

RAISING THE STAKES: OIL AND CONFLICT IN SUDAN

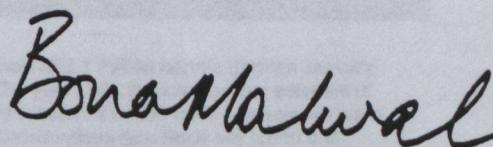
need to change the course of NIF policies. This Western position would have been reasonable if it was coming in the aftermath of a seemingly successful peace process in which the regime had responded positively to the political grievances of the people of Southern Sudan. But under current circumstances, "constructive engagement" means that the regime in Khartoum is no longer under any serious pressure to change its bad policies, especially when companies like Talisman are helping it to exploit the very resources of the disadvantaged people and provide the revenues needed to enhance its prosecution of the war.

I believe that the choice for Talisman is not between remaining in the country to safeguard its "democratic" operations so that another country without such a democratic tradition will not take over its share. There is no such choice for the people of Southern Sudan. Talisman is exploiting the South's oil without the consent of its people. You cannot convince these people that although Talisman is helping their oppressors today to exploit their oil and to kill them, at some time in the future the democratic tradition Talisman brings with it will yield some fruits for them. For the people of Southern Sudan, Talisman's operation is simply helping their oppressors to oppress them even more, using their own resources.

The question is truly a moral one for Talisman and for the Canadian government and people: Should their company remain in Sudan exploiting the resources of the people of the South and handing over revenues from this to help the Khartoum regime repress the people of Southern Sudan even more? Or, if neither Talisman nor the Canadian government can deliver an early peace settlement to the conflict in Sudan—which they seemed to promise only a few months back—should Talisman continue its operations in spite of the absence of peace? This is an economic as well as a moral question to both. Clearly, Talisman as an oil company is not in the business of morality, but the Canadian government has up to now occupied very high moral ground internationally on these human rights issues. The government of Canada and Talisman need to work this matter out between them and come up with a credible and consistent stand.

As for the people of Southern Sudan, they appeal both to the government of Canada and to Talisman Energy Inc. not to continue to be accomplices in the crimes against them by the NIF regime in Khartoum on account of their oil resource.

Thank you very much.



Bona Malwal