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AN AXIS OF PEACE FOR DARFUR

The United States, France, and China

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It should come as no surprise that the crisis in Darfur continues to deepen. Without coordinated multilateral pressure, the regime will continue to promote chaos and attack civilian targets, and both the government and rebels will continue fighting. Without a cost for obstruction, the regime will not facilitate the full and unconditional deployment of an African Union/United Nations (AU/UN) hybrid peacekeeping force. Without an internationally coordinated diplomatic surge, the government and rebels won't take seriously efforts to revive the peace process.

However, all this could change immediately if policymakers seize the golden diplomatic opportunity that is emerging for Darfur.

For widely divergent reasons, the three countries with the most leverage in Sudan—the U.S., France, and China—all have a vested interest in and desire to help bring peace and stability in Darfur.

- In the U.S., domestic political pressure continues to slowly increase as a fledgling anti-genocide movement develops and demands U.S. leadership and action, leading to a decision by President Bush to move forward with his “Plan B” policy which finally begins to impose a cost for the commission of genocide.
- In France, newly elected President Nicolas Sarkozy and his Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner have identified Darfur as a high priority, and they have expressed a willingness to pursue the trans-Atlantic cooperation that their predecessors often avoided.
- In China, as pressure mounts to tie the 2008 Olympics to Beijing's policies in Sudan and as China's own foreign policy undergoes a thorough review, the Chinese government has increasing reason to use its influence behind the scenes to help move the Khartoum regime to accept a more robust peacekeeping force and adopt more constructive positions on the peace process.

Faced with these developments, it is no coincidence that the Government of Sudan recently accepted the deployment of the full AU/UN hybrid force. Even *uncoordinated* pressure can yield results. But without better diplomacy and more pressure than that, the latest Sudanese “agreement” on the hybrid is likely to prove as short-lived and phony as in previous cases since November 2006.

Perhaps the single most influential action that could be taken now to end the horrors in Darfur would be for the U.S., France and China to convene an informal “troika” similar to the “troika” of countries—U.S., UK and Norway—that helped bring an end to the North-South war in Sudan. All three countries now have Special Envoys focused on Darfur. All three have leverage with either the Sudanese regime or the rebels, or both. All three are permanent members of the UN Security Council. All three have compelling political reasons to invest more heavily in supporting solutions in Sudan. All three need to find global issues where common ground on ultimate objectives will allow them to work together and rebuild international cooperation in the midst of global division. And there is no better way for the U.S. to improve bilateral relationships with France and China than to work closely together toward a common goal on something like bringing peace and stability to Sudan.

This new “troika” could work together and through a wider contact group to do the following:

- support the resumption of a serious peace process for Darfur;
- press the Government of Sudan to facilitate the unconditional and full deployment of the AU/UN hybrid peacekeeping mission;
- demand that the rebels and government stop attacks against civilians and allow unimpeded and full access for humanitarian aid operations;

- press for the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)—the blueprint for a democratic transformation in Sudan—between the regime and southern-based rebels; and
- ensure that Khartoum continues to cooperate on counter-terrorism issues.

All three will have different styles of engagement and different comparative advantages in promoting solutions. China can't be expected to publicly condemn the Khartoum regime or actively support punitive measures. France has limitations within the European Union (EU) and inherits regional alliances that complicate its diplomacy. The U.S. carries baggage from other global entanglements and its counter-terrorism cooperation with Khartoum.

However, a strategic division of labor between Washington, Paris, and Beijing could yield a very effective good cop/bad cop, insider/outsider approach to bringing peace and stability to Sudan.

Historians will look back at the perfect diplomatic storm that is brewing and either say, "What a missed opportunity," or alternatively, "That was indeed the turning point in ending Darfur's agony."

The table is set. All the U.S., France, and China need to do is take their places.

NEW FRENCH LEADERSHIP CREATES OPPORTUNITY

France has a major interest in stability in Sudan—both in Darfur and the south. Darfur borders its two principal allies in the region, Chad and the Central African Republic. More than 1,000 French troops are based in Chad to protect France's interests, and the French military supports the Chadian and Central African governments' operations against Khartoum-backed insurgencies. Furthermore, the French oil company Total holds major unexploited concessions in southern Sudanese oilfields.

