

A Proposal to Actually Solve the Sudan Crisis

by Uwe Friesecke

The Sudanese government and the United Nations signed an agreement in Khartoum on Aug. 10, to create safe havens within the next 30 days, as a first step to resolve the Darfur crisis. The action plan was worked out between Sudan's Foreign Minister Mustafa Ismail and UN envoy Jan Pronk, after the Sudanese government in early August accepted the July 30 United Nations Security Council resolution, demanding that the Sudanese government disarm the militias in Darfur and create the conditions for better access to the almost 1 million displaced people.

Preceding the agreement with the UN was intense diplomatic activity involving the Arab League (AL) and the African Union (AU). The meeting of Arab League foreign ministers in Cairo, in particular, strengthened the position of the Sudanese government.

For the time being, it seems, direct military intervention from U.S. or British forces is not being pushed further. In addition, a plan to deploy 1,000 Nigerian and 1,000 Rwandan troops as an AU force into Darfur, seems stalled after it became clear that the Sudanese government would resist this. In the meantime, the French government took unilateral action and deployed its troops, stationed in Chad, in support of humanitarian relief efforts for the Darfur refugees, aimed also at preventing a further destabilization of the situation in Chad itself. These efforts of the AL, the AU, and the UN may create a framework under which the crisis can be contained. It may also enable the humanitarian efforts to become more effective.

Africa Policy of the West Must Change

But this is not the end of the crisis. Ultimately, the future of Sudan, and the neighboring region, will be decided by policy decisions outside the region. Will the Africa policy of the Western powers continue to be driven by geopolitical obsessions, such as control of water and oil, or will there be a change in course to allow a genuine peace through development policy for this region, and the rest of Africa? In light of the humanitarian disaster in Darfur, this is the question that needs to be asked again.

Much of the humanitarian concern expressed by Western governments in respect to Darfur is hypocritical, because other catastrophies on the African continent, such as the current famine in Kenya, or the locust plague that is now threatening Chad and Darfur, are not met with the same urgency.

With very few exceptions, almost all African countries face humanitarian disasters. In most countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, the conditions of normal daily life itself amount to a continuing humanitarian catastrophe for the majority of the population.

A New Economic Policy

The change in Africa policy has to occur on two levels: first, economically. Under the direction of the international finance institutions—the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank—Africa's economies, except for part of South Africa, are oriented toward exports of raw material or slave labor products. This is still like it was in the days of colonialism. Over the decades, this has led to a constant drain of resources from the continent, and prevented any serious investments into infrastructure, industry, or agriculture. The result has been the collapse of formerly existing infrastructure, and the dramatic impoverishment of the overwhelming majority of the population.

This is shown by the difficulties the humanitarian relief efforts will face in Chad and Darfur at the beginning of the rainy season. There are no roads, no bridges, and people live under destitution in isolated areas. If there is no hope for change, such conditions, which are prevalent throughout the region, breed desperation. And this in turn feeds the ferment for violent conflicts. Serious political observers have warned for years of the impending explosion in Darfur and Chad, which has now happened.

A serious economic strategy for Africa's development will not come as long as the dogma of globalization is prevalent. Globalization has forced Africa into a straitjacket, from which there is no escape. The rules and structures of globalization itself, such as the destructive free trade rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), must be thrown overboard.

Globalization has to be replaced by a re-regulated international monetary and economic system, which directs large-scale investments into African infrastructure, such as trans-continental highways, railroads, and water and energy projects, thereby unleashing Africa's internal economic production potential. By producing value-added agriculture goods for Mideast and Asian markets, Africa could begin to produce itself out of poverty and lay the basis for real development.

Second, a political change in the attitude of Western powers to African political forces has to occur. Right now, from London to Washington, to Paris and Brussels, Western governments are trying to use African leaders and governments for their own interests rather than accepting them as sovereign partners in world politics. As in the colonial days, they are trying to rule Africa through comprador governments. To add insult to injury, once a year, at G-8 (the eight leading industrialized nations) meetings, some African leaders are invited for a one-hour lunch and a 20-minute photo opportunity with the government leaders of the West. Such is the facade, presented to world public opinion.



