lethal assistance to the rebels. The State Department formed a Sudan Task Force that was frustrated in efforts to attract multilateral cooperation for U.S. initiatives as long as

the U.S. was perceived as being absent from Khartoum and self-isolated. The African Bureau argued for the need to do something different like re-staffing the U.S. Embassy, and argued that the U.S. stood a better chance of success by using a multilateral approach. The Agency for International Development also formed a Sudan task Force and sought a framework for coordinating humanitarian and other policy interests in this country that represented USAID's largest humanitarian account on the African continent.

The Defense and Intelligence communities believed that the lack of U.S. presence on the ground in Khartoum constrained achievement of their missions in the region. The loss of this platform seriously eroded the quality of the intelligence product related to terrorism and regional insurgency. Clearly, the professional diplomatic and intelligence communities helped to convince the President as well as fashion the engagement policy approach and to implement it. As importantly, White House and National Security Council policy analysts had to balance these bureaucratic imperatives with those on non-governmental constituencies, such as the evangelical community, to create a policy that was responsive to these various concerns.

Another source of influence on Sudan policy was within the Congress. Influential Members of Congress had long been involved with the Sudan and held strong views on the direction and character of U.S. involvement. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee, via their Africa Sub-committees, regularly held hearings that provided platforms for various constituencies concerned with the Sudan. Of particular importance were Senators Frist, Wolfe and Brownback and Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, among many others, who formed an unlikely coalition across the liberal-conservative political divide. Long-serving Congressional staffers also played a major role in keeping Sudan issues at the forefront of governmental concern. These groups agreed that pressure needed to be applied on the Sudan to address issues of war and peace, religious freedom, slavery, human rights and humanitarian affairs. Their focus on the impact of oil on the civil war motivated much of the Congressional action, including the 2002 Sudan Peace Act.

Think tanks (i.e., Center for Strategic and International Studies, Brookings Institution, the Heritage Foundation, etc.), non-governmental organizations, religious and missionary groups (i.e., Save the Children

U.S., Catholic Bishop's Conference, Samaritan's Purse, World Vision, Adventists Development Relief Organization, etc.), former government officials and universities were major advocates with access to the President and the Congress that allowed them to influence the environment for Sudan policy.

Allies in Europe and Africa also sought to influence the emerging Sudan policy. Norway, Italy and the U.K. pressed for American leadership to end the civil war as a basis for resolving other outstanding issues emanating from the Sudan. Egypt and Ethiopia, despite past estrangement, wanted to normalize relations with Khartoum to reduce strategic security concerns with that regime. Kenya and Uganda were deeply concerned about the impact of cross-border effects of the civil war on their own national security and believed that U.S. leadership was essential to resolving Sudan's conflict.

Reactions of the Sudanese parties to U.S. approaches were also interesting. It is instructive that both the NIF and rebel negotiators, in the Post-9/11 period, sought to tarnish the image of each other in the view of the U.S. as a means of gaining diplomatic advantages. The NIF portrayed the rebels as "terrorists" and the opposition described the NIF as the "Taliban of Africa". Indeed, the

negotiations in December 2001 and January 2002 around the Four Danforth Initiatives were successful, in large measure, because each Sudanese party cynically agreed to these initiatives with the smug expectation that the other side would not agree. Consequently, in a perverse way, agreement was achieved to the surprise of both parties despite their long-held contrary positions. Nevertheless, Danforth insisted that once agreement was reached, the U.S. would hold the parties to that agreement.

Ultimately, it was President Bush's selection of and confidence in Senator Danforth that brought all of these influences together. Danforth, himself an ordained man of faith, helped to mollify the evangelical community that their concerns about religious freedom would be addressed. Danforth's personal convictions and integrity satisfied those that argued for positive action on human rights issues. His experience on Capitol Hill reassured the Congress that he would be a peace Envoy that they could work with and relate to.