However, until the new president took office, France was not actively engaged in addressing the problems in either Darfur or the south. France was not a vocal supporter of tougher UN Security Council sanctions. Nor did France press the EU—an institution within which it plays a permanent leadership role—to impose an economic cost on the regime. In 2005, EU countries exported \$1.5 billion worth of goods to Sudan.

France also failed to use its leverage to press Chadian President Idriss Deby to protect his citizens from cross-border rebel groups and to allow a UN peacekeeping force to help secure the border with Darfur. Chad serves as a military rear base for Darfur rebel factions, and the Chadians will be instrumental in any process to build greater cohesion among the rebel factions—a prerequisite for new negotiations. This gives France further leverage over a solution in Darfur, as an outside power with some leverage over rebel interests.

Early indications are that President Sarkozy has new policy ideas.

During his campaign, Sarkozy called for a "decisive toughening of sanctions against all the leaders of the regime in Khartoum" and stated that France would adopt those sanctions unilaterally if he was elected. Kouchner, a fiery diplomat and respected humanitarian activist who has been engaged in Darfur-related advocacy in France, has put Darfur at the top of France's agenda. And on June 7 at the G8 summit in Germany, Sarkozy announced a ministerial-level "expanded Contact Group" conference for Darfur for June 25 in Paris.

Kouchner has already traveled to Chad to meet with President Deby, who abruptly softened his position on the deployment of UN peacekeepers to protect civilians in Chad. Deby has now agreed "in principle" to a UN presence, the details of which will be announced by June 25. Kouchner also announced a French-led airlift of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable civilian populations in eastern Chad.

GROWING CHINESE ANXIETY PRESENTS AN OPENING

China is opening itself up economically and socially in the run-up to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. For that reason, China's policies are becoming more vulnerable to international public opinion. In addition, writing for the British publication *Guardian Unlimited*, The International Crisis Group's Gareth Evans and Don Steinberg recently highlighted four ongoing transitions in Chinese foreign policy.

1. A measured move from a policy based on strict respect for sovereignty and non-interference in other nations' domestic affairs to a policy that addresses transnational threats such as terrorism, health pandemics, and climate change.
2. A growing acceptance that China has a responsibility to promote long-term stability and responsible governance.
3. An emerging realization that bilateral relations with countries such as the United States cannot be divorced from thorny third country issues, such as Sudan.
4. A deliberate move towards a longer-term strategy to pursue its global economic interests.

China is Sudan's largest bilateral trading partner and relies on Sudan for 7 percent of its total oil imports. The atrocities in Darfur, partly paid for by Chinese investments, perpetrated with Chinese weapons, and protected by Chinese diplomatic cover, will be a dark cloud over the Olympic Games unless Beijing charts a new course.

The growing activist movement to label China's international coming out party as the "Genocide Olympics" and the increasing momentum of a grassroots campaign to encourage divestment from many Chinese companies doing business in Sudan are causing serious anxiety in Beijing. Beijing wants this problem to go away before 2008, as evidenced by its recent appointment of a special envoy, career

Africanist Liu Guijin, to spearhead Chinese diplomacy with Sudan.

The U.S. and others point the finger at China for obstructing meaningful action at the UN Security Council and shielding the regime from even the most timid attempts at international pressure. That is certainly true, and it is also true that China's recent and tentative engagement regarding Darfur has been ambiguous at best, but China has yet to veto a resolution on Sudan, and recent U.S. statements have highlighted Beijing's more "constructive" attitude regarding Darfur.

It is activism and public outcry rather than diplomatic pressure from the U.S. and others that is pushing China to increase its engagement, and the U.S. should seize this opportunity to work more closely with China on a coordinated diplomatic approach on Darfur.

A PEACE AND PROTECTION INITIATIVE FOR DARFUR

The U.S. should quickly undertake a high-level diplomatic effort with France and China to jumpstart a peace and protection initiative for Darfur. The three countries possess a common objective: a durable peace agreement that will advance regional stability, ensure the security of Sudan's oil reserves, and reduce the threat of state failure and accompanying risk of terrorism.

Sarkozy has rightly invited China to the ministerial meeting in France on June 25. Bringing China into the group of nations and organizations working for a negotiated settlement with appropriate international monitoring would help ease the tension between China and nations calling for punitive action. If China remains on the outside of peace-building efforts, Beijing would much more likely be cast in, and play, the role of spoiler.

