



DEATH AND DESTRUCTION IN DARFUR: A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO STOPPING GENOCIDE

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The Janjaweed are performing pitiless and anomalous genocidal crimes against eighty African tribes including the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa tribes who are being accused of backing the rebellion in Darfur, Sudan. A fifteen-year-old female victim explains the atrocities, ‘they tied my arms and legs together so I could not run away.’ She continued, ‘After 10 days, they just left me, and my mother had to come and carry me home because I couldn’t walk or sit.’ Another woman in the region explains of how she became pregnant after she was raped, ‘one of the four who raped me must be the father,’ she continued, ‘it was torture, not only for my body but also for my head. They would not do this to their women, sisters and daughters.’ “When the men had finished with the woman, they left her bloodied and naked. Her sister found her half dead and gave her a simple cotton dress to wear. It is the only thing she owns.”

The preceding chronicle is one of many that occurred by the non-Arab group known as the Janjaweed who have killed close to 200,000 people and left more than two million Africans homeless and in despair. In English, Janjaweed means “a man with a horse and a gun” and signifies their placement

as a civilian terrorist force. Time Magazine and Time.com have done an in depth report on the matter that visually depicts the severity of the issue through lack of food, shelter, medicine, and protection in order to increase international awareness on the issue. Women are being forced to create makeshift shelters only to use their teeth to cut string. Boys are displayed carrying water from a water pump that is likely highly contaminated. The cruelty of the genocide is further shown through a newborn baby in a plastic tent. The baby lay in its mother's hands as its only bassinet, made of bones, may shred the baby's delicate skin.

To protect the Sudanese from the Janjaweed, armed men are standing by but the armed men can hardly be called protection as they are highly ineffective in comparison to the large numbers of Janjaweed. Through all of the hardships a displaced woman is shown praying in the desert night. The woman, like other victims of genocide, is praying for what she hopes would be a miracle, the miracle of some sort of intervention. This paper will discuss in detail, the situation in Darfur. Second, it will discuss the path the US and international community are taking to solve the issue in Darfur. Lastly, the paper will propose a feasible, distinctive solution. Overall, the issue in Darfur is clearly genocidal and immoral, but the limits of humanitarian intervention shape the guidelines for an effective intervening force.

Background on Darfur

The civil war in Sudan can be dated back to 1956, when Sudan got its independence from the United Kingdom and Egypt. The struggle between the local Muslim peoples against pro-government militias known as the Janjaweed has become a country-wide battle that incorporates several Muslim groups throughout Sudan. The Janjaweed are of Chadian origin and are funded by the government in Khartoum, Sudan. Sudan's authoritarian regime, led by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, continues to deny arming and backing the Janjaweed, though

there is plenty of reliable evidence that it is doing so. The genocide in Darfur began in January 2003 when two anti-government groups, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A,) attacked government military posts. The Darfur government and Janjaweed attempted to defeat the rebels by retaliating with military force. Since then, the issue and Darfur have escalated to what it is today, 200,000 dead. The issue in Darfur began gaining significant international attention during the late months of 2003. In hoping to increase international pressure and influence in Darfur, Colin Powell recognized and publicly named the killings in Darfur “genocide” in early September 2004.

Intervention in Darfur and Intervention Attempts

UN secretary General Kofi Annan stated, ‘the international community cannot stand idle’ and view the ethnic cleansing and genocide that is taking place in Darfur. Slim asks the question, “what, then, is the story of international response to Darfur?” The general argument that can be made in any genocidal situation is as follows: First, history shows that a country will not intervene unless it truly satisfies the country’s national and social interests. Clinton made this evident when deciding if the US should intervene in Srebrenica in 1995. Clinton said, “We’ve chosen not to put troops on the ground because we don’t believe it is in the vital interests of the United States to do so.” In addition, the incumbent President Bush publicly recognized genocide and its potential harm: “we have seen far too many instances in the past decade—from Bosnia to Rwanda to Kosovo—where the failure of the Security Council to act decisively has led to tragedy.” Bush was specifically justifying his stance on the war with Iraq. The irony of Bush’s statement was that he was intervening in Iraq to stop genocide while standing by and allowing genocide to occur in Darfur. If Bush wants to show that his rhetoric in Iraq is genuine and

morally accurate, he has his chance to enhance his credibility through consistent diplomacy in Sudan. On the other hand, in any military confrontation, the public in the US needs a level of justification that directly relates to American lives and domestic security. In Darfur, it is clear that human rights violations are prevalent. By not intervening, countries are in breach of the 1948 Convention on Genocide, nevertheless countries choose not to follow that Convention so as to avoid political controversy.

The tragedy of the situation in the Sudan is magnified by the fact that no matter what is done to relieve the situation, thousands of Sudanese have already lost their lives and over two-million have lost their homes. It seems that in any genocidal case, there is a period of time when international forces are yet to recognize the activities as genocidal. During that period, whether it is six days like in Srebrenica or several years like in Nazi Germany, thousands if not millions are killed before intervention occurs. Now, after the death of 200,000 people in Darfur, intervention must occur and occur before the numbers of deaths and displacements rise substantially. The final death toll will depend largely on whether international forces can persuade the Sudanese government to make saving lives in Darfur the priority rather than a topic of negotiation.

Many argue that the UN should impose economic sanctions on the regime in Khartoum to deter its oil revenues. On the other hand, China and France have resisted such a resolution because they have oil investments in Sudan.