All of these influences affected the environment for the Bush administration's Sudan policy review and subsequent engagement. However, the critical input came when Danforth told the President in March 2002 that he believed the parties were sufficiently committed to

negotiating peace and it was worth the effort for the U.S. to pursue this new policy and intensify its engagement.

The surprisingly successful Danforth mission was the sharp wedge of U.S. engagement. It catalyzed a multilateral effort that achieved significant movement on difficult issues within months of his involvement. Members of the European Union's IGAD Partners Forum (Great Britain, Norway and Italy), regional leaders (Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Djibouti and Egypt), and representatives of the UN and international NGOs quickly stepped in to lend material and personnel support to this effort.

As a strategy, the Danforth approach aimed to build mutual confidence as a basis for generating limited gains on issues of concern to evangelical constituencies and policy makers. These gains were to be used to build new confidence among the parties that agreements reached on limited issues could be sustained on major issues when they were reinforced by international monitoring and U.S. guarantees. The surprisingly quick results of Danforth's mission was a major breakthrough and served as the basis for renewing IGAD negotiations in Nairobi in the second half of 2002 that achieved progress in the peace process and other critical issues. This breakthrough further

strengthened the administrations resistance to urgings to arm the rebels to increase their war-fighting capabilities.

Progress on the peace front was the key priority goal of the Bush engagement policy. Kansteiner, in November 2002 Congressional testimony, emphasized that a comprehensive peace settlement is "clearly in the national interests" of the U.S., for the following reasons:

- It will contribute to regional stability in the strategic Horn of Africa.
- It sends a message to people of the Middle East that even the most intractable conflicts can be resolved.
- It reinforces Sudanese commitments to cooperate fully against terrorism.
- A peace settlement with a bill of rights protects fundamental freedoms and contributes to the evolution of a more moderate Sudanese regime.
- It ensures vulnerable populations receive needed humanitarian assistance.
- Peace helps end massive human suffering, promotes human rights, and addresses legitimate grievances of southerners.



However, as Kansteiner indicated, achieving peace in the Sudan remains a long-term prospect, and there are many issues yet to be settled. No one is sanguine that the new Bush policy has succeeded in addressing all of the concerns of the myriad influential interest groups, especially the evangelical Christian community, that focus on the Sudan. Despite this continuing concern, when one considers the accomplishments of the Bush policy, particularly in terms of peace negotiations, one cannot help but be encouraged.

In spite of these developments, much remains to be done, and peace has not yet been achieved. For example, Sudan remains on the U.S. list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, bilateral economic and financial sanctions remain in place, and recently, new punitive legislation targeting the Sudan passed the Congress. President Bush extended bilateral sanctions against Sudan, citing continued concern over the alleged activities of terrorist groups in the country. "These actions and policies are hostile to U.S. interests and pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States," Bush said October 31, 2002 upon signing the redrafted Sudan Peace Act. Sudanese leaders claim that U.S. allegations of their support for

terrorism are false, and that continued restrictions placed on Sudanese result from "pressure by groups hostile to Sudan".<sup>43</sup>

That same week the government of Sudan signed in Kenya the Machakos cease-fire agreement with the rebels to suspend fighting during continuing negotiations to end the war. This cease-fire agreement allows for lifting the ban on humanitarian relief flights to the southern region. "This act demonstrates the clear resolve of the United States to promote a lasting, just peace; human rights; and freedom from persecution for the people of Sudan," Bush said. "...Sudan must choose between the path to peace and the path to continued war and destruction," he continued. "If it makes the right choice, that course will mean improvement in the lives of all Sudanese, better bilateral relations with the United States, and the beginning of its reacceptance into the community of peace loving nations."<sup>44</sup>

Reverend Franklin Graham, however, confessed that he remains "very skeptical... given that you have a government that's responsible for two million deaths." The gestures of conciliation by the NIF, to Graham, reflect a Post-09/11 fear that they could just as easily have become a target of the U.S. war against terrorism. "I think," he said, "they

are probably doing everything they can right now to appease the United States. I think they will do that as long as they have to. And as soon as our attention focuses on someplace else I think they will go right back to what they have been doing -- and that is annihilation of Christians in southern Sudan."<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, despite Graham's skepticism, the character of U.S.-Sudan relations and U.S. foreign policy had radically changed. Bush's new "carrots and sticks" approach succeeded in energizing U.S. diplomatic engagement while maintaining a tactical option of using pressure to contain the Khartoum regime's more objectionable behavior.

