Slavery, War and Peace in Sudan

A Washington Office on Africa Briefing Paper

This is an updated briefing paper based upon our fall 1999 (25,2) issue. Heavy demand for that issue has convinced us of the need for revision and republication.

INTRODUCTION: US CHRISTIANS AND SUDAN

Media coverage of Sudan, specially during the past two years, has highlighted famine, human suffering, even the United States’ bombing of a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum. A growing number of Christians – and people of other faiths – in the United States have become especially concerned with Sudan through the slavery issue. While slavery points to the extremes of human rights abuses in Sudan, for the Sudanese the greatest tragedy is the tremendous suffering caused by a devastating civil war that has raged for 33 of the past 44 years.

Sudan, with a population of some 30 million and covering one million square miles, is Africa’s largest country by area. Since 1983 an estimated two million people have died from war-related causes. More than four million people, mostly civilians, have fled their homes and are living as displaced people within Sudan or as refugees in neighboring countries. In 1998 alone, tens of thousands of people died of war-related famine and millions continue to face life-threatening food shortages. Human rights abuses continue to ravage the people living in southern and eastern Sudan, in the Nuba Mountains, the Southern Blue Nile region, and the Beja. These include, among others, aerial bombings of civilian targets, looting of cattle and grain, wholesale destruction of villages, extrajudicial executions, and the abduction of women and children.

Peace in Sudan is the only true solution to the related issues of slavery, famine, ethnic division, human rights and religious freedom.

Understandably, slavery – obviously a flagrant abuse of human rights – has grabbed the attention of many US citizens. The purpose of this Washington Office on Africa briefing paper is to place the slavery issue in the context of the civil war. Our intent is to provide an overview of the Sudanese conflict and suggest how people of faith can support Sudanese initiatives to bring a just end to the fighting. Peace in Sudan is the only true solution to the related issues of slavery, famine, ethnic division, and violations of human rights, including religious freedom.
CIVIL WAR: MORE THAN A RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

The roots of Sudan’s ongoing civil war have an ancient history, but the modern context was set in colonial times when the country was ruled jointly by the United Kingdom and Egypt (1899-1955). Northern and southern Sudan were administered separately. The Anglo-Egyptian colonists made substantial investments in developing the North, while leaving the South — about one-third of Sudanese territory — economically and politically impoverished. At independence in 1956, the North and South became united under a government ruled from Khartoum in the North. The Government of Sudan began to impose its national vision on the South, and a civil war erupted.

A variety of motives fuel the war. The Sudanese government seeks political hegemony over a unified Sudan, while most southern Sudanese want self-determination either in the form of autonomy or independence from the North. Southerners rebelled against efforts of the government in Khartoum to impose the Arabic language and the religion of Islam on them. Both sides seek control of southern resources, including oil fields, the Nile River waters, fishing sites and grazing land. Political ambitions also play a role. Finally, those engaged in arms sales and the diversion of relief aid are making profits from the war itself.

There is rich diversity to Sudan. Roughly 40 percent of the population is estimated to be “Arab” and 60 percent “African”. Roughly 60 percent are estimated to be Muslim. There are close to 600 ethnic groups and over 100 languages spoken in the South. It is true that an Arab and Islamic identity prevails in the North, and an African and Christian identity in the South; still, it is an oversimplification to reduce Sudanese diversity to this equation. Some African Muslim leadership can be found within the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), for example, and many southern Sudanese follow an African Traditional Religion rather than Christianity. Similarly there are some Christians in the North, both African and Arab. And, while the Dinka and the Nuer are the two most populous southern ethnic groups, no ethnic group represents even 20 percent of Sudan’s population. But the Arab-Muslim and African-Christian image, while qualified, carries with it some truth. The fact that the Sudanese government has seized church property adds reality to this image. However, this oversimplified image has been used to fuel the conflict by manipulating religious sentiment.

A series of Khartoum governments have existed since the fighting began. The fourth and current one — led by Gen. Omar Hassan al Bashir and the National Islamic Front (NIF) — came into power in a military coup in 1989 that blocked an imminent peace settlement.

