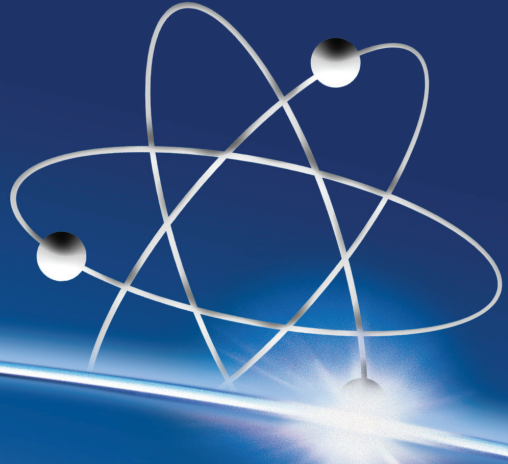




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The Strategic Importance of South Sudan

Baroness Caroline Cox
of Queensbury, Member of House of Lords
and Jessica Snapper



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By Baroness Caroline Cox of Queensbury, Member
of House of Lords and Jessica Snapper.

February 2013

חשיבותה האסטרטגית של דרום סודן ברונית קרוליין קוקס, חברת בית הלורדים הבריטי וג'סיקה סנאפר

סדנת יובל נאמן למדע, טכנולוגיה וביטחון

הסדנה הוקמה בשנת 2002 ע"י פרופסור יצחק בן ישראל, בשיתוף עם בית הספר לממשל ולמדיניות ציבורית ע"ש הרולד הרטור והתוכנית ללימודי ביטחון, באוניברסיטת תל אביב במטרה לעסוק בממשק שבין המדע והטכנולוגיה לביטחון. לשם כך, הסדנה מקיימת פעילות מחקרית וסדרה שנתית של כנסים.



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Forward

South Sudan is a topic of strategic significance that rarely receives the attention it deserves in the public discourse, both in Israel and the West. In this respect, this paper comprises at least a partial remedy in bringing this seldom-discussed issue up for wider discussion.

As someone who has visited the region on numerous humanitarian and fact-finding missions, Baroness Caroline Cox is in a position to provide a unique first-hand perspective on ongoing events there, to gauge potential future developments and to identify measures needed to contend with them.

In the paper, Lady Cox, ably aided by Jessica Snapper, provides a wide ranging survey of the historical background to the conflict, and an analysis of the current situation—focusing both on geo-strategic and humanitarian aspects. The authors also devote considerable attention to the past, present and future role that Israel has, and can play, in ensuring South Sudan's development and its continued affiliation with the West.

Finally, the paper moves beyond the realm of the descriptive and provides a prescriptive component, laying out several policy recommendations for the international community to aid South Sudan in promoting security and stability for the country.

Prof. Isaac Ben Israel

Head of Yuval Neeman
Workshop for Science, Technology and Security

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Executive Summary

With the rapid increase in global interconnectedness, resource scarcity, proliferation, and the spread of Islamic extremism, South Sudan is a “line in the sand” in a geopolitical struggle that has critical implications for the Western world.

As the newly independent country struggles to establish itself in a post-conflict environment, the West must initiate a comprehensive solution to develop its ties with the Republic of South Sudan while curtailing the influence of adversarial power-seekers. One of the most populous regions on the planet, Africa is expected to experience a rapid growth spurt this year in comparison to other parts of the world in the wake of the global economic downturn.

Higher prices for natural commodities are partly responsible for this growth, but other factors – such as economic reform, investments in infrastructure, and the development of the rule of law – are proving to be an influential force for the future of the continent as well.¹

As the “Iron Curtain” – the political and ideological barrier between countries – in a region plagued by the spread of violent Islamic extremism, it is vital that South Sudan is given the proper

¹ “Intel Brief: Islamist Extremists Threaten Africa’s Rise.” The Soufan Group, June 27, 2012. http://soufangroup.com/briefs/details/?Article_Id=325.

assistance to secure its borders, function autonomously, and establish a stable form of governance that will maintain strategic ties with the West.