Lyndon LaRouche (left) in Sudan in 1994, visiting the tomb of the Mahdi, the leader who created the foundations for a centralized state, in the 19th Century.

As the notorious cases of Uganda, Rwanda, and some oil-producing countries of West Africa attest, the West favors those leaders in Africa who are willing to sell out their countries, the wealth as well as the people. African leaders who refuse to play that game, have only a short political career, and often a short life. Rather than strengthening political factions and leaders of the continent who are genuinely concerned with real development and workable solutions to conflicts, the West tries to use factions and leaders to manipulate conflicts and dictate so-called peace agreements, which guarantee access to Africa's wealth, like oil or diamonds, but do almost nothing for the future of the population. The Sudanese peace negotiations held in Kenya during the last three years is a tragic example of this.

LaRouche Plan for Africa

The needed change in Africa policy must be focused on the plan for a New Just World Economic Order, proposed by former U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche, a plan that he presented in Khartoum in January 2001 under the title "Peace Through Development Along the Nile River." At a seminar jointly sponsored by *EIR*, the Schiller Institute, and the Sudanese Center for Strategic Studies, LaRouche warned his audiences of the coming collapse of the world financial system, and the danger that some powers in the West would unleash religious and other warfare to stay in control of the collapse scenario. He also outlined his solution to the breakdown crisis of the old system—his New Bretton Woods proposal—and how religious and other warfare must be prevented by a meaningful dialogue of culture and civilization.

LaRouche and his associates have put a number of specific development plans on the table over the past 30 years, all of them based on extensive infrastructure development in the

whole Central African region. One of the plans he has endorsed is the Transaqua Project, which was developed by the Italian firm Bonifica in Rome back in 1992 (see **Figure 1**).

Today, three years later, disaster has struck Sudan again in the context of the larger disaster of the Iraq war, which was unleashed by the same Bush Administration on which some Sudanese political leaders back in January 2001 had set their hopes. An analysis of the Bush Administration's Africa policy clearly shows how unfounded those hopes were. Parallel to the activity of Tony Blair's British government, the Bush Administration has only intensified Anglo-American efforts to establish complete geopolitical hegemony over the raw-material-rich regions of the continent.

In February 2004, this orientation was reaffirmed by the Washington Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in a report from the Africa Policy Advisory Panel, which was authorized by the U.S. Congress in early 2003. The report was prepared for Secretary of State Colin Powell under the title "Rising U.S. Stakes in Africa." The chairman of the panel was Walter H. Kannsteiner, former Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Affairs. The report does not address the urgent development needs of the continent at all, but argues that after the events of Sept. 11, "Africa has assumed a new, strategic place in U.S. foreign policy and in the definition of vital U.S. national interests." The authors cite five factors, HIV/AIDS, terror, oil, armed conflicts, and global trade, which prompted this new emphasis on Africa. They recommend seven areas of policy initiatives: Postwar Sudan, strengthening African capital markets, oil, Africa conservation initiatives, strengthening counter-terrorism efforts, crisis diplomacy and peace operations, and combatting HIV/AIDS.

The U.S. oil interests feature very high on this report's agenda. With proven reserves of more than 60 billion barrels, Central/West Africa could in 10 years supply up to 20% of U.S. imported oil and provide "an opportunity to diversify U.S. imports from outside the Persian Gulf," the report says. Looking at the conditions of poverty and injustice which the vast majority of Africans have to endure, it only attests to the cynicism of Western Africa policy if interest in oil and capital markets are defined as the priorities.

This Africa policy of the Bush Administration, like that of Tony Blair, is the direct opposite to the proposal of LaRouche. Neither peace nor development is on their agenda. But these are the essential conditions for lasting solutions to African crises, like the one around Darfur. If a real development perspective for Sudan, Chad, the Central Africa Republic, and the other neighbors to the south and east of Sudan is outlined, with substantial economic projects that include the hope for a substantial improvement of the living conditions of the population, the conflicts in the region can be solved, because there are enough political leaders on all sides who would rather negotiate peace than continue to fight wars. But for this, the West has to create the framework, and allow those leaders to step forward.

FIGURE 1
The Transaqua Project, as Proposed by Bonifica

