

Long-overdue debate held on U.S. policy toward Sudan

by Linda de Hoyos

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace headquarters in Washington, D.C., was the scene Nov. 20 of a highly unusual event: a free and open debate on U.S. policy toward the key African nation of Sudan.

Among the invited guests to the seminar were the official representatives of John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army and their U.S. "handlers"; Neil Livingstone, an international consultant on terrorism, to explain why Sudan is listed by the State Department as a terrorist state; and the two employees of the *Baltimore Sun*, Greg Kane and Gilbert Lewthwaite, who went to Sudan in July on a trip orchestrated by British House of Lords Deputy Speaker Baroness Caroline Cox to "buy a slave."

But also in attendance, was the ambassador from Sudan to the United States, the distinguished Mahdi Ibrahim Mohamed, who was given an opportunity to answer every charge and to deliver the major speech at the luncheon following the seminar. As well, on hand was the entirety of the Schiller Institute-organized fact-finding delegation to Sudan—Ben McGee, deputy speaker pro tem of the Arkansas State Legislature; former U.S. Congressman Jim Mann of South Carolina; Ben Swann, state legislator from Massachusetts; and Tom Jackson of the Alabama State Legislature, along with Muriel Mirak Weissbach, Lawrence Freeman, and this reporter.

The State Department had been invited, but backed out at the last minute—perhaps when it heard the Schiller Institute would be there.

The panels were on: 1) charges of terrorism against Sudan; 2) the civil war in the south; and 3) charges of slavery against Sudan.

What clearly emerged from the seminar was a near-unanimous consensus that the evidence against Sudan as a terrorist-sponsoring state is flimsy, to say the least; and that the charges of slavery are capricious and dangerous. Notably, by the seminar's end, Sudan's primary detractors had rushed to the defense of British Intelligence in their attempt to defend a policy of sanctions against Sudan on charges of either state-supported slavery or state-sponsored terrorism.

The seminar took place nine days after revelations in the *Washington Post* that the United States is shipping almost

\$20 million in military equipment to Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Uganda, for the purpose of re-arming anti-Sudanese rebels currently supported by all three countries. Although State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns denied that the United States had a policy of using the three countries to overthrow the Sudanese government, it is known that several high-level meetings on Sudan have been held by the administration, in which a "a very deliberate policy" decision had been reached to take a tougher line, according to the *Post*.

Hearsay, but not evidence

First at bat was Neil Livingstone, an international terror expert with wide experience in the Mideast. The audience expected to hear hard evidence as to Sudan's role in international terrorism, which has caused it to be placed on the State Department list of "terrorist states." Disappointment was the reaction, however, when Livingstone listed as the reasons: 1) Sudan's diplomatic, trade, and cooperative relations with Iran; 2) the allegation that Sudan was involved in the assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, in June 1995; and 3) allegations that a Sudanese national was involved in the 1994 Sheikh Rahman plot to blow up the United Nations.

Livingstone admitted in his speech that Sudan was being "demonized" on terrorism, and that the United States was *not* launching such attacks against what he called the "two main terrorist states," Iran and Syria.

Sudanese Ambassador Mahdi Ibrahim had little difficulty fielding these charges, pointing out, first off, that Sudan has always denounced terrorism, and second, that Sudan—unlike its neighbor Egypt—has no history of internal terrorism. "Terrorist action is not how we solve our political disputes," he reminded the audience. As for Sheikh Rahman, the ambassador implied that the sheikh had been "sheep-dipped" through Khartoum, where he was granted a visa to the United States by the American ambassador. On the murder attempt against the Egyptian President, he pointed out that all persons known to be involved in that attempt were Ethiopian nationals, and that those caught were tried *in secret* in Ethiopia!

Amid complaints that Livingstone had not presented any-

thing but hearsay, it was pointed out from the audience, and then confirmed by Mr. Mahdi, that Sudan had ended its open-door policy toward all Arabs and had expelled any foreigners believed to be representatives of organizations carrying out terrorist acts, including from the Islamic Jihad and the Hezbollah.

In conversation with this reporter, Livingston was asked whether the United States had taken any action in concert with Egypt and Israel, which have both protested that terrorist actions directed against their countries were coming from persons and capabilities located in *London—not in Sudan!* Livingston answered that the United States had taken no such

action, because we have decided that Britain “is a free and open society with a tradition of harboring dissidents of other countries, as long as they do not carry out terrorist acts there. But you are right, it is a thorny issue.”

