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"Tea and Sympathy":
The United States and the Sudan Civil War, 1985-2005

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of History
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of the requirements for the degree
Masters of Arts in History

by
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ABSTRACT

“Tea and Sympathy”:

The United States and the Sudan Civil War, 1985-2005

Peter W. Klein

The specters of violence and economic insecurity have haunted the Sudan since its independence in 1956. The United States Congress has held numerous hearings on the Sudan's civil war and U.S. television news outlets have reported on the conflict since 1983. While attempting to engage the Sudan in a viable peace process, the U.S. Congress has been beset by ineffectual Cold War paradigms and an inability to understand the complexities of the Sudan civil war. U.S. television news programs, on the other hand, engaged in a process of oversimplification, using false dichotomies to reduce the conflict into easily digestible pieces. This thesis will analyze the overall tone and focus of U.S. Congressional hearings and television news broadcasts on the Sudan and demonstrate the problematic factors in their portrayals of the war.

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PREFACE

Independence and civil war came to the Sudan at nearly the same time. The Sudan gained independence from British colonial rule in 1956, and only a year later the new nation took a precipitous turn toward civil war. Although the Sudan essentially experienced one long civil war from 1956 until a 2005 peace accord, a brief attempt at peace from 1972-1983 effectively broke the war into two periods, 1956-1972 and 1985-2005. Understanding this long, protracted civil war has proven difficult for the international community, especially those countries attempting to broker peace. The United States has been at the forefront of those attempts at ending the conflict and has fallen victim to the same obstacles to comprehending the war. In order to identify and examine United States' attitudes and misunderstandings of the second Sudanese Civil War, this thesis analyzes U.S. television news outlets and U.S. Congressional hearing transcripts from the time period 1985-2005.

Rife with complex ethnic rivalries and intricate political nuance, the Sudan Civil War often seems to escape explanation and understanding. In addition, the brief period of peace that divided the civil war into two parts allowed outside observers to examine the second civil war independently of the first. Members of the United States Congress and television news

reporters embraced simplistic dichotomies, such as Arab vs. African and Muslim vs. Christian, instead of looking to the historical roots of the conflict. The inability to grasp the complete complexities of this civil war has served to limit the ability of the United States to contribute effectively to any real change. Exasperated with Congressional committee members' refusal to understand the complexities and adopt a historical appreciation for the war, historian Robert O. Collins testified that the United States had little more to offer the people of the Sudan than "tea and sympathy."¹

Dominated by the paradigm of Cold War politics in the 1980s, one can see a shift in the U.S. Congress as it shed its Cold War mindset throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century. Throughout the 1980s members of Congress investigated the Sudan's nascent second civil war, 1985-2005, and the resulting humanitarian disaster in terms of self-serving politics. The Sudan became a place of great geo-strategic importance and U.S. politicians considered it to have the capacity to become a significant trading partner. In the 1990s and later, as the Cold War ended, the focus of Congressional inquiries moved from the United States' self-preservation to a

¹ Robert O. Collins, testifying in United States Congress, Senate, *The Crisis in Sudan*, May 4, 1993, 30. Mr. Collins answered "all I believe you can offer, senator, is tea and sympathy," to the question of what the United States can do to solve the political crisis in the Sudan.

more humanitarian inclined foreign policy. Congressmen and Senators waxed philosophic about the nature of human suffering in Africa's largest country and pondered on what exactly they could do to end this blight on the world's conscience. Amid their self-congratulating and pompous speeches and their naïve, arrogant, and often redundant questions, Congressional hearings often amounted to little in the way of substantive discussion. They focused much of their time on the issue of humanitarianism, using the suffering of the Sudanese as a cop-out to discussing the true political nature of Sudanese problems.

Often hearings became mired in the conventional wisdom surrounding the Sudanese Civil War: that it was North vs. South, Arab vs. African, Muslim vs. Christian. Although all three are indeed aspects of the civil war, standing alone none of them come close to describing the true nature of Sudanese aggression. The primary reason that the Sudan's civil war has been reduced to such simplistic explanations hinges on the fact that the hearings on the Second Civil War do not take into account the complexities and nuances of the First Civil War. In order to understand the Sudanese civil wars, one must take into account colonial and pre-colonial dynamics that dominated Sudanese life. In addition, the myriad ethnicities that comprise the Sudan existed with their very own political structures long before the Sudan became a country. Certainly, issues of religion, race, and

geographic location play a role, but they do not define the Sudanese struggle. This thesis analyzes U.S. Congressional hearings and American TV news broadcasts- the latter assembled by the Vanderbilt University Television News Archive- in an effort to demonstrate where each of these institutions failed to fully comprehend the complete nature of the Sudanese Civil War.

The first chapter discusses the primary sources the author has chosen as the basis of his research and the reasoning behind his choices. Much of this chapter focuses on the TV News Archive at Vanderbilt University and the transcripts of Congressional hearings from the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s.

The second chapter explains the historical background surrounding the Sudan as a whole. Although the chapter primarily focuses on the Sudan's post-independence machinations, it does begin with a treatment on the Sudan's role as a colony, first within the Turkish Empire and then as a part of the British colonial sphere. This chapter primarily serves as an introduction to the civil war which began shortly after independence.

Three distinct case studies comprise chapters three, four, and five. Chapter three discusses the simplistic dichotomies, African vs. Arab and Christian vs. Muslim, used by Congress and news outlets to describe the Sudan's complex civil war. Congress's and reporters' reliance on these dichotomies led them

either to disregard or overlook the ethnic rivalries reviving in the South at this time. Chapter four examines this intra-South civil war, primarily between the two largest ethnicities, Nuer and Dinka, and also the intra-Nuer fighting. Chapter five analyzes the effect of Cold War politics on the policy positions of, and testimony of witnesses to, the members of Congress. The sixth and concluding chapter discusses the role of humanitarianism in Congress' deliberative process and television news' coverage, and the genocide in Darfur.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Sudan has been mired in civil war since its inception as a newly formed country in 1956. Born of Britain's hasty decision to divest itself from its colonial aspirations following World War II, the Sudan did not enter nationhood with a cohesive political structure in place. Competition for political power and resources, especially between North and South, dominated political life. That struggle has lasted for the past fifty years. Incessant civil war, with few respites of peace, has decimated the country, physically and mentally, leaving scars that may never heal. For their part, foreign governments and media outlets have continually attempted to digest and understand the civil war as they see it. However, oversimplification and lack of in-depth knowledge often beset their good intentioned reporting and deliberations on the second civil war. Much of the relevant historical aspects and causes of the second civil war lie in the preceding war and the colonization period.

The Sudan is the largest country in Africa and comprises a total area of almost two and a half million square kilometers. The name Sudan comes from the Arabic term for the swath of land that crosses the entire continent at relatively the same

longitudinal degrees as the Sudan, called the Bilad es Sudan,² or "The land of the Blacks."³ The Sudan gained its independence on 1 January, 1956 after years of colonization, first under Turkish and then, finally, combined British-Egyptian rule. During British colonization, the Northern half of the country, primarily Arab in make-up, and the Southern half, primarily black-African, progressed separately from each other with neither side coming into much contact with the other. More politically astute than their Southern counterparts and having the nation's capital, Khartoum, in the North, the Northern Arabs enjoyed greater political power during and after colonization.

Following independence the Sudan quickly fell into civil war as Southern fears of Northern hegemony metastasized after Khartoum ordered Southern soldiers to transfer north. Those soldiers mutinied and formed a guerilla army in the Sudanese periphery, sparking the first civil war that lasted until 1972. The Addis Ababa Peace Agreement of 1972 formally ended the first civil war and ushered in a scant eleven year period of uneasy truce and cease-fire. The peace quickly ended in 1983 as Southern aspirations of political autonomy never materialized and Khartoum adopted *Shari'a* (Islamic law) as the basis for Sudanese law, angering many non-Muslims throughout the country.

² One may also see the Arabic name for this area as the Bilad el Sudan or the Bilad al Sudan.

³ Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Sudan: Contested National Identities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998)25.

Members of Congress, witnesses, and TV news media, new to the Sudanese conflict, picked up on the issues of religion, the dichotomy of Christian vs. Muslim, and metamorphosed these into one issue, seeing it as the single greatest reason for war within the Sudan. Reporters and members of Congress alike shunned a historical approach to viewing the Sudanese civil wars and instead boiled the conflict down into two easily recognizable actors, Christians and Muslims. Admittedly, a black and white perception of the war is much easier to digest, but it makes for a poor understanding.

Religion did not have an impact on the first civil war. By focusing on the religious aspect of the second civil war, observers failed to appreciate the historical causes of the first civil war and then viewed the second conflict independently of the first; or worse yet, they retroactively imparted a religious tinge to the first civil war that does not belong there, often by conflating Arab with Muslim and Black-African with Christian and then describing the Arab/African schism as Muslim vs. Christian.

With these sentiments in mind, this thesis analyzes the response and coverage of the second Sudanese civil war by the United States Congress and the major television news broadcasters in the United States. The television news broadcasts considered in this thesis cover the entire period of

the second civil war, 1983-present, and come from the nationally televised broadcasting corporations: National Broadcasting Company (NBC), American Broadcasting Company (ABC), Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), Fox News, and Cable News Network (CNN).

The research for this thesis centers around the available television news broadcasts between the years 1983 and the present and was carried out at the Vanderbilt University Television News Archive in Nashville, Tennessee. To simplify the searching process, the keyword search was limited to "Sudan," viewing every news segment that contained any coverage of the Sudan between 1983 and the present, a total of fifty news segments. The news broadcast sample begins in 1983 to get a sense of news coverage on the Sudan as the country again slid toward civil war.

The base research involved creating a detailed outline of each report, including quotations from the reporter. Congressional hearings were treated in much the same way. The research focused on twelve hearings from the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s that were selected for their pertinence to this thesis. The United States House of Representatives held eight of the hearings, while the Senate held the other four. Instead of looking for specific instances of coded material, each hearing's transcript was read and detailed outlines of the

proceedings were created.

While systematically analyzing the primary documents, common factors in both sets of material became obvious: a chronic lack of understanding and the inability to observe nuance. These deficiencies led to an incomplete picture as presented by television news broadcasts and hindered Congress' ability to formulate a viable peace plan. After assembling all of the data, the hearings were analyzed for references to the three specific issues that comprise the analytical framework for the third, fourth, and fifth chapters: Arab/African dichotomy, ethnic violence, and cold war politics.

For the reliance on the Arab/African and Muslim/Christian dichotomies, transcripts were analyzed for instances where either reporters or participants in the Congressional hearings described the Sudanese civil war as a clash between Arabs in the North and Africans in the South. Occasionally, observers used religious affiliations in place of ethnicity, transposing Arab for Muslim and African for Christian.