The largely Dinka, mostly southern SPLM/A is the main rebel organization, although there has been significant fragmentation and rivalry within the South. In 1991 the SPLM/A split roughly along ethnic lines, with most Dinka remaining in the SPLM/A under John Garang and most Nuer breaking away to form a separate faction called the South Sudan Independence Movement/Army (SSIM/A) under Riek Machar. In 1997, using "divide and conquer" tactics, the Government of Sudan signed a peace accord with the SSIM/A and other smaller rebel factions and gave them support to fight against the SPLM/A.

Recently the government alienated some of the factions by deploying government troops into the oil-producing area that had been secured under two Nuer commanders, Riek Machar and Paulino Matip, whose troops were fighting one another while fighting the SPLA. Heavy fighting ensued. The alliance between the government and Machar’s rebel group was essentially broken.

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when he resigned from his post in Khartoum and disassociated himself from the peace agreement. These changes may have serious consequences for the government's strategy and for increased fighting in the oil-rich area of the country.

Over the years, the war has been fought largely in the South, with devastating consequences for the southern Sudanese. Because the various factions use guerilla war tactics and target civilians, and because the factions are split along ethnic lines, rivalry and discord among southern Sudanese non-combatants has flourished in the South. In fact, factional fighting in the South has been responsible for a greater number of deaths than direct clashes between Sudanese government forces and southern rebels. Villages and villagers have become pitted against one another, competing for scarce resources, made scarcer through the many years of war.

Political opposition as well as some armed resistance to the government also exists in the North. Many of these opposition groups fall under the umbrella of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The Nuba Mountains in central Sudan is also a highly conflicted area. The rebel-controlled areas of the Nuba Mountains are religiously tolerant, with Muslims and Christians living together, using Arabic as the lingua franca. Until mid-1999 rebel-held areas of the Nuba Mountains were not accessible to UN humanitarian relief drops; many people went without necessary supplies of food, medicine and clothing. The Sudanese government's military has waged a scorched earth campaign to drive Nuba civilians away from rebel-held areas into government-run peace camps where they live in confinement and under conditions of forced labor.

The war has been characterized by widespread human rights abuses and humanitarian law violations. The government in Khartoum bears greater responsibility for these abuses. This year has seen an increase of aerial bombings of civilian villages, schools, hospitals, and relief sites. Other commonly-known abuses include attacks on villages that involve looting, burning homes and abductions and killing of civilians; prevention of international relief flights; and the execution of captured combatants. It has tortured persons in security detention, carried out forced disappearances, and imposed undue restrictions on the religious freedom of non-Muslims. The government-supported militias continue to destroy villages both separately and in joint operations with government troops and have abducted women and children. (Reports of government use of chemical weapons continue to circulate, though they remain unconfirmed.) The SPLM/A has diverted relief food in the South and occasionally carried out extrajudicial executions. All sides have utilized child soldiers and planted landmines.

The economic cost of the war is high. Profits from oil are said to be fueling the government's war machinery. In the rebel-held territories of the South, the SPLM/A collects taxes from the people; much of this goes to the war, while what little infrastructure present in the South is sorely neglected. If not for the presence of the UN and NGOs invited to work in the rebel-held areas, there would be no provisions for health and education.

The oil industry in Sudan is especially controversial now. With the opening of the pipeline in 1999, the Government of Sudan has expected to earn one million dollars a day from oil revenue — interestingly, an amount equivalent to the estimated daily cost of its war effort. Clearly the availability of oil revenue reduces economic considerations as an incentive to the government to seek peace. Moreover, there are human rights implications of oil production. Amnesty International, reporting in May 2000, charged that "the civilian population living in oil fields and surrounding areas has been deliberately targeted for massive human rights abuses – forced displacement, unlawful killings, [and] torture including rape and abduction." Foreign companies, the report continues, have "turned a blind eye to the human rights violations committed by government forces and their allied troops in the name of protecting the security of oil-producing areas."