The Bush approach produced major achievements on what for decades were unsolvable problems. Key developments and successes from September 2001 until December 2002 include the following:

1. The designation of Danforth as Special Envoy fueled expectations as he was viewed as a "Personage of Significant Gravitas," who brought instant credibility to his mission.

2. Humanitarian relief groups achieved wide access to rebel held areas such as the Nuba Mountains, which had been blocked for years by the NIF regime.

3. Danforth negotiated agreements with both the NIF and southern rebels to deploy an international commission of eminent persons that examined allegations of government-tolerated enslavement of southerners and reported on their findings and made recommendations for ending this practice.

4. USAID expanded its humanitarian involvement and carried out important immunization, humanitarian and development activities in the conflict zones that were not possible before.

5. Teams from the National Democratic Institute and the Republican National Institute traveled to the region and met with civil society and political groups (in exile as well as inside the country) to explore the prospect of leveraging democratic openings to build grass-roots democracy in the Sudan.

6. Sudan's cooperation on counter terrorism led to a major curtailment of the NIF's past support of Islamist terrorism groups, and the dismantling of safe havens and training camps.

7. Danforth catalyzed a rapprochement between rebel factions and key opposition leaders that can reduce internecine conflict that harms civilians in the south and strengthens the framework for peace negotiations.

8. The NIF and opposition rebels moderated their fiery rhetoric, along with sustaining the Nuba Mountains ceasefire and the Days/Zones of Tranquility, makes possible a return to IGAD peace negotiations for the first time in almost two years.

9. The Sudanese embassy in Washington returned its staff to facilitate diplomatic engagement, and in December 2002 supported the first visit of high-level Sudanese officials to Washington for direct consultations with U.S. officials in nearly half a decade.

10. A senior American Charge' d'Affaires was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum along with additional U.S. diplomats to renew resident status in Khartoum to oversee U.S. interests and to implement the new Bush engagement policy.

The Bush policy's primary focus on facilitating the IGAD peace process as the basis for future progress has borne significant fruit. It resulted in the first

ceasefire since 1998 that has the potential for more substantive agreements on outstanding issues. As Kansteiner noted,

We have helped achieve major progress towards peace. The Machakos Protocol signed in July is unprecedented in stipulating that southerners have the right to self-determination, including the option of secession, after a six and one-half year interim period, and that they must not be subject to Sharia' law. The parties agreed that they would resume negotiations to reach a comprehensive accord through agreements on power sharing; wealth sharing; the status of the three marginalized areas of Nuba, the Upper Blue Nile, and Abyei; and a formal ceasefire.

The round of talks that adjourned November 16 2002 made substantial progress. Two memorandums of understanding were signed. One extends through March 31 2003 the cessation of hostilities and provisions for unrestricted humanitarian access. The other reaffirms the parties' commitment to negotiate a comprehensive peace settlement, and identifies fifteen areas where general agreement has been reached on power-sharing issues. The parties have agreed to resume negotiations in early January 2003.

Both sides have shown some willingness to compromise, though very sensitive issues remain to be discussed. Arrangements on wealth-sharing, particularly with respect to petroleum revenues, will be crucial to ensure equitable distribution to southerners and are, therefore, a key element of power-sharing. Handling the issue of the three marginalized areas will not be easy, but it is a reality that these areas have been integral to the conflict and to the broader cultural and ethnic differences within Sudan. We do not have a recipe, but believe that arrangements acceptable to the respective populations must be worked out and folded into a comprehensive peace accord.<sup>46</sup>

Evangelical and other constituencies are closely monitoring these developments. Many are pleased with the

positive outcomes while harboring suspicion that reversals are all too easy. There are many hurdles to overcome, not to mention the habits of war and generations of suspicion. The U.S. decision to advance from isolation to engagement with the Sudanese parties, and the choice to take a leadership role within a pro-active multilateral approach, has been a genuine success. Many hopes ride on this good beginning.