Both the Congressional hearings' and the TV news broadcasts' lack of discussion on the ethnic violence in Southern Sudan proved much more straight-forward: News outlets simply did not cover it; Congress did not investigate the matter. Familiar with the intra-South fighting that plagued the second civil war, the author noticed a conspicuous dearth of

inquiries in Congress, and a complete lack of coverage in TV news programs. Much of the discussion on intra-South fighting came from historians, experts in Sudanese history, who ultimately had little impact on the members of Congress who took their testimony.

Congressional hearings during the Cold War presented the most interesting case study. During the Cold War Congressional hearings discussed Sudanese politics vis-à-vis United States policy. The United States acted friendly toward the Sudan only as long as America deemed it necessary. Post Cold War hearings witnessed a relative reduction in friendly attitudes toward the Sudan and an increase in the amount of criticism for Khartoum.

The interplay between television news broadcasts and Congressional hearings presents another interesting topic, perhaps for an additional study. While it would be safe to assume that Congressional officials watched television news, the exact relationship between the two remains unclear. Instances did arise where Congressional hearing attendees either commended the TV news media for its coverage or criticized media outlets for not paying enough attention. These examples were few and far between and had no obvious impact on the Congressional proceedings.

By far, most of the reports focused on the humanitarian disaster that resulted from the intense fighting and the relief

effort, often hampered by both sides' unwillingness to agree to a cease-fire and establish safe-havens for relief workers. More salient to this study, however, was the news portrayal of the war. Journalists invariably depicted the war as a struggle between an Islamic government and Christian rebels, seemingly averse to looking any deeper into the complicated history of the Sudan.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since their independence in 1956 the Sudanese people have seen three failed attempts at democracy and two bloody, protracted civil wars. Through mistaken, yet well intentioned, British policies, the Northern and Southern halves of the Sudan became entrenched in a political and ideological war. Prior to British involvement, the Sudan had already been separated by the great religious divide that runs from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian. The divide separated Africans of Arab descent and culture from the predominantly Black Africans of the Sub-Saharan (those lands south of the Saharan desert). This divide ran straight through the Sudan, pitting the Islamic North against a Christian-Animist South.⁴

Southern Sudan had long been fertile ground for slave raiding Arabs from the north. Even with frequent ventures south, the area beyond the Sahara largely remained a mystery to the North. Northerners viewed the Southerners with disgust and contempt, while Southerners felt little but fear and trepidation toward their northern neighbors. With good reason, Southerners feared a Northern army bent on creating an Islamic state. During Turco-Egyptian rule (1821-1880), the Sudanese effectively

⁴ John Voll, "Effects of Islamic Structures on Modern Islamic Expansion in the Eastern Sudan," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 7 (1974): 85.

put aside their fears and differences and backed the Mahdi Revolt (1881-1898)⁵. The revolt, for a time, delivered the Sudan from Egyptian domination but did little to abate the strong feelings each side held toward the other.⁶

The British conquest of Egypt in 1881 proved helpful to the Sudan and the Mahdi Revolt. Britain refused to entertain Egyptian desires to re-conquer Sudan for fear that it would be too costly. But by 1895 it became clear Britain would have to consolidate its control in the area and sent an Egyptian army to defeat the Mahdi and his followers. After four years of fighting the Sudan was again under foreign control and the new powers signed the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement in 1899. Although on paper some power rested in Egypt's hands, Britain exercised full control over its new colony.⁷

Within the Sudan the old antagonisms never died. Indeed, British policy exacerbated the conflict between North and South. The manifestation of both sides anger came after Britain instituted the "Southern Policy." Although opposition to an Arab dominated state had begun years before, the causes for the war stem from British control and their implementation of this policy; a policy that split the country in two and pitted the

⁵ Carole Collins, "Colonialism and Class Struggle in the Sudan," *MERIP Reports* 46 (April, 1976): 5.

⁶ Sam Sarkesian, "The Southern Sudan: A Reassessment," *African Studies Review* 16 (1973): 2.

⁷ Carole Collins, "Colonialism and Class Struggle", 6

two sides against each other in a desperate battle for political power and state resources.

The Southern Policy did not produce anger only in the South. The north viewed any attempts at separating the north of Sudan from the south as anathema. Northern politicians based their assumption of rule on what Ann Mosely Lesch calls the Control Model;⁸ where adherents to this school of thought believe conflict would have been avoided through the inevitable Arabization of Southern Sudan had the British not stepped in. However, Lesch points out that these Northern intellectuals do not take into account the heterogeneous nature of the Sudan, where Arab and Islam were not the dominant cultures and the North/South conflict had been developing for many years prior to the Southern Policy.⁹

Attempting to establish law and order, in 1898 the British re-conquered the Sudan and maintained power until 1952.¹⁰ Understanding the harmful effects of slavery and unfair trade,

⁸ As articulated by Ann Lesch, the control model asserts that the dominant culture within a state attempts to homogenize the state through assimilation, predicated on the belief that as the dominant culture it has the right to do so. This is in opposition to the Ethnic Pluralist Model, which is a state where the government recognizes the different ethnic and racial groups within society, creating a space for all groups within the government. In a fairly extensive breakdown of Sudanese diversity, one can see that only 40% of the people in Northern Sudan categorize themselves as Arab, out of the 66% of the total population that live in Northern Sudan. Lesch, *Contested Identities*, 8-10, and chart, 17.

⁹ North/South contention resulted in part from a history of Southern enslavement by Northern Arabs and strong pressure for Southern Arabization from the North.

¹⁰ Abel Alier, "The Southern Sudan Question," *The Southern Sudan and the Problem of National Integration*, ed. Dunstan M. Wai (London: Frank Cass, 1973) 13.

the British closed off Southern Sudan from the North. Northerners viewed the new restrictions as anti-Arab, reactionary, and asinine. These restrictions included, but were not limited to: "the prohibition of Arabic, the abolition of Arab names, the wholesale accusations against all Northerners of being slave dealers, and the advantage given to Christian missionaries over Moslem preachers."¹¹ Abel Alier¹², a Southern politician, claims that these measures proved overly zealous for a policy enacted to preserve southern culture, an aspiration essentially moral in nature

The British decided to manage the South differently from the North prior to the implementation of a formal Southern Policy in 1930. The Civil Secretary's formal articulation of such a policy in 1930 established the Southern Sudan as culturally distinct from the North and would therefore "develop along African, rather than Arab lines."¹³ Essentially, in 1930, partition rendered policy. The British established Sudanese government along a "series of self contained racial or tribal units based...upon indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs."¹⁴ This policy left unanswered the question of to whom

¹¹ Alier, "Southern Sudan Question," 15.

¹² Mr. Alier was a prominent member of the Southern Front, President of the Regional Government in the Southern Sudan, Vice-President of the Sudan and spokesman for the South at the Roundtable Conference.

¹³ Douglas Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003) 11.

¹⁴ Appendix 1, "1930 Memorandum on Southern Policy", in *Southern Sudan and National Integration*, ed. Wai, 175.

the area of Southern Sudan would belong; whether it would stay within the Sudan or go to the British East Africa Company. The Southern Policy coincided with the Closed District Ordinance of 1922 that restricted the movement of non-Southerners within Southern Sudan. These two policies further divided North and South in their respective practices of government and administration.

With their civilizing mission incomplete, the British did not give much consideration to Sudanese independence. Much was still to do by way of creating a stable nation-state. Fortunately, or unfortunately, for the Sudanese, just prior to World War II, a new crop of British civil servants made their way to the Sudan, often working as low level assistants. These were the men born and bred in a time of great unrest, World War I and the depression, and they questioned Britain's long held assertion of its right to possess and colonize foreign lands.¹⁵ These men, decades later, came to occupy the senior offices they had earlier assisted. Sir Douglas Newbold, appointed Civil Secretary in 1939, became the patriarch for this progressive group of civil servants. Around this same time, Gordon College and other Sudanese institutions began churning out graduates, creating an educated elite class within society. The educated Sudanese challenged the British decision to allow Egyptian

¹⁵ Robert O. Collins, *The British in the Sudan, 1898-1956*, ed. Robert O. Collins and Francis M. Deng (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1984) 19.

officials back into the Sudan in 1936 and aspired to become spokesmen for the nationalist cause in the Sudan.¹⁶ Through the Graduates' General Congress, these educated elites addressed both the Sudanese people and the British government. The British, even with this new liberal and tolerant political service at work in the Sudan, did not allow the Congress to speak on behalf of the Sudanese people for independence. This effectively split the Congress into two halves, the moderate Umma Party, which accepted British wisdom in the matters of government, and an extremist party, Ashiqqa' (Brothers), led by Isma'il al-Azhari.¹⁷ Northerners dominated both of these political parties and allowed Southerners a very small role in any discussions. Northern domination quickly became the paradigm for Sudanese politics.

Sudanese politicians and the British did not officially discuss the Southern Sudan until the Juba Conference of 1947, to which they only invited eighteen Southerners. According to the Civil Secretary who called the meeting, Sir James Robertson, the Juba Conference was not a meeting intended to create any new policy. Sir Robertson merely wanted to gauge the political proficiency of the Southerners. He states that he only invited eighteen because "there were no provincial advisory councils in the South at this time and so no way of electing representatives

¹⁶ Collins, *British in the Sudan*, 20.

¹⁷ Collins, *British in the Sudan*, 21.

to come to my Juba conference."¹⁸ Robertson concluded that Southerners employed sound political acumen and would, therefore, not be dominated by the North within a unified national assembly.

The British acceptance of a Sudanese legislative council encompassing both halves of the Sudan angered many within Egypt, most importantly King Faruq. He summarily revoked the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 and declared himself king of Egypt and the Sudan. In response, the British refused to acknowledge the end of the treaty and proposed a "self-governing statute for the Sudan in the Legislative Council."¹⁹ However, self-determination for the Sudan would not have been possible had Nasser not led the Free Officers Revolution in Egypt in 1952. With Egypt's old-guard out of power, Sudan had a new ally in their quest for independence. In 1952 all parties agreed to Sudanese independence within three years and Sudan held its first elections for a representative parliament in 1953. Problems, however, quickly ensued. By voting for the NUP (National Unionist Party), many Sudanese felt they were voting for independence from Britain. They realized by 1954 that they were in fact voting for a party backed by Egypt, a sworn enemy of many in the state, especially in the South. They did not want

¹⁸ Sir James Robertson, *Transition in Africa* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974) 107.

¹⁹ Collins, *British in the Sudan*, 25.

their future tied to that of Egypt, sparking massive demonstrations within Sudan and a mutiny by Southern soldiers of the Equatoria Corps in 1955.²⁰

Shortly thereafter, the first civil war began following the soldiers' mutiny in the southern town of Torit. Southern fears of Northern domination had long been simmering, but neither side had yet to take up armed struggle. The murder of Northern civilians in the South by these soldiers can be seen as the first casualties of this war, and the reaction by the North the first counterattack. The mutiny itself proved more helpful to Sudanese sovereignty than Southern politics. Britain no longer wanted the responsibility of presiding over a country falling precipitously into civil war. Ironically, Southern armed resistance was an attempt to force the British to notice the South more and give it more rights within government. According to Douglas Johnson, "the final paradox of Sudanese independence was that it was thrust upon the Sudan by a colonial power eager to extricate itself from its residual responsibilities."²¹ Independence was not predicated along a national sentiment and was, therefore, doomed from the start. Everyone in the Sudan wanted independence, but the mechanisms were not in place to ready everyone for it. Coupled with the deep resentment between the North and South, independent Sudan had but one option, civil

²⁰ Collins, *British in the Sudan*, 25.

