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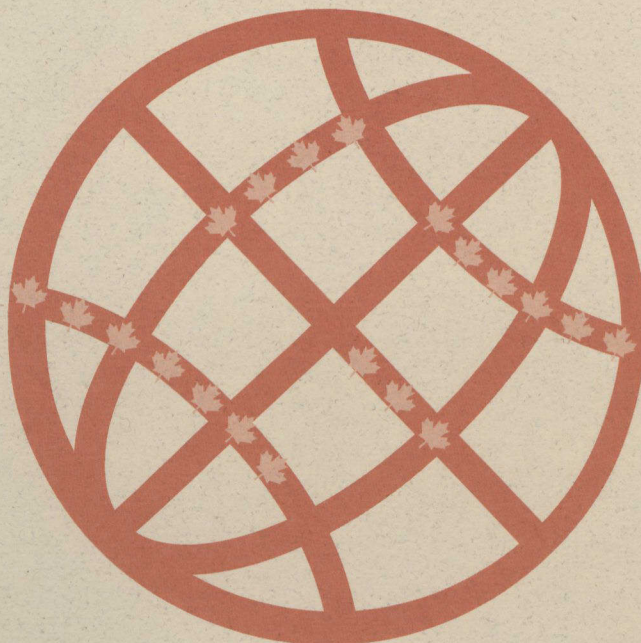


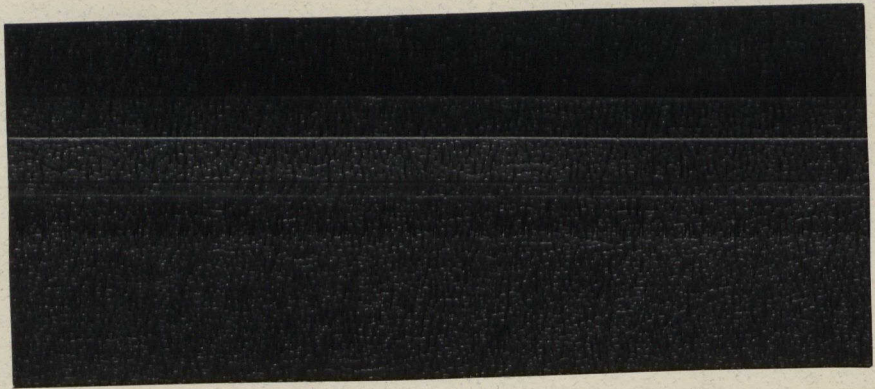
Centre canadien
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LIMITED CIRCULATION

**WORKING GROUP ON SUDAN:
CANADA AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL**

**March 28, 2000
Ottawa**





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On March 28, some government officials and NGOs met to reflect on what could Canada do to help alleviate the situation in Sudan and to contribute to a lasting peace in the region at the United Nations Security Council. Participants were invited forward through other consultational bodies, including the ICP, ICAD, and the Canadian Centre for International Justice. The meeting was chaired by Ian Stowe and organized by the Canadian Centre for International Justice. Participants included, among others, Heidi Hular, David G. ... Scribner, ... Garry Kenny and Kathy Vandergriff were also present. This was part of a series of consultations on Sudan and the role of Canada.

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Heidi Hular started the discussion by saying that Minister Agworthy is committed to take the Sudan issue to the Security Council. A Resolution has been poined and a draft distributed for this purpose. The immediate response of the Sudanese government, some Arab governments, as well as China and Russia has been negative. A "reassurance offensive" has been launched to counter the negative feedback of these countries.

It has been ascertained that at best, the Canadian delegation could achieve a statement to the press - a result of an informal "dinner meeting" of the Security Council with no records, involving only Security Council members. There would be little weight or prestige to a press statement. This leaves Canada at a critical juncture. While the statement could refer to the grave humanitarian situation in Sudan and call for humanitarian access to blocked areas and a temporary humanitarian cease-fire, it would fall far short of a Resolution. Given the amount of resistance, even this seems possible outcome would be a fight. Perhaps the Council could take the issue and develop a declaration in support of the peace process. While there would be some value in this development, is a statement, which may be seen as "a statement of intent" as meaningless, worth pursuing? Would it be helpful to have a statement? Would a seemingly public struggle for a resolution be a good idea? human security agenda?