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## END NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Cutter, Africa 2002, 37<sup>th</sup> Edition, Stryker-Post Publications, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, 2002, pp 234.

<sup>2</sup> The Sudanese civil war has passed through three major phases: a) Inyanya One, 1956 to 1972; b) a period of "no war, but not peace" from 1972 to 1983; and c) renewal of warfare from 1983 to the present.

<sup>3</sup> Op cit, Cutter, pp 235.

<sup>4</sup> The departure in 1983 of the U.S. oil companies that discovered oil in the Sudan, is a running point of concern. Any subsequent U.S. consideration of accelerating Sudan's integration into the global economy, encouraging economic development and trade, and protecting the environment were constrained due to statutory limitations, the departure of the U.S. business community and the bilateral and multilateral sanctions regimes.

<sup>5</sup> i.e., diplomats, military, USAID staff and other contractors, as well as thousands of private sector personnel, teachers, and missionaries.

<sup>6</sup> Iran established a consulate and a Revolutionary Guard military base in Port Sudan and began training of Sudanese police, internal security, Popular Defense Forces and militias. Iran also provided oil at preferential rates to the Sudan and facilitated arms deals from China, India and Eastern Europe. Iraq's internal security agency, the Mukhabaratarrat, also played a role in the early 1990s by facilitating Sudan's weapons acquisition as well as training of its internal security personnel.

<sup>7</sup> The NIF even ordered the Kuwaiti Embassy in Khartoum to lower its flag, withdrew accreditation of the Kuwaiti ambassador, and allowed Iraqi officials to invest the Kuwaiti diplomatic compound. Sudan viewed the Kuwaiti Emir and royal family as illegitimate and corrupt.

<sup>8</sup> Bin Laden later claimed that Al-Qa'ida elements participated in the fight against U.S. forces in Somalia, the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, the Kobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, and the bombing of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Carney was the last U.S. resident Ambassador accredited to the Sudan. From 1998 to 2002, U.S. interests were handled by a Charge' d'Affaires based out of Nairobi. It wasn't until May 2002, that the U.S. Charge' and the small Embassy staff resumed residency status in Khartoum.

<sup>10</sup> The Clinton Administration accused the Sudanese regime and Sudanese nationals of being complicit in these terrorist attacks and serving as a safe haven for international terrorists. The Sudanese government removed its diplomats from Washington, D.C. following this cruise missile strike that led to government-sponsored demonstrations that vandalized the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum. It must be recalled that a third bomb attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kampala, Uganda was aborted by arrest of the intended perpetrators the night before.

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<sup>11</sup> During the Clinton Administration, the U.S. provided nearly \$2 billion in humanitarian aid to the southern Sudan as a participant in the multilateral Operation Lifeline Sudan. Secondly, throughout the 1990's, the U.S. was the largest donor of humanitarian aid to the Sudan. The U.S. was also the most active advocate of protecting human rights in the Sudan. In the latter Clinton years, the U.S. proclaimed Sudan to be a "rogue state" and provided non-lethal security assistance to the "frontline states" of Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda to contain the Sudan. However, the Clinton Administration declined to exercise Congressional authorization to provide direct lethal and non-lethal assistance to the Sudanese rebels.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of State, Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2000, Washington, D.C., emphasis added.

<sup>13</sup> Statement by Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Susan Rice, before the Subcommittees on Africa and on International Operations and Human Rights of the House International Relations Committee, Washington, DC, July 29, 1998. During my pre-deployment orientation in early 2000, I encountered the sentiment in the NSC and the State Department held by key officials that the Khartoum regime was "too evil to countenance engagement."