US business involvement has been minimal since Chevron abandoned its investment in 1984 and the US listed Sudan as a country supporting terrorism in 1996. Still, the role of a Canadian company, Talisman Energy Inc. – members, with Chinese and Malay companies, of a consortium, the Greater Nile Petroleum and Oil Corporation – has led to an effective divestment campaign in North America. Faced with a critical resolution introduced by both US and Canadian investors at their May annual meeting, Talisman declared its commitment to community projects in the oil regions of Sudan and named two human rights monitors.

In February 2000 the US Commission on International Religious Freedom urged that a consortium member, a Chinese company called the China National Petroleum Corporation, be denied access to the US capital markets and be prevented from launching an initial public offering (IPO) on the New York stock exchange. The Chinese company, in turn, created a subsidiary, PetroChina, ostensibly to ensure that proceeds from the IPO would only go toward Chinese industry and not be invested in Sudan. Whether or not PetroChina actually has that effect,
its underwriters have gone to great lengths to convince the US public that this is true. In the end, their IPO only earned $2.9 billion; they had expected $10 billion.

These gestures, however, hardly end the debate. In April the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) acknowledged that its original appeal, for a trust fund to receive oil revenues to be apportioned for development in both North and South, had proved unworkable, and it now called for the withdrawal of the oil companies. As for US policy, the remark of Rabbi David Saperstein, the chair of the religious freedom commission, remains central: “Revenue from the pipeline [insulates] the Khartoum government from the impact of economic sanctions, and thus undermine[s] American policy and the peace process.”

Since 1993 Sudan’s neighbors Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, and Uganda, working through the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), have attempted to mediate a peaceful settlement of the civil war. Faith-based groups have also actively worked for peace, and the NSCC has had significant success in seeking reconciliation among conflicted southern non-combatants. The war continues, neither side able to win militarily, yet both remaining committed to military engagement.

SLAVERY AND SLAVE REDEMPTION

Slavery’s resurgence in Sudan is rooted in the civil war. Hard evidence of this resurgence dates from the mid-1980’s. Slavery has, historically, been a feature of ethnic rivalry in Sudan, but the war revived and increased the practice. With support from UNICEF and Save the Children, the Government of Sudan – which continues to deny the existence of slavery – agreed to establish a Committee for the Eradication of Abduction of Women and Children under the auspices of their Ministry of Justice in May 1999. However, it declines to prosecute or, indeed, to record any information about abductors. It calls slavery “forced labor” to shield perpetrators from future prosecution.

Slave raids are carried out primarily in the province of Bahr El Ghazal by a government-backed, armed militia of the Baggara ethnic group – a nomadic, cattle-owning “Arabized” people – known as the Muraheleen. Using the Muraheleen, the Sudanese government lowers its costs for the counter-insurgency war against the SPLM/A. The Muraheleen accompany military trains, raiding civilian Dinka villages. They loot cattle and abduct children and women to become domestic slaves or concubines. Slavery has served to expand the government’s counter-insurgency program by providing an incentive for the Baggara to serve as a proxy force for the government. Since 1989 the Muraheleen have been incorporated into the government army, but they continue to enjoy complete impunity in their raiding and looting of the Dinka.

A number of international groups, church members, and US school children have addressed the outrage of slavery in Sudan by buying back those who have been enslaved. This practice is often referred to as “slave redemption.” Slave redemption is not new in Sudan. For years, for example, the Dinka themselves have sometimes been able to redeem their abducted children from non-Dinka areas of the country by paying the masters directly, or through middlemen, or by means of inter-community negotiations. The presence of international actors in slave redemption – only since 1995, and on a large scale only from 1998 – is what is relatively new. While many southern Sudanese perceive that it is not a conclusive solution, international intervention has been welcomed by the families of the slaves and their chiefs who long to be reunited with their family members.

Concern exists, however, that slave redemption by international groups creates a more substantial market for slave purchases and could increase the destructive raids and the number of people taken as slaves. While some slaves are freed, others may be enslaved in order to take advantage of the international money available. This potential is enhanced by the perception that international purchasers want to redeem enslaved people in quantity, rather than just one or two at a time, and that they can pay more than local family members.