Some participants, including Kathy Vandergriff, at one point pointed to the massive problems in Sudan. Joe Stern said that it

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On March 28, some government officials and NGOs met to reflect on what could Canada do to help alleviate the situation in Sudan and to contribute to a lasting peace in the region at the United Nations Security Council. Possibilities of moving forward through other multilateral bodies, including the IPF, IGAD and OPCW, were also addressed. Chaired by Joe Stern and organised by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, the roundtable included, among others, Heidi Hulan and Eric Hoskins from Minister Axworthy's office, Sandelle Scrimshaw, Director General of the Africa Bureau and other DFAIT officials. Garry Kenny and Kathy Vandergrift were also present. The meeting was a part of a series of consultations on Sudan and the role of Canada.

Heidi Hulan started the discussion by saying that Minister Axworthy is committed to take the Sudan issue to the Security Council. A Resolution has been penned and a draft distributed for this purpose. The immediate response of the Sudanese government, some Arab governments, as well as China and Russia has been negative. A "reassurance offensive" has been launched to counter the negative feedback of these countries.

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Some participants, including Kathy Vandergrift, argued that a statement would at least point to the massive problems in Sudan. Joe Stern said that it would put the international

community on record in calling for peace in the war-ravaged country. A unified message, coming from the highest body of the international community, is worth something. It could legitimise the cause and generate momentum for further action. Abandoning the fight at the Security Council now would constitute a surrender and make the Sudanese campaign successful. Others, like Garry Kenny, cautioned that a mere press release followed by no practical steps could encourage impunity rather than contribute to a solution.

A suggestion was made that other Security Council resolutions be used to address the conflict in Sudan. Specifically, Canada could lean on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict resolution. Despite the fact that there could scarcely be a better example than Sudan to which this resolution applies, a reluctance prevails at the Security Council to address protection of civilians in practical terms. Tension exists between applying universal norms expounded by Minister Axworthy and the preoccupation of most Security Council members with national interests and sovereignty. Therefore, just having a statement expressing solidarity on the Sudan peace initiative would be a huge achievement. It could urge IGAD to become a more effective body.

Garry Kenny stated that press releases and resolutions mean nothing in practical terms. The Canadian government should not concentrate all its energies at the Security Council. Circumventing the UN proved effective before. To put flesh back on the human security agenda, Canada has to complement its efforts at the Security Council by a set of complementary and assertive measures that imply risk. *One of the options is to launch an investigation of the use of chemical weapons in Sudan within the framework of OPCW.* Canada should put in a formal request for such an investigation to the OPCW. It is well positioned to do so since the Canadian government and NGOs invested so much into the peace process already. Canada could work toward building an international consensus to get humanitarian access to blocked areas. It can also call the Sudanese government's bluff and act on the mandate to protect civilians in armed conflict.

Kenny continued to say that the Canadian government could add another more optimistic Chapter to the disappointing saga of Talisman and impotence of the UN Security Council. Namely, it could publicise its extra UN activities as well as ongoing efforts to develop a normative framework for companies operating abroad in conflict zones. The government could take on a pro-active approach. Some work has to be done on developing a well informed and balanced public opinion. Especially in managing the critique expected to follow on the heels of the potential press statement. There is a misinformed optimism in a Security Council resolution and its impact.

Kathy Vandergrift said that Canada could move the issue forward by publicly voicing concerns regarding grave human rights abuses in Sudan, including the abduction of children and the use of chemical weapons. She expressed frustration with the silence of the Canadian government on these clear-cut issues.