Practicality of US Intervention and Assumptions

The question at hand becomes, what are the United States' motivations for intervening in Sudan? Booker writes, "The United States cannot pretend that a meaningful peace deal can be achieved." He continues, "The (Bush) Administration had hoped that such an agreement would allow it to lift sanctions on Sudan. This, in turn, would permit US oil companies

to pursue a share of the country's recently developed oil wealth." Booker added that such interests cannot supercede moral obligation (1-2). Although Booker is correct in stressing the moral aspect of the issue, as Samantha Power does, by the same token, Booker has realized that America needs a reason to intervene that relates to their economic interests and diplomatic agenda. In this case, Booker is making an implicit assumption that it is reasonable for the US military to intervene if the Bush Administration realizes that America can earn substantial oil gains through intervention in Darfur. Again, the practicality of intervention exceeds morality because there is a political reality that goes beyond the public eye.

Although it would be ideal and satisfying to accommodate Ms. Power's views on intervention according to a moral high ground, the reality and logistics of the situation, as employed by Kuperman, cannot be ignored. US intervention in Darfur follows two assumptions that are in line with US public interest: First, the people of the US will not accept the sacrifice of American lives for a reason not pertaining directly to American security and domestic tranquility. This assumption is based on the public response to the war in Iraq and election debates. The main argument surrounding the Bush-Kerry election dealt with the validation of putting American lives at risk. Kerry's party believed that Bush's claim in fighting a war to save the Iraqi people supported a hidden agenda. In other words, fighting a war to save others is not a good enough reason to put Americans at risk. The idea of fighting a war to save another country's people does not sit well with American people. The second assumption applies a social quality to an economic principle known as risk aversion. Involvement in Darfur will add unnecessary risk to the US considering they would be waging a war against the Khartoum government. This does not imply military apprehensiveness, but rather an American attitude that focuses on the well being of its people based on risk aversion.

Plans for Intervention

There are many logistical issues related to intervention in Darfur according to Alan J. Kuperman's book *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention* and the lectures of Professor Paul Kubicek in HC 206: *Genocide in the Twentieth Century*. First, access to safe ports of water is difficult considering the battleground's lack of proximity to a body of water. Second, "moving around the roadless desert is like trying to climb a rocky mountain in a wheelchair." Lastly, transportation is virtually impossible during the rainy season, which begins during the fall season. The preceding restraints are the foundation for effective intervention in Darfur and further justify *not* performing "maximum intervention" as portrayed by Kuperman. Maximum intervention includes sending ground troops and is a relatively hard battle to fight considering these restraints. The situation will inevitably come with a sacrifice of US or international lives.

A successful intervention plan is an integration of minimal intervention as portrayed by Kuperman along with an added dynamic that curtails the amount of deaths. The integrated approach attempts to reduce forces and casualties through air power and safety helicopters. While employing Kuperman's suggestions on airborne policing, coercion, and safe passage, the US and its partners should undertake a four step plan to halt the genocide. First, considering "Sudan's debt is \$20 billion, or 250 percent of its annual GDP" the US and western countries can promise immediate debt forgiveness once the militias on all sides are disarmed and a peace settlement is assured. Second, they can assure the Sudanese, and all other poor people, of being able to sell their goods in western markets. Although hard to implement, the US can do this through unrestricted trade routes. Third, they can give Sudan access to cheap generic drugs to fight disease in a country where one child in ten dies before the age of five. Fourth, they can wind down their arms export industries: "Sudan is said to have more small arms per head of population than any country in the world, and it is estimated that landmines have already killed

700,000.” If the Sudanese government influences the Janjaweed to follow the preceding steps, it will not only stop the genocide, but will be a stepping stone in creating a Sudanese economy that can flourish through the proper development of its oil business.

In conclusion, during a controversial time in Iraq, it is only fitting that the public is not interested in sending American troops to war in Darfur. Nonetheless, as thousands are dying and being displaced daily, it is clear that the proposed plan must take place. The US must adopt a more proactive solution that properly allocates resources. The proposed solution attempts to deploy refugees through minimal intervention, sets forth a four step plan to restructure the Sudanese government in Khartoum and stop the genocide, and most importantly, does not involve sacrificing the lives of American or international troops. The plan is feasible because it supercedes the restraints of public opinion, political aspects, logistical aspects, and moral aspects. The plan conforms to public opinion by superceding the risk averse US public opinion which prefers not to send troops if the issue does not directly relate to the US. Second, the plan supercedes the political aspects through an intervention plan that involves strengthening the international economy and trade. Third, the plan avoids logistical issues that would confront any ground force due to Sudan’s geography. Lastly, and ultimately, the intervention plan attempts to save many lives and risk minimal lives. Thus, the issue in Darfur is clearly genocidal and immoral, but through the proposed intervention guidelines, lives can be saved effectively and expediently.

There are also other signs for some hope. In April 2004, the African Union (AU) and the European Union negotiated a cease-fire in Darfur, and the AU sent a monitoring mission into the area in July of that year. In September 2004, The United Nations sent Sudan the ultimatum of accepting an expanded AU force or facing sanctions on their oil industry. This year there have been reported cease-fire violations. Recently there has been an upsurge of violence, and AU troops have

been fired upon. As of this writing, it is unclear how well the AU mission will succeed. But the prospect of a self-policing Africa has raised many hopes.

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