²¹ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 29.

war.

The deep schism between North and South Sudan was not that the North was predominantly Muslim or that the South was predominantly Christian or Animist. Instead, the resentment grew out of the North's never ending attempt of Arabization in the South. As the majority group, the Arabs in the North believed they had a right to assimilate the peoples of the South into an Islamic republic, encompassing all of the Sudan. This is what inspired the South to take up arms. Khartoum expelled all Christian missionaries from the South in 1964 and accompanied its attempt at Islamization with repressive campaigns of terror against Southern populations in the late 1950s and early 1960s.²² Fearing possible arrest or execution, many politicians in the South fled to border countries or the bush. Many politicians and academics formed political parties, en émigré, fighting for Southern rights and freedoms. In 1963, the Anya Nya was established, comprised primarily of the 1955 mutineers, Southern police officers, and civil servants. The Anya Nya was the military wing of SANU (Sudan Africa National Union) but quickly grew tired of politicians directing them from exile. Within the Sudan, the various Anya Nya regiments coalesced under the leadership of Lt. General Joseph Lagu in 1970.

²²Johnson, *Root Causes*, 31.

With an opposition military in place, the civil war lacked only a mass movement. The Sudan did not have long to wait. The October Revolution of 1964 effectively ousted Gen. Abboud from power, forcing him to relinquish control to a transitional military council. The revolution began after police opened fire on a peaceful demonstration at the University of Khartoum. These students strongly disliked the Khartoum military and many sympathized with the Southern cause. The police, not equipped or trained to deal with riots, opened fire on the crowd killing one and injuring nine. At the funeral the next day, an angry mob denounced the Abboud regime and the University of Khartoum staff resigned in protest. Professionals and non-professional workers quickly joined the professors in protest. On October 26, 1964, oppositional leaders called for a general strike.²³ General Abboud agreed to hand over power and the revolution proved a temporary success.

The new transitional government did not fare much better. Led by Sir al-Khatim al-Khalifa, Northerners saw the new government as a concession to the Southern people. A Northerner well liked in the South, al-Khalifa viewed the "Southern problem as a political question and not a military one."²⁴ Khartoum and the Anya Nya were even able to negotiate a cease-fire. But two

²³ Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* (London: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974) 215.

²⁴ Kyle Keith, "The Sudan Today," *African Affairs* 65 (1966): 239.

problems arose: the state of emergency was not lifted and the Anya Nya had poor communications between its regiments. In al-Khalifa's refusal to abrogate the state of emergency, the South saw no real difference between the new government and the old regime, leading to further animosity between the North and South. Second, poor communication within Anya Nya meant that not everybody heard the cease-fire, which led to more fighting.

The Round Table Conference of 1965 proved another failure. The Anya Nya continued their attack during the conference, weakening the Sudan's negotiating position. Fighting kept the South from voting in the 1965 elections and left the South with no representatives in the new parliament. The South did not do much better in the 1968 elections, when power was still concentrated in the hands of Islamist regimes in the North. The lack of members in parliament in 1965 allowed for the government to unleash its security forces on the South under the guise of restoring law and order. The civil war intensified and Northern soldiers arbitrarily murdered many unarmed civilians in the South. The parliament also kept up efforts to assimilate the South into an all-Islamist country.²⁵

The coup of 1969, orchestrated by Jafaar Numeiri, was seen as an opportunity for a non-sectarian government and a possible lull in fighting. Although the south got in Numeiri a

²⁵ Lesch, *Contested Identities*, 43.

secularist, he was still a highly authoritarian dictator with a new policy focused on pan-Arabism. Numeiri viewed the South as an integral part of the Sudan and considered treasonous any attempts at secession. To combat the Southern troops, he stationed two-thirds of his troops in the South and sporadically attacked Anya Nya soldiers.²⁶ Then, as soon as it started, it seemed the fighting would come to an end, much to the astonishment of everybody. Both sides had grown weary of the struggle and Numeiri realized his forces could not defeat the Anya Nya as long as they continued their guerilla tactics. For the Anya Nya, their numbers were too small to openly attack Numeiri's forces and they could not win using its guerilla tactics. Both sides came to a standstill and wanted an end to the fighting.

The Addis Ababa Peace Accords of 1972 effectively brought to an end the first civil war in the Sudan. But it was clear the peace would not last. Both sides failed to achieve any victory at the negotiating table. The whole Southern movement had been predicated on the fight for independence from the North, but the best they received from the treaty was regional autonomy. Khartoum began a campaign to eradicate Southern forces, mainly the Anya Nya, and Arabize the people and the land. Numeiri managed to keep the Sudan together but had to

²⁶ Sarkesian, "Southern Sudan," 15.

give autonomy to its provinces. Clearly, neither side won.

Infighting marred both the North's and the South's political positions giving the peace accords little chance of surviving. Southern politics came to be dominated by two men: Abel Alier and Joseph Lagu. Alier was president of the High Executive Council (HEC) managing the South from 1972-1978 but came to be seen as a supporter of Numeiri. He allowed the president to curtail Southern regional government authority, which resulted in South having no control over its economy or education. Hoping for change, Southerners elected Joseph Lagu president of the HEC in 1978. As president, Lagu attempted to replace the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the regional government. His subsequent fight with the judiciary led to a temporary shutdown of the court system. In response, Numeiri dissolved the national and regional assemblies and held new elections in which Alier was again elected president of the HEC.²⁷

In the North, Numeiri felt pressure of his own. Northerners did not appreciate the level of autonomy, however paltry it was, afforded to the South in the Addis Ababa Peace Accords. Numeiri, up to this point, had received more support from the South because of his concessions in the peace accords than in the North. Two coup attempts made him nervous of outside forces, prompting him to issue a National Reconciliation

²⁷ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 43.

that allowed all of those responsible for the coup attempts to come back into the government. Support from the South waned with the new influx of Islamists back into the country.

The economy also declined. Efforts to modernize its agricultural capacity fell short and the Sudan was deeply indebted to outside creditors by 1980. In 1977-1978 the Sudan was unable to pay its debts as they came due. The United States stepped in and restructured its debt, but the country remained in very bad shape. The National Reconciliation allowed for Islamists to have a greater hand in government and welcomed the ideas the United States put forward concerning privatizing the Sudan's public corporations. The government used all Islamic banks for lines of credit.²⁸ With the economy in shambles Numeiri searched for a way to advert the people's attention. His answer: reintroduce Shari'a law and designate his country a caliphate. On September 23, 1983, Numeiri began his turn to Islam by pouring bottles of whiskey into the Nile River.²⁹ Not only did this mark a new Islamic era within the Sudan, it also set the date for the second civil war.

Southern troops stationed at the southern city of Bor, as though it were 1955 all over again, mutinied after receiving orders to transfer north. With the constant reshuffling of

²⁸ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 44.

²⁹ Graham Thomas, *Sudan 1950-1985: Death of a Dream* (London: Darf Publishers Ltd., 1990) 198.

presidents and governments, it proved difficult for Numeiri to learn from past mistakes. In an attempt to quell the uprising, Khartoum requested John Garang, a member of the military, to mediate a surrender. Bor, after all, was his hometown so he was a Southerner like them. But there was just one problem; John Garang was a Southerner like them! He joined the mutineers and managed to spread the uprising throughout most of the troops in the South. Similar to the mutineers of 1955, these newest ex-soldiers fled into the bush and joined the Anya Nya II rebels. This marriage proved unsuccessful and they fled further, mostly into Ethiopia where they received support from President Mengistu. The resulting army and political operation was named the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A).³⁰ Ethiopia provided massive amounts of support for the rebels, including artillery shells and air support for attacks on the North. The SPLM/A grew rapidly, amassing 20,000 troops by 1985.

In 1985 the Sudan witnessed the demise of Numeiri as president. The continuing war with John Garang and the SPLA coupled with mounting protests in the streets and multiple worker strikes brought the regime to its knees. While on a state visit to Washington, Numeiri's Defense Minister, Abd al-Rahman Suwar al-Dhabab relieved Numeiri of duty and implemented another transitional government, the Transitional Military

³⁰ G. Norman Anderson, *Sudan in Crisis* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999) 70.

Council (TMC).³¹ Having played a hand in Numeiri's downfall, John Garang believed the new leadership would be willing to talk productively with the SPLM/A. He received mixed messages from the government and the TMC did not attend the meetings.

The National Alliance, however, did agree to meet with the SPLM at Koka Dam. On March 26, 1986, both parties sat down and agreed to form a new Sudan, based on equal rights and an end to racism. They also agreed to contact the National Islamic Front (NIF) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) to obtain their agreement as well. However, the National Alliance and SPLM disagreed on the issue of holding elections. Garang did not want to hold any parliamentary elections prior to a new constitution, a process that could not begin without the NIF and the DUP, the primary members of the TMC.

Far from wanting to sign any peace accords, total destruction of the SPLM consumed the NIF and Umma parties. When the DUP finally signed an accord with the SPLM, the Umma-NIF majority blocked its approval through parliament. The war continued to rage and, finally, officers forced the prime minister to decide on either gathering the force he needed to defeat the SPLM or negotiating with them.³² Al-Mahdi, leader of the Umma party, which held the largest block of seats in the TMC, and therefore prime minister of the TMC as well, chose the

³¹ Lesch, *Contested Identities*, 62.

³² Lesch, *Contested Identities*, 83

latter and accepted the DUP-SPLM Accord into a new government. Fearing a wane in power for the NIF, al-Mahdi attempted to end the cease-fire that the government and the SPLM had agreed to and suspend the accord between DUP and SPLM. When it looked like neither of those would happen, the NIF staged a coup and Lt. General Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Beshir came to power in 1989, just days before Sadiq al-Mahdi was scheduled to meet Garang in Addis Ababa.

As the civil war continued, the SPLM suffered multiple setbacks as many within SPLM lost confidence in John Garang as a leader. The primary point of contention was Garang's insistence on staying in Ethiopia and helping Mengistu with the Ethiopian civil war. Many within the SPLM viewed Garang as a puppet of Mengistu. Reik Machar and Lam Akol voiced this opinion and ultimately broke away to form their own wing of the SPLM. War quickly broke out between the two factions, primarily fighting along lines of ethnicity; Garang's SPLM was mostly Dinka while Machar's SPLM was mostly Nuer. This shift toward intra-South fighting brought war to the door steps of the civilian population. SPLA-Nasir (led by Machar) accepted support from Khartoum in their struggle against Garang. This allowed Khartoum to move about Nasir territory free from harm, giving them an upper hand in the South.³³

³³ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 99.