<sup>14</sup> Regarding U.S. strategic military and national security concerns leading to the U.S. policy to isolate the Sudan, Dr. Susan Rice, stated, "Ethiopia's and Eritrea's neighbor, the Sudan, has long supported international terrorism, fostered the spread of Islamic extremism beyond its borders, actively worked to destabilize neighboring states, including Ethiopia and Eritrea, and perpetuated massive human rights violations against its own citizens."

<sup>15</sup> Johnston traveled to the Sudan in March and September 2000, and was the first high level U.S. official to visit Khartoum since August 1998. He was accompanied by Deputy Chief of the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum, Donald Tietelbaum in March, and DCM Raymond Brown in September, who were resident in Nairobi. Johnston initiated a dialogue with the warring parties to achieve progress in the peace process, action on counter terrorism, attention to human rights and access for critical humanitarian relief efforts. By his own estimation, he did not achieve much success.

<sup>16</sup> IGAD - Intergovernmental Authority on Development, a regional grouping of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Uganda and the Sudan.

<sup>17</sup> The U.S. diplomat, Glenn Warren, was falsely accused of conspiring with opposition politicians to violently overthrow the Khartoum regime on December 7, 2000. He was declared *persona non grata*, and given 72 hours to leave the country. This contrived diplomatic spat was aimed at showing the NIF's displeasure at A/S Rice's visit and denunciatory statements.

<sup>18</sup> "U.S. Diplomatic Strategies to Resolving Conflict in Africa," by Terrence P. Lyons, in African Policy in the Clinton Years: Critical Choices for the Bush Administration, edited by J. Stephen Morrison and Jennifer G. Cooke, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., 2001, pp.48.

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<sup>19</sup> Nicholas C. Kristof, "God, Satan and the Media," in the New York Times, March 4, 2003.

<sup>20</sup> Donald Rothchild, The United States and Africa, Power with Limited Influence, pp 231. As Rothchild noted further, "the main US interests in Africa are interrelated: sustained stability ... which requires attention to the processes of conflict management and effective governance."

<sup>21</sup> This related to the U.S. objective to strengthen regional stability and security that were negatively affected by conflict in the Sudan and elsewhere. I believe the U.S. has real, though limited, national interests in Africa. Africa does not pose a direct military threat to the U.S. However, regional stability in the strategic Horn, West Africa, and the Great Lakes region are serious concerns.

<sup>22</sup> His father, Billy Graham, also called Islam "an evil and wicked religion" following memorial services in Washington for victims of the 09/11 terrorist attacks. See, John Sawyer, "Now is the Time to Push for Peace, Ex-Diplomats Say," in St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 13, 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Several senior Bush appointments also caused concern among the NIF elite. Vice President Cheney, Secretary Powell, NSC Adviser Dr. Condoleezza Rice and USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios were known to the NIF from previous administrations -- and not particularly favorably. Powell was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff when the 1989 NIF coup led to termination of U.S. military and development aid; and during Sudan's alignment with Iraq during the Gulf War. During Congressional testimony in early 2001, Secretary Powell described the Sudan as "possibly the world's most tragic humanitarian crisis," a view perceived in Khartoum as biased. Walter Kansteiner, the new Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, also an evangelical, served in the previous Bush administration. He was known to the NIF for his criticism about Khartoum's religious persecution and civil war tactics. Andrew Natsios, USAID Administrator, is a devout Greek Orthodox Christian, possesses broad and intensive experience in the Sudan as Director of USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in the former Bush (the elder) administration; and as Executive Director of the faith-based international NGO World Vision during the middle 1990s. Natsios and his deputy, Roger Winter, (former director of American Refugee Committee), also worked for decades on Sudanese issues, and both of them were viewed by the NIF as "enemies."