There have been accusations of fraud, where unscrupulous southerners are said to have “borrowed” children who have never been abducted, offering them as “slaves” to augment the proceeds from the redemption. Some observers suggest that the SPLM/A and southern local government structures are implicated. Concern continues that the enterprise of slave redemption could increase funds for combatants, guaranteeing the purchase of more arms to fuel the war. Highly publicized international interventions may undercut southern Sudanese efforts to find their own solutions to this problem.

People of faith in the United States may differ about the wisdom of slave redemption in Sudan. But all should be able to work together to encourage an end to the war that has intensified this practice, while bringing death and devastation throughout Sudan. Indeed peace is the true solution to this and other problems in Sudan.
United States policy since Sudan’s independence in 1956 has been largely a product of Cold War politics. Both the United States and the Soviet Union, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, sought to use the historic north-south division in Sudan for their own purposes. The United States was supporting the Government of Sudan when Gen. Jaafar Nimeiri was overthrown in 1985. Its support declined thereafter, finally ending when the National Islamic Front took power in 1989. Sudan’s support for Iraq in the Gulf War did more to end US ties with Sudan than did Sudan’s domestic policies.

US policy in recent years has focused on isolation and containment of the Sudanese government. This policy is motivated more by US perceptions that the Sudanese government supports international terrorism than by concern about the civil war. However, the US relationship to Sudan is complicated by economic factors. US corporate and financial interests, for example those which use gum arabic in their products (soft drinks, candy and pharmaceuticals) and US investors in the oil company Talisman want the United States to maintain good relations with the Government of Sudan to secure their interests.

When the US government has turned its eyes to the war, it has generally sympathized with the South. The United States has seen a quest for greater autonomy, control of resources, and freedom from Islamic law by southern Sudanese as the fundamental realities to be addressed if peace is to be secured. Some elements in the US government have pressed for more direct support of the SPLM/A in particular.

The US government has directed its attention to four issues: International terrorism, regional destabilization, human rights abuses, and humanitarian concerns:

**International terrorism:** In 1993 the Clinton administration placed Sudan on its list of state sponsors of terrorism and applied unilateral sanctions. In late 1997 they announced more extended sanctions, prohibiting trade and financial transactions and freezing Sudanese assets in the United States. Suspicious of a Khartoum connection to the bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the United States bombed a privately-owned pharmaceutical factory in a suburb of Khartoum.

**Regional destabilization:** The United States pledged some $20 million in “non-lethal” military assistance to Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda in 1996, ostensibly to confront what it saw as Sudan’s efforts at undermining the political stability of nearby countries. Since then the United States has also run special military training programs in Ethiopia and Uganda through the African Rapid Deployment Force project.

**Human rights abuses:** The United States sometimes condemns human rights abuses committed by the Government of Sudan and has imposed loosely observed economic sanctions. These condemnations take second place to US concerns for combating terrorism. Still, until 1998 the United States took the lead in developing resolutions in the UN General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights citing the Government of Sudan’s disregard for human rights. When it found itself isolated diplomatically after the bombing of the factory in Khartoum, the US tended to yield to European Union initiative. The US also lists Sudan as one of seven countries that engage in or tolerate “particularly severe” violations of religious freedom. Although the United States has also made statements about human rights abuses committed by the SPLA, the United States has never imposed penalties. The issue of slavery in Sudan has secured some attention.

**Humanitarian concerns:** Assistance to Sudan, both North and South, has come in the form of humanitarian aid. In 1999 total humanitarian aid, throughout Sudan, reached $95 million, down from $110 million in 1998. The US has been the largest supporter of the massive international UN-led relief effort, Operation Lifeline Sudan. Between 1989 and 1998 the US contribution exceeded $700 million. In the process, the United States frequently protested Sudanese government bans of relief flights.

Two developments have complicated humanitarian initiatives in recent months: The first involves food aid for combatants; the second, a memorandum of understanding demanded by the SPLM/A of relief agencies.

Appropriations legislation for 2000 included a provision which permitted the US government to provide food aid to “groups engaged in the protection of civilian populations” from government attacks. A similar provision also appears in the Sudan Peace Act, which passed the Senate in November but still languishes in the House.

