

Nigeria, and virtually guaranteed the killings would continue. Kofi Annan has not accepted this formulation, and is sending a team to Sudan to investigate. So far neither the European Union, nor any single European nation, has echoed Powell's formulation. Jan Pronk, the UN special envoy to Sudan, has rejected the use of sanctions called for in UN Resolution 1564, as counterproductive and harmful to the population of Sudan.

Former U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who is also one of Presidential candidate John Kerry's top foreign policy advisors, while praising Powell's characterization of the crisis in Darfur as genocide, has for the moment staked out a more moderate position. At a recent forum in Washington, D.C., Holbrooke called for the United States to give considerable financial and logistical support to the African Union's deployment into Darfur, ruling out any U.S. military role. He also called for the United States to send a full-time ambassador to the African Union, and for a higher-level representative to attend the Abuja peace talks. While these contributions are useful to counteract those advocating a regime change Iraq-style, unfortunately this thinking is still within the accepted Washington "rules of the game," and does not address the fundamental flawed axioms of U.S. policy toward Africa.

Interview: Khidir Ahmed

Second Front Opened Against Sudan

Sudan's Ambassador to the United States, Khidir H. Ahmed, was interviewed by Lawrence Freeman, on Sept. 20.

EIR: Ambassador Ahmed, there has been a great deal of focus in the United States on the situation in Darfur, Sudan. Recently U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell declared the situation over there genocide, and a UN resolution was passed over this weekend—Resolution 1564. I have a series of questions on this I would like to ask you.

First of all, could you tell us exactly what is happening on the ground in Darfur at this moment?

Ahmed: What is happening right now in Darfur at this moment—even according to the United States report to the UN Security Council recently—things are improving. Two days ago we had the foreign minister of Spain, who just concluded a visit to Khartoum. He met with the President and other senior officials there. He concluded that the situation is improving. Also the state minister of the Foreign Secretary of Britain also said three days ago that surely the situation is improving. So it came as a surprise to everybody that despite this improvement on the ground, the United States is in fact

too hasty to punish the government of Sudan, rather than to acknowledge and build upon the improvement which is taking place now.

EIR: Mr. LaRouche has said that the situation in Darfur is being orchestrated by outside forces for geopolitical reasons against the Sudan government. Both of the rebel groups¹ are supported by forces that are opposed to the Sudan government, and are the ones responsible for starting the crisis. How do you see the Sudan government finding a solution to this crisis in dealing with these outside forces?

Ahmed: Well, I think it was not a coincidence that, at the time when we signed a memorandum on the cessation of hostilities back in February 2003, these two groups—in the same month—attacked the major city of El Fasher: they disabled four airplanes on the runway; they destroyed two helicopters; they killed scores of civilians as well as military people in El Fasher itself; and they went on a rampage. They killed any police officer they could catch there, and also they destroyed the police station for the entire region. By that they created a security vacuum, which is unfortunately filled by different tribal militias there, and the natural result of that was this tragic humanitarian situation.

That was not a coincidence, because the agreement which we signed at that time, with the SPLM/SPLA [southern anti-government groups—ed.] in February 2003, was the major one. It was the memorandum on the cessation of hostilities which technically stopped the war between the North and the South. So there was a deliberate effort to open a new front there [in the Darfur area in western Sudan—ed.]. And it is no secret now, even the United States admitted that the Eritrean government was involved, and is still involved. The SPLM also, according to Charles R. Snyder, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, in his testimony before the Senate on June 15. He put it quite clearly that they are totally convinced that the SPLM/SPLA trained, and provided arms and munitions to these two rebel groups in order to open a new front, and also to weaken the position of the government at the negotiating table there. And I would assume that some friends of all these people from outside are also part of that.

We heard about the whole strategy of making the situation similar to the civil war in the South by creating a very similar front on the western part of the country, in which the El Khufra region of Libya will serve as does Lokichokio, in Kenya,² to

1. The two anti-government rebel groups are: Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), connected to Hassan al-Turabi (who himself left the government in 2002); and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLA), founded by former state minister Khalil Ibrahim, (who sided with Turabi in 2002). See *EIR* Aug. 6, 2004, "Western Powers Seek Sudan Disintegration," for a more detailed description of the background of these groups.