The first military success for the Garang's SPLA (referred to merely as SPLA) in some time came in 1995-1996 when it launched a major offensive against government forces. Most of the government's advances from 1992 were rolled back. The newly formed National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was integral to the SPLA's success. This new coalition was formed from both Northern and Southern opposition groups, encouraged by the other states in the region. But, a crisis in leadership still loomed for the SPLA and the NDA. A formal alliance between Khartoum and anti-Garang forces led to rebellion within the Southern forces and desertions to Garang's SPLA. This new success was short lived as the Ethiopian-Eritrean war cut off supplies and support to Garang's forces.³⁴ Khartoum had problems of its own as Beshir and Hasan al-Turabi, the leading scholar for the Islamist movement in the Sudan,³⁵ fought each other for power. Both attempted to garner al-Mahdi's support from the NDA. He did eventually return from exile and support Beshir. Turabi was summarily imprisoned. As al-Mahdi left the NDA it began to disintegrate, as did its coalition with the SPLA.³⁶

An end to hostilities in the Sudan seems elusive, at best. The North-South civil war constitutes but one such war raging

³⁴ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 107.

³⁵ Raghid El-Solh, "Islamist Attitudes towards Democracy: A Review of the Ideas of al-Ghazali, al-Turabi and 'Amara," *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 20 (1993): 59.

³⁶ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 108.

within the Sudan. The peace initiatives of the twenty-first century are the first steps in a very long journey toward peace. The IGAD peace talks and Machakos Protocol are vital for the peace process but fairly insignificant as one side or both refuse to sign or obey them. It seems self-determination for the South remains a pipe dream, considering Khartoum's campaign sweeping through Darfur.

The Sudan's interminable violence has garnered international attention, reaching a fever pitch in the face of genocide in Darfur. Although peace remains perpetually elusive, the United States Congress and U.S. television news outlets have continued to investigate the Sudan's civil wars. Although well intentioned, analysis emanating from Congress and news media remain confused and incomplete. International peace efforts in the Sudan require a full understanding of the historical and political roots of the conflict if they are to ever work.

CHAPTER 3

OVER-SIMPLIFYING A COMPLEX CIVIL WAR

Simplifying this extremely nuanced and complex conflict into the paradigm of Muslim vs. Christians, or Arab vs. Black African, represents the most common impediment to understanding and resolving the Sudan's civil war. Both the media and U.S. Congress are guilty of substituting the myriad causes of the war with its mere components. While the second war had a greater degree of religious overtones, most scholars argue religion was not its major cause, and the first civil war had little, if any at all, to do with religion or race. Indeed, geography and distribution of resources accounted for more fighting than any other reason.

The media fell into a pattern of presenting a superficial view of the Sudanese conflict when the second civil war began in the early 1980s after President Numeiri abrogated the Addis Ababa Peace Accords, effectively ending 10 years of relative peace. President Jaafar Numeiri rose to power in the 1969 coup that ousted the parliamentary government of the previous five years. He was part of a group that wanted a political end to the civil war rather than the military solution championed by preceding regimes in Khartoum.³⁷ After ten years of peace, Numeiri made the politically expedient decision to institute

³⁷ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 36.

Shari'a law as the basis for Sudanese law. This was a far cry from his role as secularist at the beginning of his rule, and some say it resulted from a personal awakening, but, whatever the cause, it helped him to shore up support and placate some of the more radical Islamists in the North.³⁸ Whether political expediency or personal revelation, it was this beginning to the second civil war that media outlets and members of Congress used to characterize the entire conflict.

The big three broadcast news networks, ABC, NBC, and CBS, did not cover the nascent Sudanese Civil War until 1985. Up to that point their coverage of the Sudan focused on the famine and Sudan's relationship with its neighbors. Still, as these news outlets began sending reporters to the Sudan, much of their reporting focused on the growing humanitarian crisis, an aspect of their coverage that is discussed later in this chapter.

Although reports on the Sudan are few and far between, 1986 proved a sort of watershed year for coverage on the Sudan. In an August 24 NBC broadcast, Mike Wildrich reported from the Sudan that the civil war consisted of a Christian rebel movement fighting an insurgency against a Moslem government.³⁹ Later, in a September 18 report, ABC used the same model for explaining the recent violence, informing the viewer that Arabs, mostly

³⁸ Lesch, *Contested Identities*, 54

³⁹ NBC Evening News, August 24 1986. This and all subsequent citations of TV news accounts are from the versions archived at Vanderbilt University.

Muslim, were fighting Christians, mostly Africans.⁴⁰ Not only did the second broadcast enter into the Muslim/Christian, African/Arab dichotomy, but the reporter also saw it acceptable to interchange Black Africans with Christians in their relation to Arabs (essentially showing that Arabs are all Muslim and that Black Africans are Christian and those terms are easily interchangeable).

The same two television news networks engaged in the simplification of the conflict in later reports as well. In a November 30, 1988, report on mass starvation and the indifference of the leadership on all sides of the fighting, NBC news correspondent Jim Bitterman referred to the SPLA as "Christian rebels."⁴¹ In similar fashion, ABC broadcasts on December 5, 1988, and March 31, 1989, both focused on the level of Christian faith in the Sudanese refugees fleeing to Southwest Ethiopia. In an attempt to position the two religions against each other, the refugees in the March 31, 1989, report were described as mostly Christian and in support of the Southern rebels against the Muslim North.⁴²

In the 1990s, as the SPLA split and the Sudan endured even greater violence, the news agencies became more explicit in their coverage of the war. In an ABC News report on April 22,

⁴⁰ ABC Evening News, September 28 1986.

⁴¹ NBC Evening News, November 30, 1988.

⁴² CBS Evening News, December 5, 1988, and March 31, 1989.

1993, Ron Allen, from location in the Sudan, tells viewers that the north of the Sudan is mostly Arab and Muslim, while the South is mostly African and Christian and that the civil war is a clash between the two religions/races.⁴³ And this view prevails today, with a report as recent as a January 24, 2004, Fox Evening News segment in which the reporter pitted a Muslim government against Christian rebels.⁴⁴

In total, thirteen out of a total of forty-six television news broadcasts portrayed the Sudan's civil war as Arab vs. African or Muslim vs. Christian. Although the number thirteen may seem small and insignificant, the other thirty-three broadcasts did not speak to the reasons for the civil war and the news reporters used the same paradigm throughout their respective news channel's years of coverage, demonstrating an engrained sense of understanding, however misplaced it may be.

The members of the Congressional committees that investigated the civil war in the Sudan proved equally guilty of buying into the paradigm of Arab vs. Black and Muslim vs. Christian; members of Congress, Senators, and witnesses alike, with some exceptions, entered into this naïve way of viewing the Sudanese civil war. Using a cross-section of Congressional hearings starting in 1984, this thesis delineates the attitudes and sentiments of U.S. legislators, and the experts they called

⁴³ ABC Evening News, April 22, 1993.

⁴⁴ Fox Evening News, January 24, 2004.

to testify.

The scholars and government agents who testified as experts on the Sudan proved to be the only attendees of these hearings imploring the U.S. legislative bodies to look at the whole picture of Sudanese history when developing a strategy to end the civil war. Indeed, many of the Congressional committee members who convened hearings on the civil war in Sudan commented on the war as though the first civil war had never happened. In a March 28, 2001, Subcommittee on Africa hearing, Cynthia McKinney, of Georgia, referred to the "18 year old civil war"⁴⁵ currently ravaging the country. And she was far from the only one. Eight years earlier, in a March 10, 1993, hearing, Frank Wolf stated that the "Islamic fundamentalist government has a clear history of intolerance of other religious groups," and that he was in agreement with a Southern Sudanese woman who believed Khartoum targeted Southerners because of their Christian beliefs.⁴⁶

At some points witnesses and Congressional members stated either falsehoods or wonderment at the facts on the ground in the Sudan. At the same hearing as Cynthia McKinney in 2001, Representative Tom Tancredo, of Colorado, stated "it is true

⁴⁵ Rep. Cynthia McKinney, in United States Congress, House of Representatives, *America's Sudan Policy: A New Direction* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office [hereafter USGPO] March 28, 2001) 6.

⁴⁶ Rep. Frank Wolf, in United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Recent Developments in the Sudan* (Washington: US GPO, March 10, 1993) 3.

that you can look historically at the country of Sudan and say, well, there was a time when this population apparently lived together peacefully, but I think oil has changed everything."⁴⁷ Lois Richards, then Acting Assistant Administrator for Food and Humanitarian Assistance of the Agency for International Development, in the March 10, 1993, hearing expressed surprise at the fact that the Sudan had been at war with itself since early on in its independence: "I was reminded by a colleague of mine this morning who had served in the Sudan 27 years ago, that there was a civil war then between the North and the South."⁴⁸ Indeed, recognizing the breadth of misinformation and lack of knowledge on the parts of the other witnesses and members of congress, Robert O. Collins, at the same hearing as Ms. Richards, implored his audience to "remember that this war has been going on since 1965 with a ten year break from 1972 to 1983, this is not something that just began a few years ago."⁴⁹

It would be naïve to argue that issues of religion and race were not significant facets to the struggle between the government in Khartoum and its combatants on the peripheries. But that does not mean that they are the most important factors or that solving these two issues will automatically bring peace.

⁴⁷ Rep. Tom Tancredo, in, *America's Sudan Policy*, 20. The oil he refers to is that discovered in the Southern regions of the Sudan. Competition for resources and receipts for refinement of that oil is causing more strife between the government in Khartoum and Southerners.

⁴⁸ Lois Richards, testimony in *Recent Developments in the Sudan*, 14.

⁴⁹ Robert O. Collins, testimony in *Recent Developments in the Sudan*, 28.

The underlying causes for the Sudan's second civil war reside in deep-seated hatred and mistrust that go back to the mid 1800s. Prior to the Turco-Egyptian regime, under the leadership of Muhammad Ali, Arabs of the North and Africans of the South had been separated by a large swamp area called the *Sudd*. An 1839 excursion South from Khartoum opened up the *Sudd* for the first time and allowed European and Arab traders and hunters to make fortunes in the newly exposed land.⁵⁰

Out of the Arab slave raids into the South emerged Southern hatred of and mistrust toward the North. The people of the South identified themselves as African, even though they belonged to disparate tribes and ethnicities, and fought hard to keep their way of life. The Arabs, on the other hand, used Islam to justify their raids and expeditions south and believed themselves validated in Arabicizing the entire region, a belief that persists even today.⁵¹

The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium of the early 1900s put on hold the Arab efforts to penetrate deeper into the South and take total control. The British discouraged interaction between the Arabs of the North and the Africans of the South and quite ably kept them apart. After World War II the British granted the Sudan independence and began a process of unification

⁵⁰ Dunstan Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York, London: Africana Publishing Company, 1981), 27.