This was a matter of considerable controversy for the Washington Office on Africa and other advocacy and aid organizations. We considered it to further complicate an already difficult situation and further delay meaningful steps toward a just peace in Sudan. We held that providing food assistance to combatants contravenes the principle of neutrality in humanitarian relief. Other critics added that it served to politicize NGOs working in Sudan and put their workers at greater risk. As of February, the Clinton ad-

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ministration has reported simply that it “has not made a decision to use the authority” given it for food aid to combatants.

Meanwhile, the SPLM/A sought early this year to secure signatures of aid groups working in the southern Sudan to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that set the terms under which they were to operate. Some relief organizations balked, saying that it compromised their neutrality and forced them to recognize the SPLM/A’s claims of sovereignty over the region. They were also anxious about relinquishing authority to identify an area of need, which would devolve to the SPLM/A. The dispute emerged in the midst of a continuing food crisis in Sudan.

In March thirteen groups — including World Vision, CARE, and Doctors without Borders — left their work in Sudan rather than sign the MOU. Others, including Catholic Relief Services, signed, and remained. (Interestingly, Christian Solidarity International, a key slave redemption group, is now being asked to sign an MOU.) An issue handled poorly by most parties to it, the MOU controversy may well have a significant short term impact upon humanitarian relief. The long term is less clear.

Within the last year, US foreign policy proposals toward Sudan have been a mixture of “carrots” and “sticks”. In July 1999, the US legalized the sale of food and medicine to Sudan while continuing to impose broad sanctions on all other US trade with the country. Harry Johnston, former US Congressman and chair of the African subcommittee named by President Clinton in 1999 to be Special Envoy for Sudan, has already traveled to Khartoum twice in 2000 in an effort to negotiate better relations with the Government of Sudan, yet the US State Department continues to list Sudan as a terrorist state.

Diplomatic efforts continue in the midst of divisions within the Sudanese government. President Beshir recently ousted the former secretary general of the parliament Hassan al-Turabi, leading many outsiders to speculate that by disempowering Turabi, Beshir is trying to shed Sudan’s image as an exporter of Islamic fundamentalism. Combined with Beshir’s recent successes at negotiating peace agreements with every country on its border, this move may enhance prospects for peace.

The United States, a strong supporter of IGAD, is one of the IGAD Partners, together with various European nations. IGAD, however, is as yet unable to deliver any substantive contribution to the peace process. The SPLM/A recently pulled out of the IGAD talks in protest against the government’s continued aerial bombardments of the South. Now there may be plans to unite the IGAD peace initiative with others. The US may reconsider its support for the body if certain benchmarks are not met soon. The US agreed to fund $600,000 of the IGAD secretariat’s work for a six-month probationary period, with additional funding dependent upon movement toward a comprehensive peace agreement.

The US certainly lacks an image as a neutral partner in the search for peace. Secretary of State Madeline Albright, for example, first met with SPLM/A leader Dr. John Garang in December 1997. The meeting led to accusations by the Sudanese government of “hostile intentions” by the US. She met again with him in the fall of 1999.

Critics of US policy take two directions. Some emphasize US inattention to the incredible human dimension of the tragedy in Sudan. According to these critics, the United States has engaged more in rhetoric than in consistent, serious efforts to help end the war. Other critics see United States as acting inappropriately against the government in Khartoum, citing anecdotal reports of US military assistance to the SPLA, and non-lethal aid to front line states finding its way to the SPLA. These critics suspect that the United States is playing a more active role in the war than it admits. Certainly the US preoccupation with the issues of international terrorism and destabilization in the region and in the Middle East suggests it is less concerned with the human tragedy within Sudan than with the effect of Sudanese government policies upon the region and the world.

THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE

“Many friends of Sudan are very keen on relief work,” observes Sudanese Catholic Bishop Paride Taban of the Diocese of Torit. “Spending on relief alone is like fattening a cow for slaughter. How long can one be doing work without spending time, energy, and resources on root causes?” As Bishop Taban so eloquently admonishes, the root causes of the Sudanese conflict must be addressed in order to facilitate true and lasting peace.