‘The British aren’t a major player’

The next session brought to the fore Ted Dagne, former Congressional aide to Rep. Harry Johnston (D-Fla.), when Johnston was chairman of the Africa Subcommittee in the House. As later remarked by former Congressman Mervyn Dymally (D-Calif.), who served on the Africa Subcommittee for 12 years, Dagne’s presentation on the civil war in southern

Security Council delays decision on embargo

The United Nations Security Council Nov. 21 delayed for a month a decision on implementing an air embargo against Sudan. The council had decided on Aug. 16 to impose the air ban, but had postponed setting a date for its entry into force for at least 90 days, pending a report from Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The sanctions are to be imposed for Sudan’s supposed failure to hand over three alleged suspects in the June 1995 assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The Sudan government, which has cooperated with investigations of the attempt, has maintained that the three suspects are not *in Sudan*, and hence cannot be extradited.

“Sudan hopes the delay will be a chance for weighing facts so that a fair resolution . . . will be adopted by the Security Council,” Mustafa Othman Ismail, the state minister at the Foreign Ministry, was quoted as saying.

In May, travel and diplomatic sanctions were placed on Sudan for its failure to hand over the suspects, despite an interview in *Al-Hayat* newspaper in April with suspect Mustafa Hamza, from Afghanistan, in which Hamza said that none of his accomplices were in Sudan and that the Sudanese government had nothing to do with the assassination attempt on Mubarak.

Then again in August, at the behest of Britain and the United States, the UN Security Council passed another resolution for escalated sanctions against Sudan, this time targeting Sudan’s international airlines.

This time, however, when the council discussed the secretary general’s report during private consultations on Nov. 21, France called for a 30-day delay in deciding on a date for the air embargo, to allow time for a report on the humanitarian impact of the new measures. This was supported by Russia and Egypt, whose lead on the Sudan

issue is usually followed by other council members.

Egypt has at various points indicated its reluctance to join intensified efforts to destabilize the Sudanese government, since the plunging of Sudan into chaos would likely cause the blowup of the entire region, threatening Egypt itself.

The air embargo would have dire humanitarian effects, such as preventing imports of medicines and travel abroad by thousands of Sudanese seeking medical treatment. The air embargo, decided in principle in August, would require all countries to deny permission to aircraft registered in Sudan, or leased or operated by Sudan Airways or the Sudanese government, to take off from, land in, or overfly their territory.

There is also news, this time coming from Cairo, that indicates that the three suspects are not in Sudan, making it impossible for Sudan to comply with the resolution. The Egyptian government daily *Al-Ahram* reported Sept. 26 that Hamza and Shmet, the two terrorists accused of the assassination attempt against Mubarak, killed the third terrorist and then fled to Afghanistan and Kenya, respectively. The paper claims that they were in Sudan, but left “before the imposition of the UN Security Council’s sanctions on Sudan.”

Although the paper claims that Sudanese intelligence helped the two escape, the report nonetheless indicates that not even Egyptian intelligence believes any suspects are in Sudan.

While the UN Security Council has delayed action, the Clinton administration has taken new unilateral action against Sudan. On Nov. 22, President Clinton signed a Proclamation for “the suspension of entry as immigrants and non-immigrants of persons who are members or officials of the Sudanese government or armed forces.” The Proclamation states that the motivation for the measure is Sudan’s failure to comply with the UN Security Council Resolutions 1044 and 1054, which demand Sudan’s extradition of the suspects.—*Linda de Hoyos*

Sudan was an apologia for John Garang's SPLA. Instead of an "objective presentation, one would think that Ted represents the SPLA here," Dymally noted.

In what could have been a veiled reference to the U.S. policy intent reported in the *Washington Post* on Nov. 11, Dagne claimed that the civil war would end soon—without giving any reason except his prediction that the government of Sudan President Omar Al-Bashir would soon fall.