2. The anti-government rebellion in southern Sudan receives significant support via this airbase. Despite being in a remote, sparsely populated part of Kenya, it is reportedly the busiest airport in the country. The airbase is a ChevronTexaco refueling facility. ChevronTexaco has no oil interests in neighboring Sudan, and only marketing interests in Kenya.



is now happening with the African Union deployment, and what do you hope will happen over the weeks and months ahead?

Ahmed: The African Union, as a newly founded entity, was supposed to be given time in order to resolve this problem. They know the situation very well, better than anybody else. But unfortunately, twice their efforts have been jeopardized by the United States. In fact, according to the UN Charter, whenever you have a conflict being handled by a regional organization, it should remain there unless the regional organization itself came to the United Nations, and said: "Well, we couldn't resolve it." What happened is that while the African Union is working hard in order to resolve this problem, and is sponsoring one or two agreements between the government and the rebel movements, the United States took the issue to the United Nations Security Council, issued resolution 1556, and again, also at a very critical time, the United States intervened by supporting and helping the passage of this recent United Nations Security Council Resolution 1564, which in fact jeopardized the efforts of the African Union, and took the whole issue from their hands. What they are saying about supporting the African Union, to us is just lip service.

EIR: Sir, could you tell us how many troops are there, sponsored by the African Union, and how many troops do you expect will be there to help in the Darfur crisis?

Ahmed: According to the African summit last June in Addis Ababa, they decided to send 150 monitors, and to protect them with 300 African Union troops. We have now about 355 troops from Rwanda and Nigeria. We have around 100 monitors in the region. The government said it would have no problem to receive more African Union monitors, and people to protect them there. We are open to that, but from the beginning we said this should be the decision of the African Union, not anybody else. So this is the situation, and ironically, if you look into this recent resolution, it will tell you a lot about that.

The United Nations, in a way, unfortunately contradicted itself. Before me here is the Resolution 1564, which has just been passed, just two days ago. The first paragraph says the following: "Declares its grave concern that the government of Sudan has not fully met its obligations noted in resolution 1556, 2004." This is what they said here. The other document is the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan report to the Council on September 2nd. This is prepared, of course, by Mr. Jan Pronk, UN Special Envoy to Sudan, who is on the ground there. He said the following to justify how the government [of Sudan] could not fully act upon its obligation. He said the following: "First, the acknowledgement that not all commitments made by the government could be fully implemented within 30 days. Making an area the size of Darfur, in view of the number of armed men there, and violent recent history, safe and secure for all civilians, takes more than 30

just recreate the civil war that the country suffered from in the South, in the western part of the country, in order to weaken the government, to dismember the country. And so some forces from outside the country in collaboration with the elements which I just mentioned, contributed a great deal to this situation.

Again, we feel that there is a great reluctance here to condemn openly these two groups, to the degree that when the African Union invited the government, and these two groups for negotiations in Addis Ababa, on July 17, these two groups walked out from this. Again, at the time when negotiations in Abuja, which was sponsored by the African Union, showed a great deal of progress, the testimony of the Secretary of State came at that critical time in order to discourage them from continuing negotiations, and technically the negotiations between the government and these two rebel groups collapsed.

So this is exactly the situation. It shows you that outside elements are working hard, they are in business in order not to enable the Sudanese people to enjoy the peace they have been waiting for for a long time.

EIR: Recently, this past week, former Ambassador Richard Holbrooke said that the main responsibility for the policy of the United States should be to support the African Union, to supply finances and logistics, for the African Union to deploy troops into the Darfur area. Could you tell us what

days.” So the United Nations is asking you to do a certain job within 30 days, and then they say “Okay, we are wrong. You couldn’t do it in that time.” Despite that, they would punish you. So I think this is, unfortunately, in my opinion, what academicians call a case study of how even international agencies could be pushed to pass very hasty, very irrational, very unfair resolutions against small and poor nations.