A question was raised about how to support the IGAD peace process and bring the Sudanese to the table. Perhaps the IPF could play a useful role in setting goals/benchmarks. However, the interests of the IPF members may hinder any harmonisation efforts. NGO-IPF forum could be developed to generate some fresh ideas and address disfunctionality of the IPF. The link to the UN would be key in legitimising such a forum/process, therefore, it would be beneficial to convene such a group around a resolution or a presidential statement. A possibility of creating a 3rd technical committee of IGAD was also put on the table. Some participants agreed that technical committees often work since they focus on seemingly non-political issues.

Questions surrounding the rehabilitation of Talisman also came up during the discussion. Joe Stern asked what would be necessary for such a rehabilitation to occur. It is fairly clear that for the leadership of Talisman, efficiency comes before social responsibility. It is also clear that the value of Talisman's stocks is declining. Talisman is viewed negatively by some other private companies as well and may become a cautionary tale of what not to do in a conflict situation in the future. Talisman is compensating those who have been displaced as a result of its operations and its leadership believes the company can "come back." However, human rights monitoring and information gathering by NGOs is key to Talisman's compliance.

Eric Hoskins asked whether opening an office in Khartoum would be useful and whether it would not just legitimise the current regime (i.e., precisely what the Sudanese government is aiming for)? He reflected that, perhaps, establishing an information gathering office in the South or in Nairobi could offset the potential negative feedback. The Khartoum office could:

- support efforts of Minister Axworthy and others to develop and implement a mechanism to monitor human rights and Talisman,
- explore ways to address oil revenue (i.e., distribution, usage, etc.),
- fulfil the needs for an on-the-ground presence
- facilitate the peace process by serving the needs of Senator Lois Wilson and others.

Concerns remain about how to support the South. A possible answer would be from Nairobi, where a human rights monitoring capacity could be located. Would criticism about neglecting the South be deflected by enhanced activities in the area? Garry Kenny said that information gathering is really the only solid reason for opening an office in Khartoum. He reminded the participants about the useful role the Canadian Embassy played in South Africa, especially in human rights monitoring.

Joe Stern raised attention to the mounting pressure on Minister Axworthy to divest himself of the Sudan issue. There are little resources to spare and the political situation in Sudan is so complex that even if rules and regulations are developed and imposed/encouraged, there is no rule of law framework to ensure their implementation. Moreover, the regulation that has been developed is very modest and Talisman's oil operations are far from Ottawa. He also briefly raised the option of refusing visa service to Sudan. Others countered this pessimism by saying that the process is sound and perseverance will be rewarded in the long term.

Reflecting on the several multilateral tracks to peace in Sudan (i.e., IGAD, IPF, the US efforts, Libyan and Egyptian initiatives, and the Security Council), the role of international community has been "pathetic." Self-interest of individual players has been at the centre of multilateral efforts rather than peace itself. First step to remedying this situation would be to look at the actors in the various multilateral fora and their interests.

In conclusion, Joseph Stern reflected on the complexity of the problem in Sudan, the lack of understanding of the conflict on all sides, and the moral imperative on the part of Canada to engage (choose sides/or at least favour one side over the other). Garry Kenny pointed out that while it may be difficult to morally choose who is the villain and who is the victim, it is clear, nevertheless, from the report of the special rapporteur of the Secretary General, Franco, that the government of Sudan perpetuates abuses against civilians on a much larger scale than the opposition. There is not and should not be a perception of moral equivalence.

Support for indigenous civil society was encouraged through human rights work and by strengthening the trade unions. Currently the engagement of indigenous civil society is very limited. Therefore, support should be channelled to grass-roots through community projects and the ground prepared through the IPF and other multilateral bodies and unilateral initiatives for a possible future democratisation process.

List of Participants

Eric Hoskins, Office of Minister Axworthy
Heidi Hulan, Office of Minister Axworthy
Sandelle Scrimshaw, Director General, Africa Bureau
Steve Lee, Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development
David Melvill, Sudan, Somalia Uganda, Africa Bureau
Patrick Wittmann, Deputy Director, UN Security Council Affairs Section
Gordon Houlden, Director, Eastern and Southern Africa Division
Joe Stern
Garry Kenny
Gerry Barr
Kathy Vandergrift
B. Taylor
Marketa Geisler, Rapporteur/Writer, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

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