<sup>24</sup> Jane Perlez, "Suddenly in Sudan, A Moment to Care," New York Times, June 17, 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Uwe Siemon-Netto, "Sudan Abuses Raise Ire," in United Press International, April 30 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Op cit, Perlez.

<sup>27</sup> The groups in this category represented a coalition of more than 100 religious and civil rights groups, which included: Samaritan's Purse, The Southern Baptist Convention, Center for Religious Freedom, the U.S.

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Commission for religious Freedom, Christian Solidarity International, the Hudson Institute, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Church Alliance for the New Sudan, New Sudan Council of Churches, Episcopal Church Conference, the National Association of Evangelists, the Southern Christian leadership Conference, The NAACP, Institute for Religion and Democracy, "Rock the Desert" Christian Music festival of Midland Texas (the home of President Bush), Midland Black Pastor's Alliance, Anti-Slavery Group of Boston, American Anti-Slavery Society, Bethel AME Church, Sidwell Friends School, Chuck Colson, William Bennett, Nina Shea, Michael Horowitz, Reverend Al Sharpton, Elliott Abrams, among many other individual churches and activists.

<sup>28</sup> James Phillips, "To Stop Sudan's Brutal Jihad, Support Sudan's Opposition," Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C. June 12, 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp 1. Phillips proposed that the Bush administration's policy should include the following: Firmly oppose Islamic radicalism in the Sudan, not Sudanese Muslims; Strongly support the Sudanese opposition; Appoint a Special Envoy to spearhead and coordinate U.S. policy on the Sudan; Launch a high profile campaign of public diplomacy to publicize the regime's harsh policies and enlist international support in pressing Khartoum to halt these abuses; Change the way food relief supplies are distributed inside Sudan to deprive Khartoum of its food weapon; and Strengthen U.S. and multilateral economic pressure against the Khartoum regime.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, Phillips pp.3. Raiding parties from the Arabicized Baggara tribes of Western Sudan, armed by the regime and incorporated into the Popular Defense Forces, the regime's feared militia, have attacked Dinka villages, murdered the men, abducted the women and children, and transported them north to work as slaves. ("Once captured they become the private property of individual masters, and have to endure endless hard work, poor nutrition, and sexual abuse.")

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*, Phillips, pp 8 - 9. Rather than being "anxious to see reconciliation" in the Sudan, Phillips said the U.S. should take "a hard-nosed approach to ensure that the (NIF) regime becomes anxious to see reconciliation."

<sup>32</sup> *ibid*, pp 37.

<sup>33</sup> Financial Times Information, "U.S. Deeply Divided Over Sudan Policy in Washington," Global News Wire Africa Analysis, July 2, 2001. The times wrote further, "The African Christians of southern Sudan, as they see it, must be saved from the "Arab" Muslims north. They do not appear to be bothered by inconvenient facts, as for example, that most southerners are animists and that there is a sizeable Muslim minority in the south." It was also popularly believed that Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld were following a largely unilateralist foreign policy approach, while Secretary of State Powell was perceived to be more inclined toward working with allies to build multilateral consensus on foreign policy issues. Powell moved slowly to stamp his imprint on American policy toward Africa, making one of his first official overseas tours to this continent that had a major focus on the Sudan agenda.

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<sup>34</sup> Inter-Governmental Authority on Development made up of Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Djibouti and the Sudan. The IGAD Partners Forum - composed of the United Kingdom, Norway, and Italy along with the U.S.