Peace must be constructed at every level of the Sudanese conflict – local, country-wide and regional – and must encompass real and perceived issues of conflict.

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development is the official international forum for the peace effort, under the leadership of Kenya. One of IGAD’s primary mandates is to promote peace and stability within the region so that resources can be better used for development. Thus, the ongoing conflict in Sudan is a primary
concern. The member states of IGAD are meant to address the root causes of the Sudanese conflict and facilitate dialogue between the government in Khartoum and the opposition. IGAD’s “Declaration of Principles” includes the principles of self-determination and separation of religion and state. In the past IGAD has met infrequently and has lacked an ongoing structure to sustain peace initiatives; but despite its inadequacies, most observers believe that it remains the best framework for continued negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM/A.

In May 1998, after nearly four years of negotiations, the government joined the SPLM/A in accepting the principle of self-determination for the South. However, the IGAD principle that Sudan be affirmed as a “secular” rather than a religious state remains unresolved. Even within the broader issue of self-determination, several questions remain unanswered. These include when to conduct a popular referendum in the South, the definition of the geographical boundaries of the South during such a referendum, and whether political independence is an option, rather than some form of autonomy.

While IGAD addresses the north-south conflict, the New Sudan Council of Churches has initiated an important call to peacemaking known as the People-to-People peace process. This initiative is designed to address ethnic conflicts among the various southern groups. Dr. Haruun Ruun, executive secretary of the NSCC, notes that this is an effort to “build [a] just and lasting peace that begins with person to person, family to family, and community to community…. Harmony and unity should overcome tribal, religious, political, and personal differences.”

In the past, southern rebel leaders have not been successful at brokering peace among themselves, and the tensions have destroyed civilian security and life in the South. Through the People-to-People process local Nuer and Dinka chiefs, religious leaders and women on the West Bank of the Nile, who had been on opposite sides of the war since 1991, refused to wait for warring rebel leaders to meet and discuss peace. Meeting at Wunlit in Bahr el Ghazal province in early 1999, they developed a peace covenant signed by all participants, hoping that this action from the grassroots upward would have an impact on the leaders around them. It has already begun to do so.

Among the many fruits of this peace agreement are increased access to fishing sites, farmland, and grazing areas, as well as the return of captured women and children taken during the course of the conflict. The peace covenant has also brought on an increased sense of security and trust. The greatest example of this was in September 1999. Due to fighting in the Western Upper Nile area, fleeing Nuer found refuge among Dinka they had met at the conference. The Dinka received the Nuer, as signed them areas for themselves and their cattle, and welcomed their children in Dinka schools.

In October-November 1999 the process continued with a conference which united the Lou Nuer of Upper Nile. Agreements made then to rebuild the civil administration, establish a police system and re-empower traditional courts were to be concretized in a May 2000 conference. Appeals were also made for peace with all sections of the Nuer and with all neighboring peoples, declaring unilateral and permanent cease-fires and urging all southerners to join in the reconciliation process.

Women continue to be recognized as leaders in the grassroots peace process. Many were co-signers to the final Wunlit agreements. The efforts of women to promote peace and reconciliation through the establishment of jobs and services for other women is also critical.

Many southerners place a great deal of hope in the People-to-People peace process, feeling that if the southern Sudanese can unify themselves at the grassroots level, then the political and military leaders will have no choice but to follow. Some seem to be following. Several government-sponsored militia groups among the Nuer have now joined the reconciliation process. The process is to culminate in a broader All South Inclusive Conference.

The People-to-People peace process is compelling evidence that the Sudanese are engaged in their own initiatives for a just and peaceful Sudan. The role of the United States, and of faith-based communities in the United States, is not to “rescue” the Sudanese. Rather our role is to find ways to be supportive of Sudanese initiatives, ways that embrace genuine partnership and solidarity.

A generation of Sudanese people have known nothing but war – a war that has denied many access to health services, education, food and the enjoyment of basic human rights. While the international community has responded to the Sudanese tragedy with humanitarian relief aid, development assistance, denunciations, and statements and actions aimed at drawing attention to human rights violations, the root causes of these problems lie in the protracted civil war.

