

It would be interesting to read the Heglig security logs for this period, but it would not be a surprise to us if they contained little pertinent information. If Talisman is relying totally on GNPOC, read Northern Sudanese, security officials, for information about events which impact on the company's reputation, it does not mean that it is meeting its responsibilities. **We hope Talisman will join us in calling for, and facilitating, the investigation we seek.**

It is certainly fair to acknowledge that the durable civil war in Sudan is not fundamentally about oil, but oil has become a key factor. The IGAD Declaration of Principles, cited in the October 26 policy statement, gives a clear account of the key issues --democracy, human rights, religion and state, and self-determination. But oil is now part of the war, and the Assessment Mission has had to ponder whether the current oil operations exacerbate this war, or advance the pursuit of peace.

The evidence we gathered, including the testimony of those directly involved directs us to conclude that oil is exacerbating conflict in Sudan.

We know that a Canadian helicopter servicing Talisman in Sudan was used to transport Major General Paulino Matip himself on at least one occasion. It appears that Matip demanded that the pilot, a Canadian, take him to Khartoum, or so we have been told.

We also learned, and have reported, that flights clearly linked to the oil war have been a regular feature of life at the Heglig airstrip, which is adjacent to the oil workers' compound. It is operated by the consortium, and Canadian chartered helicopters and fixed wing aircraft which use the strip have shared the facilities with helicopter gunships and Antonov bombers of the GOS. These have armed and re-fuelled at Heglig and from there attacked civilians.

The matter of the military use has been discussed at a high level with Talisman, which assured us that it happened in November, and that when it came to the attention of Talisman executives, a verbal protest was lodged with the Sudanese authorities. The offending machines were removed, but they came back. A second protest was lodged, and they were removed again.

We are troubled, however, by other credible reports, that the military use of Heglig airstrip has been more or less constant since May 1999, interrupted not by protest but by such events as the appearance in the area of the team of financial analysts taken to Heglig by Talisman, or even our own arrival there in early December, 1999. One report we have received has it that during our own visit, the military aviation was relocated to Muglad, a town north west of Heglig.

Ordinary people in the South, even their leaders, can confuse Talisman, which operates north of the Bahr El Arab and Bahr El Ghazal rivers, with other oil companies such as IPC, which holds the concession, known as 5A, around which war is raging south of these rivers, but two things are certain. First, the gunships and Antonovs which have attacked villages south of the rivers flew to their targets from the Heglig airstrip in the Talisman concession. Second, it is a prominent perception of southern Sudanese that Talisman, "the Canadian oil firm", is in active collaboration with the GOS, economically, politically & militarily; it is also the perception of these southerners