<sup>35</sup> A partial list of the individuals and groups that approached the Bush team on the Sudan include:

- U.S. Senators Brownback, Wolfe, Frist, Lieberman and Kennedy as well as key Senate staffers.
- U.S. Congress persons Crocket, Jackson (Jr.), McKinney, Rangel, Dellums, Waters, among others in the Congressional Black Caucus as well as key House Staffers.
- Former members of Congress Howard Wolpe and Nancy Kassenbaum.
- Commission on International Religious Freedom, Elliot Abrams and Nina Shea.
- Former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice.
- Former President Jimmy Carter, who had made numerous trips to the Sudan and brokered a limited ceasefire in 1998 in addition to programs by the Carter Center to eradicate Guinea Worm and River Blindness.
- Former U.S. Ambassadors to Khartoum Norman Anderson and Timothy Carney.
- Faith-based and missionary organizations, such as Samaritan's Purse, Blood of the Martyrs, Adventist Relief and Development Agency, Catholic Bishop's Conference, the Southern Baptist Convention, The Southern Christian leadership Conference, World Vision, among numerous others.
- Think Tanks, including TransAfrica, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Constituency for Africa, the Heritage Foundation, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Heritage Foundation, the NAACP, the National Urban League, among others.
- International NGOs, such as CARE International, Oxfam UK and US, Save the Children US and UK, International Red Cross, among many others.

Media organs and columnists including from the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Boston Globe, Washington Times, Washington Post, Atlanta Journal Constitution, Los Angeles Times, CNN, etc.

<sup>36</sup> Edith M. Lederer \*AP Writer, "Security Council Lifts Sanctions Against the Sudan with U.S. Abstaining," Associated Press Worldstream, September 28, 2001.

The following exchange during and on the record briefing upon release of the 2001 Patterns of Global Terrorism report by Ambassador Francis Taylor expresses the administration's views on counter terrorism cooperation with the Sudan during the first phases of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism:

**QUESTION:** There's interesting language in about five of the seven state sponsors on terrorism. Two of them you say are making significant headway; three others are sending -- while they have mixed signals, there are positive developments. Are you seeing a broader trend that there is movement by the traditional state sponsors away from the kind of activities for which they have become most noted?

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**AMBASSADOR TAYLOR:** Certainly the reason we designate state sponsors is to put them on notice that we want them to change their behavior. Indeed, Sudan, as an example, has been working with us in counter terrorism cooperation for some time. They remain on the state-sponsored list because they continue to have some elements of Hamas and PIJ that are in Sudan. But the fact is, they are working to try to change their past practices of the use of terrorism as a tool of state policy.

That's why we list them. That's why we want them to change their behavior. And it takes much more than just talk, though, to be removed from the list. In order to be removed from the list, a nation has not only to renounce terrorism, but also to demonstrate conclusively that no longer will it use terrorism as a tool, and none of the state sponsors has sufficiently indicated that to give us a reason to want to take them off the list.

**QUESTION:** On Sudan, the Report also says that al-Qa'ida has -- remains in Sudan, and that it's using it as a base of logistics. On the record, the State Department Spokesman at one point said that Sudan had handed over some of these operatives, and there's been a lot of information also in the press regarding this. Could you sort of square the circle here? Do you really believe that al-Qa'ida is operating in Sudan right now?

**AMBASSADOR TAYLOR:** I believe that the Sudanese are working very closely with us against the al-Qa'ida problem, and that the statement that's in our *Patterns* is not inconsistent with what the State Department Spokesman said about their past cooperation with us.

<sup>37</sup> Lee Davidson, "Bush Urged to Push for Religious Rights," in *Deseret News*, Washington, D.C. October 9, 2001.

<sup>38</sup> The letter, signed by numerous Protestant and Catholic clergy as well as Kweisi Mfume of the NAACP, was distributed by Freedom House, the Center for Religious Freedom, and the Institute for Religion and Democracy. This was not the first missive of its kind to the President, but represented a growing crusade as the year progressed. The authors also noted that since 09/11, the Khartoum regime had intensified its bombing campaign against non-combatant civilians and U.N. food distribution centers.

<sup>39</sup> "Blood, Oil and God: War in the Sudan," International Crisis Group, Washington, D.C. and Brussels, 2002.