⁵¹ Wai, *African-Arab Conflict*, 29.

between the two regions.⁵² But by then the divisions had grown too deep. The two regions had only a half century of interaction, and that based on exploitation of the South by the North. Indeed, both civil wars can be better understood as a clash of nationalism, each side's nationalist views cultivated through its forced separation.

Nationalism and nationalist identity are key factors in understanding the Sudan's civil wars. Fighting has been over access to national and economic resources and "Sudan's conflict since its inception had more to do with political and economic hegemony than with ethnicity."⁵³ An excellent example of this is the current conflict in Darfur, an offshoot of the second civil war. There the media has mislabeled the combatants as "Arabs" and "Black Africans", when in actuality members of the Darfurian political movements battling Khartoum "identify themselves as Arabs, Afro-Arabs, and Africans" and adhere to differing degrees of Islamic devotion. The only thing they have in common is an "opposition to the policies of the government in Khartoum and their associated Militias."⁵⁴

⁵² Charles Gurdon, *Sudan at the Crossroads* (Cambridgeshire, England: Middle East and North African Studies Press, Ltd., 1984), 12.

⁵³ Khalid Mansur, *War and Peace in Sudan: A Tale of Two Countries* (London: Kegan Paul, 2003), 278.

⁵⁴ Ruth Iyob and Gilbert Khadiagala, *Sudan: The Elusive Quest for Peace* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006.), 66.

CHAPTER 4

THE INTRA-SOUTH CIVIL WAR

Congress' singular ability to simplify the Sudanese conflict did not limit itself to its favored dichotomy, Arab vs. African. Congressional focus on this factual, yet ineffective, dichotomy took attention away from the inter- and intra-ethnic fighting in the South of the Sudan. Long simmering under the surface, ethnic conflict came to a head in the 1990s as the SPLA split along ethnic lines. A study of Congressional hearing transcripts demonstrates an overwhelming failure to completely understand the Southern cause. Mention of ethnic violence is few and far between, with an in-touch few imploring their colleagues and congressmen to understand ethnic grievances as they relate to the peace process. In contrast to television news, Congress seems extremely well-informed as TV news broadcasts failed to mention the growing ethnic violence altogether.

Of the twelve Congressional hearing transcripts in this study, a paltry four hearings included testimony or questions directly related to the burgeoning ethnic strife in Southern Sudan. Naturally, the preponderance of discussion rested primarily in the hearings of the mid-1990s as it became more and more obvious that ethnic violence, beyond that between Arabs and Africans, would become a permanent plague on the peace process.

Noel Koch, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs, proved prescient in his analysis of the difficulties faced by the Sudan at the "Sudan: Problems and Prospects" hearing on March 28, 1984. Although probably not cognizant of the implications of his words, he understood that the Sudan was beset by problems common to all developing nations; "economic difficulties, difficulties attending the national integration of disparate in-tribe national elements and infrastructural short-comings."⁵⁵ Koch deviated, however, from later analysis of ethnic violence because he was an official in an American presidential administration that supported President Numeiri. Naturally, he did not see ethnic differences as a problem to be addressed, but rather a problem to be overcome in an attempt for Numeiri to rule effectively.

In the 1990s, as ethnic violence heated to a boil, experts and government officials addressed ethnicity as a problem to be solved in order to achieve a peace settlement acceptable to everyone. Robert O. Collins, a historian and Sudanese expert from the University of California, Santa Barbara, represents the constant voice for understanding the Sudanese Conflict historically and holistically. His testimony at the hearing "Recent Developments in Sudan," on March 10, 1993, was buttressed with testimony from Lois Richards and Herman Cohen,

⁵⁵ Noel Koch, testimony in US Congress, House of Representatives, *Sudan: Problems and Prospects* (Washington: USGPO, March 28, 1984) 4.

from the Agency for International Development and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, respectively. At the time, ethnic mobilization began to manifest itself and SPLM/A split into warring factions along ethnic lines. This new wrinkle presented problems for delivering food and supplies to refugee camps and divided a tentatively united front for dealing with the government in Khartoum.

As the situation in the Sudan grew steadily worse, the militarization of ethnic identity⁵⁶, especially amongst the Nuer and Dinka, continued to solicit little discussion from Congressional committee members and witnesses. The omnipresent Robert O. Collins was joined only by George Moose and Nelson Kasfir in discussing this new war in the South at the hearing "The Crisis in Sudan" on May 4, 1993. Like most every other Congressional hearing on the Sudan, most of the discussion focused on the growing humanitarian disaster and the obstacles presented by the Sudanese government and rebel groups to delivering relief supplies. It got to the point that Roger Winter, a veteran of multiple hearings on the Sudan, called for a more politically centered discussion of the conflict and believed "dwelling on the humanitarian can be an excuse, can draw attention from the need for clear, politically based

⁵⁶ Idea credited to Sharon Hutchinson, "Sudan's Prolonged Second Civil War and the Militarization of Nuer and Dinka Ethnic Identities," *African Studies Review* 42 (September 1999): 125-145.

policy."⁵⁷

Roger Winter was not the only American government official to observe the growing tension in the South of Sudan. George Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, understood the challenge of a fractured opposition in the South. He knew the Abuja Peace Conference of 1993 would never work because Khartoum and John Garang refused to allow for broader participation. Indeed, Moose expressed concerns that resolving the intra-SPLA conflict would prove to be as vital to the peace process as ending the war between Khartoum and the SPLA. Nelson Kasfir, professor at Dartmouth University, seconded this very notion. For Kasfir, a SPLA split resulted in reduced bargaining power because a single opposing force emanating from the South could have more easily forced the government of Sudan to reach a settlement.⁵⁸

As menacing as the incestuous war seemed, intra-SPLA fighting amounted to little more than a flash in the pan for both members of Congress and the experts testifying at their hearings. A cross section of subsequent hearings saw that Congressional officials continued to call before them experts on refugees, humanitarian assistance, and slavery. Politicians paid little attention to the historical roots to the conflict or

⁵⁷ Roger Winter, testimony in United States Congress, US Senate *The Crisis in Sudan*, (US Senate, May 4, 1993) 33.

⁵⁸ Nelson Kasfir, testimony in *The Crisis in Sudan*, May 4, 1993, 24.

to the fighting in the South. Instead of a clear political discussion on how best to broker peace, the hearing was muddled by continued focus on the Muslim/Christian dichotomy, humanitarian assistance, and what it all means for the United States of America. In the March 22, 1995, hearing, also entitled "The Crisis in Sudan," Edward Brynn was the only person to communicate the urgency of ethnic fighting in the South. Even he could not resist the lure of religious terminology. While he established that the Sudan is comprised of multiple ethnic groups, he conceded that the historical divide was between a Muslim North and a Christian/Animist South.⁵⁹

The new millennium witnessed a drastic change in the dominant discussion on the Sudan at Congressional hearings. The genocide in Darfur, which will be discussed in greater detail later, replaced religion, the humanitarian crisis in the South, and ethnic fighting as the dominant issue. While the situation in Darfur focused much more attention on the Sudan, it distracted American policy makers from making a concerted effort to help the Sudan forge a lasting peace. Donald Payne, Representative from New Jersey, went so far as to argue that addressing the root causes of the war represented the best path for an attainable peace. He then pointed to oil, petrol-dollars, as a key facilitator and cause of the war and the

⁵⁹ Edward Brynn, testimony in United States Congress, House of Representatives, *The Crisis in Sudan*, March 22, 1995, 8.

genocide in Darfur, apparently believing the war started just recently and he is perhaps disingenuous in calling for a better understanding of the root causes.⁶⁰ Cynthia McKinney, Representative from Georgia, furthered that same notion, pointing to the oil as a catalyst for the war and genocide. The most egregious misunderstanding of the war, however, belongs to Tom Tancredo, representative from Colorado. Mr. Tancredo claimed that "it is true you can look historically at the country of Sudan and say, well, there was a time when this population apparently lived together peacefully, but I think oil has changed everything."⁶¹

The caveat that "oil has changed everything" implies that prior to the discovery of oil, the ethnic groups inhabiting the South of Sudan and the Arabs of the North got along peacefully, if not harmoniously. This argument further implies that the second civil war existed independent of the first and fails to take into account violence before, and irrespective to, the discovery of oil.

The primary impetus for the largely invisible conflict in the South was a clash of ideology, a "war of visions."⁶² Congress and television news reports focused so intently on ascribing a

⁶⁰ Rep. Donald Payne, in *America's Sudan policy : a new direction?*, 5

⁶¹ Rep. Tom Tancredo, in *America's Sudan Policy: a new direction?*, 20

⁶² A term coined by Francis Deng in describing the difficulty of creating an encompassing plan for Southern Sudan; see his book of the same name, *War of Visions* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995).

grand narrative for the war, between North/South, Arab/African, Muslim/Christian, they failed to see the smaller wars brewing in other parts of the country. An ironic take on an arboreal expression, Congress and TV news reporters failed to see the trees for the forest. Congress' and TV news media's failure to understand the political dynamics of the South led to their bewilderment at the onset of intra-South conflict, limiting their ability to report accurately, or at all as was seen in this case, or provide effective assistance.

The primary ethnicity, that is the ethnicity with the most power within the state, is Arab, which makes up roughly 40 percent of the population. The Islamists, who are a part of the Arab identity, control the government and lead the fight against Southern rebels. Ann Mosely Lesch, Sudanese expert, categorizes the Islamist government as belonging to the Control Model, where "the state tries to undermine and even destroy other ethnic national groups that exist within its boundaries, whether by assimilation or repression."⁶³ It is within this context that the Nuer and Dinka find themselves, leading the South against a repressive Islamist government and, since the eruption of inter-ethnic violence within the South, against each other. The Southern ethnic groups, especially those fighting Khartoum, identify themselves as African and view the Arabs of the North

⁶³ Lesch, *Contested Identities*, 9.

as the enemy.

Competition for natural, not political, resources define the historical relationship between ethnic groups in Southern Sudan. A heavy reliance on cattle caused conflict between migrating tribes over grazing land and intricate bride-wealth systems. In the eighteenth century the Nuer were the most aggressive tribes in Southern Sudan. Their bride-wealth system, where the bride's family receives cattle from the groom's family as payment for the woman's lost services, could require a groom's family to relinquish as much as forty head of cattle. The sheer cost, then, of marriage required Nuer families to maintain large herds of cattle, prompting them to seek huge swaths of land that brought them into direct competition with other cattle herding tribes.⁶⁴ Arab slave raids had the same effect. Nuer fleeing east from Arab slavers conquered the tribes who put up resistance, mostly Dinka, and assimilated them into their groups. Indeed, the Nuer populations "increased fourfold" during this period.⁶⁵

The first half of the twentieth century saw a marked decrease in the relative violence between Nuer and Dinka. The reasons can be traced back to the Turco-Egyptian rule from 1821-

⁶⁴ Raymond C. Kelly, *The Nuer Conquest: The Structure and Development of an Expansionist System* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985) 117.