At this point, the fact-finding delegation that had visited Sudan in September (see *EIR*, Oct. 11, 1996), including in the hinterlands such as the Nuba Mountains region, made its presence known. Ben McGee answered Dagne's complaints that the 1996 elections held in Sudan were bogus, by pointing to the undisputed fact that the 75% voter turnout in Sudan far exceeded the voter turnout in the United States in the 1996 Presidential elections—in which only 50% of all registered voters came to the polls. Attempts later in the seminar to sweep aside this reality failed repeatedly.

Members of the delegation also said that they had visited adherents of various religious faiths other than Muslim, and that all were free to practice their religions in Sudan—in contrast to the charges of religious oppression lodged against Sudan by Baroness Cox's Christian Solidarity International.

Muriel Mirak Weissbach of the Schiller Institute, who travelled with the fact-finders to Sudan, asked Dagne to explain his precise relations to Baroness Cox, whose so-called Christian Solidarity International has targeted Sudan. It is Cox, with Dagne's help, who has run the anti-Sudan circuses in the U.S. Congress, where only those Sudanese who oppose their country's current government are permitted to speak.

To the contextual evidence of his working with Cox, Dagne limply answered that the "the British are not a major player in this region." Given that Britain was the colonial master of most of East Africa up until the 1960s, Dagne's protests, though they might be believed by elementary school-children, could not be taken seriously by the Sudanese experts assembled in the room.

The high-strung representative of the SPLA, Steven Wondu, also brushed aside all discussion of the British apartheid policy that divided Sudan between north and south during the colonial period.

The smell of a hoax

It was the last session of the seminar—on the charges of slavery against Sudan—which most glaringly exposed the web of lies that has been spun to justify the crusade to bring down the Sudanese government.

The session was opened by former Rep. Mervyn Dymally, who told the audience that the charge of slavery in Sudan was new—in all his 12 years on the Africa Subcommittee, this charge had never been brought to his attention. The only reason he could see that it is surfacing now, he said, is because "it is a very emotional issue for 40 million Americans."

Charges of slavery in Sudan are the ostensible justification

for a bill demanding sanctions against Sudan sponsored by Rep. Donald Payne, outgoing chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The audience was then treated to the entertaining tale told by Gilbert Lewthwaite of the *Baltimore Sun*, of how he and his sidekick Greg Kane discovered slavery in Sudan. Even in his presentation, Lewthwaite said that the slave-master from whom he and Kane "bought" a slave, was terrified and would not give his name, because he said that if the government were to find out, he would be executed. Nevertheless, Kane and Lewthwaite both claimed that the Sudanese government is "turning a blind eye" to slavery.

Furthermore, they admitted that they had gone into Sudan illegally and had "bought" the slave in rebel-controlled territory. In his reply, Ambassador Madhi reported that he had asked both journalists to go to Sudan with a legal visa and assured them they would be permitted to go anywhere they wanted and to talk to whomever they pleased. They had declined the invitation. Lewthwaite retorted that this was because the ambassador could not guarantee that they would be able to meet the President of Sudan personally! Representative Dymally castigated the two reporters later for what he called the "height of arrogance" to demand that they would not pursue an investigation unless they were permitted to meet with the President of a country himself.

And, as the two were forced to admit, their entire venture had been aided by Baroness Cox's Christian Solidarity International. By the session's end, Lewthwaite could not even vouch that he himself had not been a (possibly unwitting) participant in an event staged entirely by Cox and her confederates.

But the final blow to the *Baltimore Sun* employees came from Dr. Stanley Smith, of the Dymally Corp., who delivered an eloquent speech on the fundamental difference between finding a slave in some location, and the "institution" of slavery, as it existed in the United States before the Civil War. The institution of slavery, he said, is backed up by the state, by the courts, by the churches, and is completely integral to the entire economic structure.

"In the United States, we had the *Dred Scott* decision of the Supreme Court, that said that a slave could be nothing more than a piece of property. We had to fight an entire Civil War to rid ourselves of the institution of slavery." In contrast to this reality, Smith said, the charges brought by the *Baltimore Sun* employees are capricious. Nevertheless, they have the power to severely hurt the Sudanese people. "There are proposals for sanctions against Sudan on the basis of these charges," he said.

In such manner, the various justifications the State Department and the press have put forward for skewering Sudan internationally were exposed as either hearsay or downright fabrications, traced back to British outlets. What was not revealed at the seminar, is why the State Department persists in its policy nonetheless.