EIR: Are you expecting more troops from the African Union to be deployed in the area?

Ahmed: With respect to sending troops there, again I said that the government has not any problem with that. It is up to the African Union to decide the number and mechanism of deploying these troops in the region. But we believe that the best thing to do is to leave the protection of the civilians to the government, because having foreign troops who are totally alien to the region, with a conspicuous kind of uniform would make themselves targets of the different outlaw militias in the region, and the region itself might attract some extremists, some terrorists into the region in order to wage a war against what they might call foreign invasions.

So for these reasons we think that the international community should give ample time for that. Domestic elections in the United States should not in any way result in more suffering of the Sudanese people, who have nothing to do with this election.

EIR: If you could tell us as clearly as possible, what is the solution, what is the government of Sudan proposing as a solution to resolve this crisis? There obviously is great humanitarian suffering going on, and obviously there is a great deal of military fighting going on between the Janjawid and the rebel groups; how do you see this crisis being resolved? What steps need to be taken?

Ahmed: The African Union suggested a certain kind of solution to this, which is in fact accepted by the government: designate certain areas for the rebels to be amassed in, and the government is ready even to allow the African Union to send troops in order to protect them in those designated areas. This will enable the government to roam the entire region, disarming anybody else. And here, you could set a time for that. But allowing these people to function, roaming the entire region, it will be very difficult to distinguish who is who; if the concentration unfortunately of the government is to disarm only the Janjawid or the Arab tribal militias, it is unrealistic. Since you have other tribal militias, to ask the government just to disarm only certain tribal groups, because they wouldn’t disarm themselves, [the other groups would say] the government is not available here, it could not protect us; we are not going to disarm ourselves, unless you disarm the others, which is very natural. And the African Union is for this; but the two rebel groups are not receptive to that, so I think, in order to bring back security and safety to the region, and to allow people to go back to their villages, the solution is to

disarm all non-governmental militias in the region. So we think this is the best way to do it. Just to concentrate on certain kinds of missions—Janjawid are outlawed, we said that they are a bunch of criminals. But you have a larger number of other nomadic tribal militias, who would not accept this, because they have been attacked by these people in the past, and still they are under attack from the two rebel groups there. So, I think we are really supportive to the African Union design, in order to designate certain areas for these people to disarm simultaneously. This is the only way that would bring back peace and security to the people of Darfur.

EIR: What about economic development, sir? Obviously this is a poor area of Sudan. One of the major concerns has been the lack of water for both the farmers and the ranchers. What steps would the Sudanese government like to take to develop this area economically?

Ahmed: The government committed itself to all kinds of solutions to this problem. You know Sudan itself is potentially a very rich country. But right now it is still designated by the United Nations as among the least-developed countries, which includes about 48 sub-Saharan African countries. So to talk about marginalization, or to use it as a pretext to wage war against the government, is unrealistic because you have the entire country, even in Khartoum itself, if you go just ten miles out of Khartoum, you will find people who have no real facilities of water, electricity, or anything. So you cannot pinpoint certain areas in Sudan, and say they are developed, and other areas are undeveloped. All the country is a very poor country. So the international community should be very careful about that. You should not condone armed struggle as a means to address grievances. If you do that, you are going to enflame the entire African continent, because you have a very similar situation in every single country in Africa.

Ironically, despite all this outcry about the humanitarian situation, you have resolution after resolution being adopted, and the contribution of the international community to the needs of the people there is still less than 50%, which is a very strange situation, in terms of the real needs of the people in Darfur. So if these people are serious about the situation, they would not have been very hasty in penalizing the government; the priority should have been to serve, and secure, and feed these people, and to protect them from epidemics in that part of the region. So the first step, after disarming all these militias, should be some kind of international donation forum for helping the government to end . . . and frankly, according to statistics, this is the only government that has really developed this region of Darfur. You would be surprised to know that in 1989 this area had about six or seven high schools; today they have 250. They have three universities in the region, three international airports, many dams have been established in that part of the country. So I think there is a lot for the international community to do, in terms of helping development of this region the way you just mentioned.