

## The friends of John Garang

Militarily, Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) leader John Garang receives the backing of the British, and their American allies, referred to in Khartoum, Sudan's capital, as "the British lobby in the U.S. administration." These are the forces lined up behind Secretary of State Madeleine Albright; her charge, Susan Rice; John Pendergast, until recently of the National Security Council; and a host of Congressional backers, including Reps. Donald Payne (D-N.J.) and Frank Wolf (R-Va.), and Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), to name but the most prominent. Payne and Wolf are the sponsors of Resolution 75, which called for setting up a "no-fly zone" in southern Sudan, modelled on those in Iraq, and for providing the SPLA with Stinger missiles, to "protect" the population. Brownback presented a parallel resolution in the Senate.

It was Madame Albright who, in 1997, launched the war cry from Kampala, Uganda, that the government of

Khartoum should be overthrown, after \$20 million had been allocated in aid to the so-called "front-line states" engaged in hostilities against Sudan.

The most active military partner in the SPLA rebellion is Israel. Garang himself travelled to Israel in 1998, to arrange for Israeli delivery of training, as well as high-tech, laser-guided systems. Israeli experts have been training Garang rebel forces in camps in Eritrea, as well as in the southern part of the country. They are being trained in special operations, sabotage, and mine-laying. Already as early as March 1997, when rebel forces mounted a two-pronged attack, from the east and from the south, government troops destroyed 15 rebel tanks which were found to be equipped with Israeli laser-guided systems. The tanks were destroyed in a battle at Mile 39 (measured from Juba to the southern border). The Israeli tanks had been delivered via South Africa, through the good offices of Ugandan dictator Yoweri Museveni, to the SPLA. The tanks were manned by European mercenaries, including British personnel.

Among the institutions operating under the cover of "humanitarian aid," which are supplying the rebels with food, is Norwegian People's Aid.

statement issued by the Umma party, calling it a "great achievement on the way to saving the country, if we compare it to previous statements by the National Democratic Alliance calling for uprooting and eliminating the regime."

### Settling the Sudan-Eritrea conflict

Significantly, the Turabi-Mahdi talks in Geneva took place as the governments of Eritrea and Sudan were settling the conflict which dates back to 1994. Sudanese President al Bashir, who conducted the negotiations with his Eritrean counterpart Afwerki, said a joint commission would meet to lay down "programs for normalization of our bilateral relations." Afwerki said that Eritrea was "completely convinced of the need to go beyond the mistakes of the past, and circumstances now favor a normalization." The agreement they signed foresees the solution of problems politically; the reestablishment of diplomatic relations; the cessation of acts of aggression; the respect for national sovereignty, and non-interference into internal affairs; the cessation of hostile media campaigns; and, the resort to international law and norms in political relations.

It must be added that relations between Egypt and Sudan, which had reached the breaking point when British assets spread the slander that Sudan had been behind the failed assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 1995, have been steadily improving. President al Bashir

laid down conditions for normal relations late in April, identifying the need for Egypt to desist from providing support to the NDA in Cairo. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa responded days later, asserting Egypt's commitment to "work with Sudan in all its political trends," to solve Sudan's problems in a positive context and not a negative context, or a context that would threaten Sudan. Moussa reiterated Egypt's commitment to the territorial unity of Sudan.

Finally, the news was released on May 6, that former U.S. President Jimmy Carter has undertaken a mediation effort between the Sudanese government and Uganda.

The importance of these events cannot be overstated. It must be recalled that the entire strategy of the British has been to utilize the so-called front-line states—Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Egypt—as bases of military and/or political operations against the Khartoum government. Eritrea had been selected by the British, as the base of operations for the opposition alliance put together by Cox in the form of the NDA. The Eritrean government had in fact given the NDA the former Sudanese embassy, as its headquarters in Asmara. Egypt had been used by al Mahdi and al Mirghani of the DUP, as well as Numayri, as their chosen exile.

Now, it emerges that the careful piecing together of political relations, between the Sudanese government and different factions of the opposition, is a process which is embedded in a broader process of regional stabilization. It is significant, in