The June 25 ministerial meeting should seek to strengthen the existing contact group for Sudan, by including all countries with important influ-

ence to bear with Sudan and the rebel movements, and by making that expanded contact group a permanent process. Within the larger group, the U.S., France, and China should form an informal “troika” that will press ahead with a coordinated approach to Sudan.

The division of labor in this good cop/bad cop diplomatic effort should use each country’s leverage in a coordinated manner focused on a “Peace and Protection Initiative for Darfur.” These objectives can best be reached within the framework of the 3 Ps of crisis response (peacemaking, protection and punishment). To achieve success, the U.S., France, and China (the “troika” for Darfur) should pursue the following strategy.

PEACEMAKING

- Jointly lead a high-level visit to Khartoum to underscore international commitment to a peaceful resolution to the crisis, and follow up with regular coordinated visits to the region. This “troika” must work full time: occasional, uncoordinated trips will not have an impact.
- Establish conflict resolution teams in the region staffed by senior diplomats assigned on one year stints to work together to foster a negotiated settlement in Darfur consistent with the framework established by the CPA. The U.S., for example, could significantly enhance its capacity to help negotiate peace in Darfur by deploying five diplomats to the region—just one percent of the 500 State Department personnel at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.
- Work with the UN, the AU, the Government of South Sudan and regional actors such as Chad, Eritrea, and Libya to develop a three-tiered diplomatic approach to those who can further a peace process. The basics are:
 - leaning on Chadian President Deby, Eritrean President Issayas Afewerki, and Libyan leader

Mu’ammar al-Qaddafi to exert coordinated pressure on the Darfur rebels to form a more cohesive political body to prepare for negotiations;

- work with the Government of South Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement to coordinate their peacemaking efforts with the UN and AU; and
- pressing the UN Secretariat and the AU to devote additional resources to building a coordinated and inclusive framework for new peace negotiations.

PROTECTION

- Jointly press Khartoum to facilitate the unconditional and full deployment of the AU/UN hybrid force.
- Contribute funding, military and police assets, and personnel to the peacekeeping force in Darfur. France (through the EU) and the U.S. have sent advisors and provided some resources for the African Union, but they can and should do much more to enhance the capacity of the AU mission and the eventual hybrid AU/UN force. China has troops participating in the UN mission in Southern Sudan, and greater Chinese involvement in peacekeeping operations in Darfur could substantially enhance peacekeepers’ ability to protect civilians.
- As a back-up plan, the U.S. and France should work within NATO to develop credible plans for non-consensual military intervention if humanitarian operations collapse and violence escalates against civilians in Darfur.
- Ensure that the next UN Security Council Resolution provides enforcement measures for the existing arms embargo, which would require reviewing major arms sales to Sudan from a number of suppliers over the past year, including from China.

PUNISHMENT

- The U.S. and France—working closely with China—should lead efforts to increase multilateral economic pressure on Sudan’s ruling National Congress Party through mandatory targeted UN Security Council sanctions, coupled with clear benchmarks for their removal—rein in its militias, allow unrestricted humanitarian access, facilitate full deployment of the hybrid force, forge a peace deal with the rebels, and implement the CPA—and work closely with Khartoum on achieving them.

ACTIVIST AGENDA

On June 25 Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will attend the high-level meeting in Paris on Darfur. Activists should immediately call the White House and their representatives in the House and

Senate to advocate the Bush Administration to do the following:

- work with France and China to form a diplomatic “troika” for Darfur, leading an expanded contact group encompassing all key countries;
- work full-time and at a senior level within the “troika” to jump start a Peace and Protection Initiative for Darfur that would seek a resumption in peace talks and unconditional deployment of the full AU/UN hybrid force; and
- work with the French and the UK to secure Chinese cooperation (or abstention) on a Security Council resolution that would impose targeted sanctions on individuals and companies complicit in the destruction of Darfur, which would give international leverage to peace and protection imperatives.



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ENOUGH is a joint initiative, founded by the International Crisis Group and the Center for American Progress, to prevent and resolve genocide and mass atrocities. With an initial focus on the crises in Darfur, eastern Congo and northern Uganda, ENOUGH's monthly updates provide analyses of what is happening on the ground, outline challenges and obstacles to policy change, and offer targeted recommendations using a "3P" strategy that focuses on promoting durable peace, providing civilian protection, and punishing perpetrators of atrocities. The monthly updates also provide an agenda for activists and concerned citizens to affect change. To learn more about ENOUGH, and what you can do to help, go to www.enoughproject.org.



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