The war as a devastating root cause must be addressed. In seeking a peaceful solution to the war, the Sudanese have embarked on a number of initiatives on international, national and local levels. At this time it is crucial that the international community accompany, encourage, and support these initiatives. Peace is not built from outside but from within, and as long as peace is a distant dream, the devastation and destruction discussed in this paper will continue. As US citizens we are called to solidarity with our Sudanese brothers and sisters. We must support them as they find solutions to their own problems.
**THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE: ACTIONS**

The Washington Office on Africa especially advocates the following steps toward peace to be taken by the Government of the United States:

- Promote and strengthen grassroots efforts at peace and reconciliation, particularly in the South. Support the People-to-People peace conferences as they are extended throughout the South.
- Maintain IGAD as the only viable international forum for peace talks on resolving Sudan's civil war, taking steps to strengthen the mediation role of IGAD by providing funding and technical assistance, applying diplomatic leverage on the parties, and bringing the weight of the UN Security Council to the process.
- Support an investigation of the suspected use of chemical weapons by the Government of Sudan.
- Prohibit, to the greatest extent possible, any foreign corporation engaged in oil/gas development in Sudan from gaining access to US capital markets.
- Impose an immediate arms embargo on the sale and supply of arms and ammunition, as well as military materiel and services, against all sides.
- Urge the extension of the cease-fire to include all areas of southern Sudan and the region.
- Insist on continued access of UN human rights monitors to all areas of Sudan.
- Write to the US Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and ask that they call on PetroChina and the US underwriters to inform OFAC if ever the Chinese consortium does retire Sudan-related debt out of its profits. *(Call us! We'll clarify this one!)*
- Press your Senator or Representative to support authorization and appropriations for the Sudan Transition Assistance for Rehabilitation (STAR) program.
- Urge the US Congress to increase funding for capacity building, democracy promotion, civil administration, judiciary, and intra-South peace processes in Sudan.
- Mandate US AID to establish or expand programs in road building, health care, agriculture, animal husbandry, well-digging, education, and skills training.
- Encourage the IGAD Partners Forum nations to develop a plan for post-war settlement aid for reconstruction, future mechanisms for debt relief; and normalization of diplomatic and economic relations.

How can you and your immediate community be a part of this? Bring together a group from within your congregation to discuss this briefing paper. Work together to discern what actions are meaningful to you. These actions might include some of the following:

- Raise money to support the People-to-People peace process in the South. The Washington Office on Africa can provide banking information for contributions to the New Sudan Council of Churches.
- Encourage members of your church to investigate their pension plans and their individual investment portfolios. Urge that any money going to Talisman be divested.
- Annual meetings, clergy associations, and women's and youth organizations offer a chance to raise awareness of the tragedy in Sudan. Where appropriate, consider introducing a statement on the situation that could be affirmed by your church body, denomination, or general assembly.
- Investigate whether your church body would want to send representatives to be observers and supporters in solidarity with the upcoming People-to-People peace conferences in Sudan. There are considerable dangers involved in traveling to be a part of such a meeting, so potential attendees should be thoughtful about their decision and mindful of possible risks.

**Work to become more fully informed:**

- Consult your own national church for the latest actions they may recommend on Sudan. Some of our churches have been engaged in Sudan for many years. They will not only have explored ways to be supportive of Sudanese churches but may also have engaged in a witness for justice and assisted in refugee and humanitarian matters.
- Contact the Washington Office on Africa as a way to link with others engaged in Sudanese issues as well as to stay current about opportunities for advocacy with the US Congress and administration. *(See p. 2.)*
- Contact the Africa Office of the National Council of Churches/Church World Service to learn of their initiatives and suggested actions.
- Contact other national bodies concerned with particular aspects of the situation in Sudan, such as human rights and refugee organizations.
- Look for local opportunities to work ecumenically or within your own diocese, synod or convention.
- Be inclusive. Africans, including Sudanese, are likely to be a part of your community or attending your local college. Include them in your plans. Listen to them.

Note: Our original briefing paper contained lists of resources and useful addresses. If you do not have access to that document, call us and we will provide you with the listings.