⁶⁵ Stephanie Beswick, *Sudan's Blood Memory: The Legacy of War, Ethnicity and Slavery in Early South Sudan* (Rochester, NY : University of Rochester Press, 2004) 174.

1885, better known as the Turkiyya. This period saw a massive increase in slave raids on the African tribes of the Sudan as Arabs needed workers and soldiers. The Turkiyya ended Dinka dominance in the South and preoccupation between ethnic groups. "Now, externally generated traumas would equally, although not exclusively, consume the lives of Southern people."⁶⁶ Douglas Johnson made note of the same phenomena; "Eastern Jikany (Nuer) quickly changed from being harassers of the Northern Dinka to becoming their protectors against Turco-Egyptian raids."⁶⁷

The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium from 1898-1952 was the greatest period of calm between the Nuer and Dinka. Under the "Nuer Settlement Policy" of the 1920s and 1930s, Nuer were separated from their Dinka neighbors. It was part of a "pacification campaign" by the British against the Nuer.⁶⁸ The new laws forbade the Nuer from raiding cattle from other tribes and created a no man's land between the Nuer and Dinka. The British abrogated this policy in 1936 and drew up plans to merge the Nuer and Dinka tribes into a single political unit. All of this was under the umbrella of the Southern Policy, enacted in 1930 to stem the violence in Southern Sudan, pacify all of the peoples, and stop Arabs from taking advantage of the lesser

⁶⁶ Beswick, *Sudan's Memory*, 195

⁶⁷ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 186.

⁶⁸ Sharon Hutchinson, *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War and the State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 115.

developed Southerners economically.⁶⁹ The British abrogated the plan for cohesion along with its Southern Policy in favor of Sudanese unity in preparation for independence.

The separation became a problem when the British did not attempt to increase infrastructure and development within the South to compete with the North. There were too few schools to educate and train the people and no government secondary schools to create a politically astute class of civil servants.

Ann Mosely Lesch illustrates the disparity between the North and South economies by analyzing the per capita gross domestic product in 1956; people living in greater Khartoum earned 119 Sudanese Pounds whereas people living in the three Southern provinces earned only twelve Sudanese Pounds.⁷⁰ The effects of the Southern Policy were compounded by its sudden abandonment "on the eve of the imperial withdrawal." Dunstan Wai opines that the real "crime" against the Southerners was not in the Southern Policy's adoption, for he thinks it was the right policy, but was "its abandonment and the political unification of the two disparate regions."⁷¹

Southern Sudanese politics after independence revolved around the issue of secession from, or unity with, the Arab

⁶⁹ Wai, *Southern Sudan*, 14-15.

⁷⁰ Lesch, *Contested Identities*, 33.

⁷¹ Dunstan Wai, "Pax Britannica and the Southern Sudan: The View from the Theatre," *African Affairs* 79 (July, 1980): 375.

government seated in Khartoum. During the first civil war, from 1955 to 1972, there was more or less a pan-African feel to the movement; mass cooperation between many of the ethnic groups supplanted inter-ethnic violence. Allan Reed, who spent ten months with Anya Nya forces in 1971, saw a great deal of inter-ethnic cooperation. He commented on the ease with which Dinka troops traveled through historically non-Dinka territory and concluded that "there is a genuine Southern Sudanese nationalism now that crosses over tribal boundaries."⁷² The Anya Nya themselves did not make a point to distinguish between ethnicities relative to the total war effort. According to the Anya Nya, it was "fighting for freedom for the people of Southern Sudan-freedom to determine their own cultural, religious and linguistic character. Freedom to be African."⁷³

The Addis Ababa Peace Agreement, signed in 1972 in Ethiopia, ushered in an eleven-year period of uneasy peace and ceasefire. The South was granted regional autonomy and it looked as though there would be the chance for a referendum on Southern self-determination. Those hopes were dashed when President Jafaar Numeiri, the same man who brought the belligerents to the peace table, abrogated the peace agreement

⁷² Allan Reed, "The Anya Nya: Ten Month's Travel with its Forces Inside the Southern Sudan," *Munger Africana Library Notes* 11 (Feb., 1972): 20.

⁷³ The Anya Nya, *The Anya Nya Struggle: Background and Objectives* (South Sudan: South Sudan Resistance Movement, 1970[?]) distributed by *The Grass Curtain*, a newsletter published by the Anya Nya in London, England.

by instituting Shari'a Law in the North. Islamization and Arabization were renewed as policies for the government and Southern militias took up arms once again to defend against what they saw as Arab domination. More important was the ethnic violence, primarily amongst Nuer and between Nuer and Dinka, that became a part of the second civil war in the late 1980s.

The 1980s saw a drastic increase in Nuer on Nuer violence, primarily consisting of spear attacks between close kinsmen. But Nuer fighting Nuer was nothing new. The 19th century was rife with intra-Nuer violence. Compensation for homicide was similar to bride payment and acted as a "redistributive mechanism" for cattle.⁷⁴ The new ethnic violence during the second civil war hardened ethnic identities and fractured an already fragile commitment between the parties to fight the North.

Intra-South violence prior to 1991 paled in comparison to the destruction wrought by the split in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLA). It is difficult to ascertain the exact role of ethnicity in causing the SPLA split. Riek Machar and Lam Akol were the leaders of the breakaway faction SPLA-Nasir. Machar was a native Nuer and most of the militarized Nuer simply followed him into the new SPLA. This left the Dinka to stay with their fellow tribesman, John Garang.

⁷⁴ Kelly, *Nuer Conquest*, 115.

"Confined to the highest ranks of the SPLA leadership, this political rift soon sparked off a full-scale military confrontation between the two largest ethnic groups in the South, the Dinka and Nuer."⁷⁵

It proved tough for non-Dinka members of the political class to overlook John Garang's dictatorial style. Many, both inside and outside the rebel movement, perceived the SPLA "as a Dinka movement inspired by traditional Dinka concerns and aspirations."⁷⁶ Joseph Lagu, former commander of Anya Nya forces, accused the Dinka of dominating the SPLA and paying little regard to other ethnic groups.⁷⁷ Political aims were also a point of divisiveness. Lam Akol "persuaded Riek Machar to support secession and try to overthrow Garang,"⁷⁸ who wanted to keep the North and South unified. The lack of democratization within SPLA ranks and a clear split in political ideology precipitated "personal grievances and rivalries that had been brewing over a period of time" that could not be overcome through diplomacy.⁷⁹

The conflict between the disparate ethnicities of the

⁷⁵ Sharon Hutchinson, "A Curse from God? Religious and Political Dimensions of the post-1991 Rise of Ethnic Violence in South Sudan," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 39 (June 2001): 308.

⁷⁶ M.A. Mohamed Salih, "The Ideology of the Dinka and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement," in *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, edited by Katsuyoshi Fukui and John Markakis (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1994), 198.

⁷⁷ Joseph, Lagu, *Decentralization: A Necessity for the Southern Provinces of the Sudan* (Khartoum: Samar P. Press, 1981), 63.

⁷⁸ Lesch, *Contested Identities*, 157.

⁷⁹ Deng, *War of Visions*, 230.

South, especially the Nuer and Dinka, devolved into a brutal tit-for-tat. While the breakaway SPLA factions decried Garang's human rights abuses and lack of democracy, ironically, they did not seem to mind committing human rights atrocities of their own. In one particular response to a Nuer raid against a Dinka village, a Dinka officer rounded up unsuspecting Nuer civilians and executed them.⁸⁰

Intra-ethnic fighting in Southern Sudan further complicated U.S. Congressional and media attempts at understanding and describing the civil war. In the 1980s Congressional members and media reporters overlooked the ethnic fighting in favor of a focus on Cold War politics. United States politicians viewed the Sudan as a possible ally in the Cold War and constructed foreign policy around political expediency. The end of the Cold War allowed members of Congress and the media to shed Cold War paradigms, but they instead focused on the humanitarian issues instead of a political solution to the fighting, both in the South and the larger civil war.

⁸⁰ Hutchinson, "Curse from God?," 318.

CHAPTER 5

COLD WAR POLITICS

The Sudan's second civil war presents a significant case study in Cold War politics as it relates to United States' foreign policy. The second war began in the early 1980s after President Numeiri abrogated the Addis Ababa Peace Agreement and re-implemented Shari'a law, angering non-Muslim Southerners on both accounts. At its onset U.S. policy makers experienced confusion in creating a monolithic U.S. policy toward the escalating civil war. Numeiri was an ally to the West, with his fight against communists in his own country, while the Sudan occupied an important geo-strategic position along the Red Sea, a possible gateway between the Arab World and Black Africa. Attitudes toward Numeiri and the Southern opposition were redefined, effectively switched, and policy positions hardened as the Cold War ended, allowing for a more objective approach to understanding the conflict.

The most effective way to demonstrate the Cold War paradigm lies in how Congress and television news broadcasts portray the two central organizations in this tragedy, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the government of Sudan (Khartoum). This study will use the year 1992 as the break point for reporters and congressional officials no longer using the Cold War paradigm to analyze the Sudanese conflict.

In the 1980s, with the Cold War still dominating foreign policy considerations, news coverage of the Sudan seemed slightly confused. While television reporters made it clear that both sides were to blame for the growing humanitarian disaster, they found it difficult to assign one side the role of villain. But with Cold War terminology so prevalent, issues of national sovereignty reigned supreme rendering rebellion a nuisance in need of suppression. It is in this light that television news coverage portrayed the SPLA and Khartoum. Khartoum's position as an ally in America's fight against communism also helped in assigning judgment between the SPLA and the government of Sudan.

In the period between 1983 and 1992, television news networks covered some aspect of the Sudanese conflict twenty-two times. In the early years of the civil war the media covered Sudan's political machinations as they related to U.S. foreign policy. Sudan borders both Libya and Ethiopia, two countries that at that time enjoyed strong ties to the Soviet Union. Not unexpectedly, American coverage of the Sudan slanted toward these issues. In the late seventies and early eighties, political coverage of the Sudan centered on President Numeiri's expulsion of Soviet advisers following the Sudan communist party's short-lived coup. The news outlets clearly placed Numeiri and the Sudan in the camp of the United States and the

West, a de facto friend of America. Before the rebellion began in earnest, coverage of Southern rebels kidnapping American missionaries and their subsequent rescue by Sudanese troops squarely put Southern demands and military excursions at odds with American sentiment.

After the war started, coverage shifted toward the nascent humanitarian disaster throughout Sudan. Ten of the twenty-two news segments covering the Sudanese conflict depicted the SPLA as the main obstacle to peace and prosperity, mostly due to their hindering of relief supplies. Famine and drought ravaged the country and humanitarian assistance dominated the coverage. Reporters credited the SPLA with shooting down relief planes, threatening further attacks on relief efforts, and open rebellion against the government. While all those claims were true, and reports often claimed that both sides were to blame for the famine and death, little coverage was given to Khartoum's complicity in perpetuating the war and its use of food as a weapon. Of the twenty-two news segments between 1983 and 1992, not a single report explicitly blamed the government of Khartoum for waging a religious/ethnic war against non-Muslims and Africans in the South. Although a few made it clear that there existed animosity between a Muslim government and a non-Muslim South, that line of thought was never fully fleshed out and the viewer was left with an incomplete picture.