<sup>40</sup> The Sudan Peace Act as drafted by the House would have barred foreign oil companies doing business in the Sudan from selling their stock and other securities in the U.S. Although both houses of Congress passed the SPA by large margins, a conference committee to reconcile the two versions was held up for months by Sen. Phil Gramm at the behest of the Bush administration, which argued that the bill's sanctions would set a bad precedent for political intervention in U.S. capital markets. The

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House version would ban the target companies from being listed on U.S. stock exchanges.

<sup>41</sup> The Outlook for Peace in the Sudan, Report to the President of the United States from John C. Danforth, Special Envoy for Peace, Released by the Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, April 26, 2002.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Policy Towards Sudan, Walter H. Kansteiner, III, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Testimony Before the House Committee on International Relations, Washington, DC, June 5, 2002. Kansteiner also made the following points to the Congress:

The commitments that the parties have made to implement these agreements will necessarily represent ongoing tests of their will to cooperate in good faith. While not perfect, these tests represent unprecedented progress, which, most importantly, continues to save lives.

...The human rights and humanitarian crisis in Sudan has its basis in the ongoing civil war... The duration and nature of the civil war, however, make it clear that neither the government nor the opposition can win militarily. Without a strong international role, it is doubtful the parties to the conflict possess the initiative necessary to resolve the differences of their own accord. This is where we have focused our diplomatic efforts.

...The release of Senator Danforth's report a few weeks ago marks the initial step to determine if we can indeed stop the war. His initial mandate...was to determine if the parties to the conflict are earnest in their stated desire for peace. Senator Danforth found that while the parties have demonstrated an ability to reach agreement on contentious issues, the difficulty of achieving these agreements underscores the necessity of outside intermediaries. Specifically...he notes that the time is right for the United States to participate and act as a catalyst in a peace process. The Administration agrees with his conclusion.

...When we talk about the prospects for peace in Sudan, we must be realistic, and we must be prepared for a long-term commitment. The latest iteration of this war is 19 years old. Achieving a just peace will require resolution of difficult questions such as the role of religion in the state, boundaries, sharing of oil revenue, and guaranteeing respect for the south's legitimate right to self-determination. Peace negotiations will require sustained effort and the demonstration of a will to peace that appears so far to be less than enthusiastic...

Humanitarian relief, human rights, and peace are three critical keys to our Sudan policy. We must work on all three simultaneously, but we must insist on concrete progress by all the parties. To achieve our goals, we must be prepared to aggressively advocate our positions in Khartoum. We have been looking at re-staffing our Embassy in Khartoum to provide the presence we need to advance our interests there and to support an engagement on the issue of peace.



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<sup>43</sup> This legislation calls for additional sanctions against the Sudanese regime if it failed to act in good faith in the IGAD peace talks with southern rebels. That legislation empowers the administration to suspend diplomatic relations with Khartoum, to oppose loans and other assistance from international financial organizations, to take steps to deny Sudan benefit from oil revenues especially to buy weapons, and to seek a UN resolution for an arms embargo. The bill also authorizes US\$300 million over the next three years for peace efforts.

<sup>44</sup> Under the Sudan Peace Act, the president must evaluate every six months whether the government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) are pursuing peace talks in good faith. If he finds that the government, but not the SPLM, is acting in bad faith or has "unreasonably interfered with humanitarian efforts" in the south, then Washington will vote against multilateral loans to Sudan and consider downgrading or suspending diplomatic ties. The U.S. will also try to prevent Sudan from using oil revenues to acquire weapons, and seek a UN Security Council resolution imposing an arms embargo on Sudan's government. The legislation also authorizes the administration to spend 100 million dollars a year in fiscal years 2003, 2004, 2005 to improve conditions in areas of Sudan not under government control. And the Act also directs the US Secretary of State to collect information about possible crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes committed by any party to the conflict in Sudan.

<sup>45</sup> Op cit, Sawyer, pp. 3.

<sup>46</sup> **Walter Kansteiner, Peace, Conflict, and Mediation In Africa: An Historic Opportunity in Sudan, Walter Kansteiner, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs**, Remarks to the Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC, November 22, 2002