From 1992 to 2007 television news networks covered the Sudan twenty-eight times, invariably focusing on the humanitarian relief efforts. However, because the Cold War had ended, news reporters gained a clearer sense of how to assess blame and freed themselves from the Cold War paradigm. Of the twenty-eight segments, six of them clearly portrayed the Khartoum government as the villain, with only one assigning the SPLA to that role.⁸¹ Notice that neither time period contained a news segment that depicted the SPLA nor the government of the Sudan as the protagonist, i.e. nobody is good. In those segments that do not assign blame, they are fully devoted to the economic and humanitarian crises.

United States' Congressional hearings demonstrate the clearest transformation from Cold War politics to a more altruistic based foreign policy toward the Sudan. Discussions about the geo-strategic importance of the Sudan dominated Congressional hearings in the 1980s. Situated along the Red Sea and its close proximity to both the Arab world and Black Africa, the Sudan presented prime real estate for Cold War political maneuvering. The ability to control the Red Sea, with its importance as a trade route from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean, presented an opportunity gain the upper hand against the Soviet Union. A 1982 staff report, compiled for,

⁸¹ CBS Evening News, December 23, 1992.

but not necessarily the views of, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, concluded that the Sudan "is politically and strategically important to the United States," with important borders with Libya and "communist Ethiopia."⁸²

In a 1981 hearing, "Libya-Sudan-Chad Triangle," Representative Howard Wolpe expressed the concern of "many Americans [that] Libya will exploit political strains in Northern Africa in order to foster political change that would be detrimental to American interest" following the assassination of Anwar al Sadat, president of Egypt.⁸³ To shore up further western support within the Sudan, Wolpe went on to float the idea of more economic aid in addition to the military support already allocated. Presiding over another hearing on the Sudan in 1984, "Sudan: Problems and Prospects," Wolpe delineated American support for the Sudan; twenty to twenty-five percent of African Aid goes to the Sudan, with American planes patrolling Sudanese skies to deter Libyan attacks.⁸⁴

At that same 1984 hearing, Noel Koch, Deputy assistant Secretary of State for International Security Affairs, pointed to the same outside agitators, Libya and Ethiopia, and seconded the opinion that Sudan "occupies a critical position on the

⁸² Lewis Gulick and Stephen D. Nelson, *United States Economic Assistance to Egypt and Sudan* (Washington: US GPO, 1982) 39.

⁸³ Representative Howard Wolpe, in US Congress, House of Representatives, *Libya-Sudan-Chad Triangle* (Washington: US GPO, October 29, 1981).

⁸⁴ Representative Howard Wolpe, in *Sudan: Problems and Prospects*, pg #

African continent."⁸⁵ Princeton Lyman, Deputy assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, best summed up the official government attitude for the Reagan Administration: "President Numeiri shares major U.S. objectives in the region, countering Soviet influence in the Arab World and Africa."⁸⁶ Unable to look beyond Cold War politics, both Lyman and Koch went on to congratulate President Numeiri for ending the first civil war in 1972 and touted the value of America's friendship with the Sudan.

In 1989, a few years into the second civil war, attempts to define the SPLA as anathema to the goals of both the United States and Sudan picked up in earnest. In the March 2, 1989, hearing, "Politics of Hunger in the Sudan," Representative Howard Wolpe used the term "Southern insurgents" in reference to the SPLA⁸⁷ and Kenneth Brown, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, reemphasized America's long standing friendship with Khartoum. In a bit of unintended irony, Brown asserted that the United States "will continue to seek an end to external interference in Sudan,"⁸⁸ implying Ethiopia and Russia while not realizing he could just as easily be referring to the United States.

⁸⁵ Noel Koch, testimony in *Sudan: Problems and Prospects*, 4

⁸⁶ Princeton Lyman, testimony in *Sudan: Problems and Prospects*, 18

⁸⁷ Representative Howard Wolpe, in US Congress, House of Representatives, *Politics of Hunger in the Sudan* (Washington: US GPO, March 2, 1989) 1

⁸⁸ Kenneth Brown, testimony in *Politics of Hunger in the Sudan*, 23.

Robert O. Collins and Roger Winter, among others, noticed the underlying current of Congressional members' animosity for the SPLA and overly friendly attitudes toward Khartoum. In 1981 Collins considered it a "very serious mistake" to place Khartoum in either camp vis-à-vis the Cold War, citing its inconsistent foreign policies. He cited economic problems as the major obstacle to Sudanese viability and rejected as "detrimental" large military aid packages from the U.S. to the Sudan.⁸⁹ Douglas Johnson, another historian and Sudanese expert, in 1984 ventured that Khartoum would use Cold War politics to garner U.S. assistance and that Numeiri was bent on establishing an Islamic state within the Sudan.⁹⁰ Roger Winter in 1989 was more explicit. He rejected the notion that the SPLA is America's enemy simply because it is backed by Ethiopia, an ally of the USSR. Instead, he called for rethinking U.S.'s relationship with Khartoum, citing that most of the starvation has occurred in government controlled areas.⁹¹ At the same hearing, a point of ironic levity elicited derisive laughter from the audience after Kenneth Brown assured the panel that the United States would guarantee that Khartoum would not use American military equipment in the South.⁹²

Congressional inquiries on the Sudan shifted from issues of

⁸⁹ Robert O. Collins, testimony in *Libya-Sudan-Chad Triangle*, 4.

⁹⁰ Douglas Johnson, testimony in *Sudan: Problems and Prospects*, 44.

⁹¹ Roger Winter, testimony in *Politics of Hunger in Sudan*, 15.

⁹² Kenneth Brown, testimony in *Politics of Hunger in the Sudan*, 24.

American hegemony in a bi-super power world to human rights and combating terrorism following the end of the Cold War. The United States no longer needed an ally in a theoretical war against the Soviet Union. That fact alone allowed U.S. policy makers to shift their attention from "what can the Sudan do for America?" to "what should America be doing for the Sudan?" With this new attitude came a much more critical view of the Sudanese government.

George Moose clearly defined the growing sentiment in the United States toward the Sudan at the May 4, 1993, hearing "The Crisis in Sudan"; "America's values do not permit us to sit idly by while civil war rages and human rights are systematically abused."⁹³ At the same hearing James Kunder, a veteran of various U.S. government and nongovernmental Aid organizations, points out that the Sudan is fully one-third the size of the United States. Understanding that the Sudan is a large swath of land, Kunder makes it clear that many obstacles stand in the way of effectively delivering aid. In addition to logistical hindrances, many Sudanese were quite averse to foreign aid workers.⁹⁴ Noting that the situation in the Sudan had remained static, Roger Winter believed that the U.S. had no clear policy toward the Sudan other than waiting and watching.⁹⁵ But more

⁹³ George Moose, testimony in United States Congress, Senate, *The Crisis in Sudan* (Washington: USGPO, May 4, 1993) 2.

⁹⁴ James Kunder, testimony in *Crisis in Sudan*, 10.

⁹⁵ Roger Winter, testimony in Senate *The Crisis in Sudan*, 33.

important than what was said is what was not said. In no question or answer did participants discuss the geo-strategic importance of the Sudan. Indeed, participants geared much of the discussion to the humanitarian disaster and possibilities for United States' help; "the overriding American interest is the suffering of innocent people."⁹⁶

Although U.S. policy makers and experts viewed secular governments as benign in themselves, many became alarmed with Khartoum's campaign of forced Islamization in the South, its support for Islamic terrorist organizations, and its harboring of international terrorists, most notably Osama bin Laden. With the threat of terrorism, the hearing concerning "The Crisis in Sudan" on March 22, 1995, saw a reversion to a more selfish foreign policy, but one borne out of self-preservation and not the perpetuation of American hegemony. Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen believed Khartoum's support for insurgency groups and international terrorists presented enough of a reason to no longer view the Sudan as primarily a humanitarian issue but as a threat to U.S. security.⁹⁷ Clearly, Khartoum was no longer the friend to the United States it was during the Cold War.

As the United States became less and less enthralled with Khartoum's politics, members of Congress and witnesses shifted

⁹⁶ Melissa Wells, testimony in House of Representatives, *Crisis in Sudan* (March 22, 1995), 20.

⁹⁷ Rep, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, in House of Representatives, *Crisis in Sudan* (March 22, 1995), 1.

toward a friendlier attitude with regard to the SPLA and other opposition groups. The most glaring reversal of opinion on the SPLA arose between Kenneth Brown, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa in the Bush Administration (1989), and John Prendergast, a Sudanese expert in the Clinton Administration. In 1989 Kenneth Brown testified that a cease fire was an integral part to any peace agreement and military gains by the SPLA undermined any chance for peace negotiations.⁹⁸ In 1995 Prendergast directly contradicted Brown's statements. Lamenting the SPLA split, Prendergast testified that Khartoum would not negotiate a peace settlement unless there was another stalemate that was unlikely with a disunited opposition.⁹⁹ This disagreement clearly demonstrates the reversal of attitudes toward Khartoum and the SPLA, from an earlier U.S. official calling for the SPLA to stop fighting to a later U.S. official calling for a stronger Southern opposition.

If the 1990s saw a more critical American view of Khartoum, the new millennium saw Khartoum's complete vilification. The genocide in Darfur dominated Congressional discussion. One needs to look no further than the Congressional hearing titles to understand the topic of discussion: "Consolidating Peace While Confronting Genocide"; "Darfur Peace and Accountability

⁹⁸ Kenneth Brown, testimony in *Politics of Hunger in the Sudan* (March 22, 1995), 91.

⁹⁹ John Prendergast, testimony in House of Representatives, *Crisis in Sudan* (March 22, 1995), 26.

Act"; and "The Current Situation in Sudan and Prospects for Peace." Without exception, experts and members of congress alike portrayed Khartoum as the *uber*-villain bent on wiping out a whole population. The genocide is covered in the concluding chapter, and the monolithic condemnation of Khartoum throughout the Congressional hearings since the genocide started renders an explanation of nuance here pointless. For these hearings, Khartoum was evil and any opposition seemed heroic.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Failure to understand the myriad nuances and idiosyncrasies of the Sudanese civil wars has bedeviled the U.S. Congress and television news outlets alike. Falling victim to oversimplification, reporters and congressional representatives used tired clichés in explaining complex and sometimes contradictory attitudes between the combatants. Often, they would either use ineffectual dichotomies left over from the first civil war to explain the second, or fail to grasp nascent rivalries that proved prevalent in the second, such as the Muslim/Christian dichotomy in the former and the intra-South fighting in the latter. As for the Cold War, it seems they did not realize they were engaging in Cold War paradigms while reporting on and investigating the Sudan.

While many members of congress as well as television reporters embraced the Sudan with good intentions, it became painfully obvious that they focused on aspects of the war that had little to do with its resolution. The overwhelming majority of news reports and Congressional discussions dealt primarily with the humanitarian crisis and did little to contribute to finding a political solution. Some of the experts testifying before Congress understood this problem and informed the respective committees.

Delivering relief supplies to those in need became a struggle in itself for the relief agencies working in the Sudan. With no political solution in sight, relief organizations battled Khartoum and the SPLA for access to refugees in their respectively held areas. It turned into a major point of contention in 1986 when the SPLA shot down a plane carrying relief to Sudanese citizens.¹⁰⁰ Following the attack, the SPLA vowed to shoot down any plane flying over their territory based on the belief that the planes carried supplies to Northern soldiers. Naturally, the relief agencies denied the accusation, but little came of it. Politics and military strategy proved to be the largest impediments to relief work.

Reporters sent to cover the Sudan quickly realized that much of the food and supplies devoted to starving citizens sat in hangers and on tarmacs waiting for a politically stable window to begin airlifts. To their credit, the news coverage highlighted the reality that Khartoum and the SPLA were using food relief as a weapon. By not allowing relief supplies to go through, each side could curtail the other's willingness to fight. However, the people suffering the most continued to be the innocent civilians. In a war full of ironies, the most brutal was the fact that some starving people were so hungry they could not physically eat. Even if relief got there, it was

¹⁰⁰ ABC evening news, September 18, 1986.

often too late.

The focus of Congressional hearings and television news on the humanitarian aspect of the brutal conflict persisted well into the twenty-first century. The newest conflict to suffer from this acute lack of understanding is the genocide in Darfur. Although the international community, most notably the United Nations and the United States, officially recognized the violence in Darfur as genocide, little has been done to rid the area of the systemic violence that has plagued the area since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Like the civil wars before it, the genocide in Darfur will only end with a political solution. As the Sudan creeps ever closer to a new civil war, and violence begins to dominate the landscape again, the need for a political solution to the Sudan's ills has never been greater.

Darfur is the commonly used name for the area of western Sudan that was once dominated by the Fur people¹⁰¹, encompassing about 508,000 square kilometers.¹⁰² Fur allegiance to the Nile River area, modern day Sudan, resulted from *fuqura* evangelism in Darfur. *Fuqura*, "holy men from the Nile," converted the Fur to Islam, instilling a deep devotion in the Fur to Islam and the

¹⁰¹ E. G. Sarsfield-Hall, "Darfur," *The Geographical Journal* 60 (November, 1922): 359.

¹⁰² Agnes van Ardenne, Mohamed Salih, Nick Grono, and Juan Mendez, *Explaining Darfur: Lectures on the Ongoing Genocide* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 10.

Nile region. The Fur sultan Muhammed Tayrab extended the kingdom to the Nile valley in 1787, conquering the lesser sultanates in his way and engaged in the international trade of the period.¹⁰³

The British incorporated Darfur into the greater Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in 1916. Now a part of the Sudan, the British implemented indirect rule, resulting in what Gerard Prunier calls "colonial benign neglect."¹⁰⁴ Claiming a respect for native authority, British authorities divided the region into small areas of personal rule by local chiefs. Local chiefs and Condominium authorities alike did little to advance education or economic infrastructure in the region. Shielded from the rest of the Sudan for its entire Condominium life, Darfur was ill-prepared for incorporation into a new, independent state when the Sudan gained independence in 1956.¹⁰⁵

Like Southern Sudan, Darfur received little assistance or attention from Khartoum. Following World War II Darfur received even less attention as international organizations and foreign nations pumped money into Southern Sudan. Darfur grew even more distrustful of Khartoum. The drought of the 1960s exacerbated the already established tensions between Darfur and the more

¹⁰³ J Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins, *Darfur: A Long Road to Disaster* (Princeton: Markus Weiner Publishers, 2008), 17.

¹⁰⁴ Gerard Prunier, *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005, 2007), 25.

¹⁰⁵ Prunier, *Darfur*, 25.

urban areas. The wells built by the Sudanese government to combat the drought added to the problem. The water supply attracted herds of camel and nomads with their own cattle in search of water. The traditional farmers of Darfur turned into shepherds as only small shrubbery would now grow in their fields. Competition between nomads, with their herds, and Darfurian shepherds occasionally turned violent, reviving long simmering rivalries.¹⁰⁶

In 1975 the rains came back. They did not last. In 1982 the drought resumed in earnest and spread from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. To make matters worse, Numeiri's politically expedient conversion to Islam and imposition of Shari'a law precipitated more rebellion throughout the South, leading to the second civil war. The transitional government that replaced President Numeiri in 1986 did little to mitigate the rising tide of mistrust between the periphery and the center. Shari'a law continued unabated and the National Islamic Front under General Omar el Beshir took power in 1989. Khartoum hoped to kill two birds with one stone by giving arms to militias in Darfur to use against Southern rebels. Tribes in Darfur have a long history of antagonism with Southern tribes, which Khartoum hoped to capitalize on.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Burr and Collins, *Darfur*, 65.

¹⁰⁷ Molly J. Miller, "The Crisis in Darfur," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 18.4 (2007): 112-130, 120.

The combination of drought, which led to greater competition for resources, and hardened ethnic identity led to open hostility between Arab militias and the native tribes of Darfur. Under the guise of "deep seated tribal conflict," Khartoum prosecuted a proxy war against rebelling Darfurians using Arab militias.¹⁰⁸ In the early 1990s the NIF government began the violent process of cleansing the Darfur region of non-Arab ethnicities, primarily the Fur. What was once the natural outcome of competition for resources, violence in Darfur became a state-sponsored enterprise with a racist ideology.¹⁰⁹

Two non-Arab political groups formed in 2003 avowing armed conflict against the NIF government to gain political autonomy and an equitable wealth-sharing agreement for Darfur; Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).¹¹⁰ Unable and unwilling to transfer troops from the South, Khartoum instead fostered its relationship with *Janjaweed*, a heterogeneous Arab-militia comprised of "former bandits and highway men who had been in the trade, since the 1980s; demobilized soldiers from the regular army; young members of Arab tribes having a running land conflict with a neighboring 'African' group-most appeared to be members of the smaller Arab

¹⁰⁸ Miller, "Crisis in Darfur," 123.

¹⁰⁹ Mahgoub El-Tigani Mahmoud, "Inside Darfur: Ethnic Genocide by a Governance Crisis," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24.2 (2004): 5.

¹¹⁰ Mahmoud, "Inside Darfur," 6.

tribes; common criminals who were pardoned and released from gaol if they joined the militia; fanatical members of the Tajammu al-Arabi; and young unemployed 'Arab' men."¹¹¹

The genocide in Darfur continues, unabated, through today. The major obstacle to peace seems to be convincing the primary actors that peace can actually work. The SLA and JEM embraced violence as their last resort, rendering it difficult to accept any other option.¹¹² Darfur's violence has a long history and cannot be separated from the civil war at large. Its roots lie in the same fertile ground that produced the Sudan's civil wars; namely the precipitous removal of the colonial apparatus and ethnically stoked conflict. Darfur's genocide, just like the greater civil war, requires an overhaul of the Sudan's political structure. "With only vague demands for accountability from the international community," Khartoum has been able to prosecute wars of aggression throughout its entire periphery.¹¹³ Indeed, just like the United States' failure to fully comprehend the enormity of the Sudan's civil war, the world at large continues to bury its head in the sand, refusing to take bold action against Khartoum.

The sad fact is that violence defines political differences and aspirations in the Sudan. The fluid nature and changing

¹¹¹ Prunier, *Darfur*, 97-98.

¹¹² Ardenne, *et al*, *Explaining Darfur*, 14.

¹¹³ Miller, "Crisis in Darfur," 130

positions of the combatants as well as the contradictory policies emanating from disparate political groups in the South and Khartoum made it difficult for the U.S. Congress and national media to comprehend the war's complexity and nuance. This chronic lack of understanding has limited the United States' ability to effectively work toward substantive change in the Sudan. Indeed, Robert Collins had it right: the United States has had little more to offer the Sudan than "tea and sympathy."¹¹⁴

United States' limited abilities to effect change in the Sudan has not deterred it from trying. The daunting task of helping to bring an end to such an enduring, intractable war has proven quite difficult. The threat of terrorism has added a new, more immediate wrinkle to U.S. involvement in the Sudan. The Bush administration, however, has not used the "War on Terror" as a new *raison d'être* to become involved in Sudanese politics. The U. S. goal remains ending the war, rebuilding southern Sudan, and resolving the genocide in Darfur. Astutely, John Danforth, U.S. special envoy to the Sudan, sees "America's own preoccupations with identity politics and minority rights" in the Sudan's conflict.¹¹⁵ While autonomy for the South remains the primary stumbling block for peace talks, Danforth decided that the United States would not seek self-determination for the

¹¹⁴ Robert O. Collins, testifying in *The Crisis in Sudan*, May 4, 1993, 30.

¹¹⁵ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 178.

South as a pre-condition in U.S. sponsored peace talks.

The latest attempts at peace emanating from the United States, the Machakos Protocol in 2002, occurred in spite of a rift between the White House and the State Department over self-determination. The White House indicated a preference toward self-determination for the South while Danforth and the State Department worked to keep the Sudan whole. The Machakos Protocol was more a template for future peace talks than a peace plan. Calling for a referendum on self-determination for the South, the Protocol reconfirmed the sectarian nature of the Sudanese government.¹¹⁶ Since 2002, the U.S. has been preoccupied with its two wars, in Iraq and Afghanistan, and has not allocated the "necessary diplomatic resources" to the peace process.¹¹⁷ The lack of U.S. involvement has led to ineffective peace settlements. The 2005 peace accord signed by both Khartoum and the SPLM/A has not managed to end the violence in the Sudan. Khartoum's aspirations for the oil in the South have created a secondary genocide as the government continues to push Nuer and Dinka off of the oil rich lands. Khartoum's refusal to accept oil revenue sharing as a part of the peace plan begs the question; how can peace gain traction if the government continues to perpetuate genocide?

¹¹⁶ Johnson, *Root Causes*, 179.

¹¹⁷ Eric Reeves, "Peace or War? The Moment of Truth for Sudan," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 14 (Winter 2003): 85.

President Beshir refuses to rule in accordance with the 2005 peace agreement as this would require a relative decrease in personal power.¹¹⁸ Without willingness on the part of Beshir and his political party to relinquish some control, it becomes obvious that a viable peace process requires an increase in political pressure from the United States and the international community at large. But that process begins with an understanding of the conflict as it is, not as the West wants to see it. Perhaps a commitment to this type of understanding will allow the United States to offer the victims of the Sudanese Civil War more than mere "tea and sympathy."

¹¹⁸ Pierre Engelbert and Denis Tull, "Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa: Flawed Ideas about Failed States," *International Security* 32 (Spring 2008): 124.

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