Key Recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The Need to Support South Sudan’s Survival

Support for the new state is urgently needed, especially in light of the long-term political implications for the international community. A committee should be set up to coordinate and monitor the international community’s assistance.

Recommendation 2: Calling Khartoum to Account for its Belligerent Policies

Khartoum must be held accountable in order to stop its continuous bombardment of civilians and other abuses. The international community should investigate Khartoum’s belligerent policies more meticulously.

Recommendation 3: The International Community’s Support for the Resolution of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

Unresolved issues of the CPA, such as border demarcation and arrangements for oil revenue, must be addressed in a more timely fashion, as many of the disagreements potentially serve as a *casus belli* that risks reigniting the conflict.

Recommendation 4: Media Coverage Needs to be Genuinely Impartial and Well-Informed

In addition, there is a general “moral equivalency” that often takes place when covering the problems suffered by both nations. This encourages Khartoum to remain confident in its position of impunity, while discouraging the South from its aspirations. Media coverage must be held to the standards of professional impartiality and accurate dissemination of information.

Recommendation 5:

Supporting Israel and Christian Groups Building Infrastructure in the Region

Without solid foundational structures to support the economy, education, etc., the country will only face increasing challenges to stimulating productive sectors and supporting a stable, democratic government. With this in mind, there is a pressing need to establish infrastructure in South Sudan; without the support of the West, other interested parties are already stepping in to fill the vacuum. There are currently a number of beneficial Christian groups operating in the region that should forge closer ties with Israel, which is already providing South Sudan with advanced technology and other support.

Introduction

In a world characterized by increasing dynamic and generative interdependency, the strategic importance of the newly formed South Sudan requires active deliberation on the part of the West. Hassan al-Turabi² has reportedly claimed that South Sudan is like his ‘Iron Curtain’ – if he could break South Sudan, he would get “militant Islamism all the way to Cape Town”.

In the wake of the Arab Spring, one of the most crucial aspects of South Sudan’s strategic value is that the predominantly Christian country comprises a non-Islamist bulwark against the spread of militant Islam. Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir, well aware of this position, has publicly announced his commitment to turn the Republic of Sudan into a “unified Arabic Islamic nation”.³ The nexus between regime security and international interest in energy supplies is a complicated balancing act, as other countries and religious groups seek to provide incentives to gain supremacy in the region. It is therefore incumbent upon the West to reinforce South Sudan as a democratic pluralist society committed to the fundamental freedoms of its citizenry, supporting this energy-rich country as it strives to provide

² The prominent Sudanese Islamist leader who institutionalized sharia law in the northern area of the country; former leader of the National Islamic Front in Sudan.

³ Lord Alton of Liverpool. “Lord’s Resistance Army – Questions” (presented to Her Majesty’s Government by the Grand Committee, publication by UK Parliament, March 26, 2012.) <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201212/ldhansrd/text/120326-gc0001.htm>.

humane and sustainable governance.

Ramifications of the Humanitarian Situation on Long-Term Stability:

Following its first anniversary of independence, roughly half of the citizens living in South Sudan are struggling with basic food needs and other security issues. Although most of the land is fertile and rich in natural resources, a weak rainfall in 2011, complex population movements, and the ongoing internal conflicts have created a humanitarian crisis that threatens the country's long-term stability.⁴ In addition, Khartoum's denial of humanitarian access to pro-South dissident-controlled areas within its borders is exacerbating the situation, generating a continuous displacement of refugees. Although it is difficult to accurately record the numbers, the most recent census cited by The Christian Science Monitor suggests close to 300,000 Sudanese have fled to refugee camps in the south (the majority to the Unity and Upper Nile states).⁵ With an already weak infrastructure and a shortage of vital services, including healthcare and education, existing resources for support will continue to be overwhelmed.

The humanitarian crisis in South Sudan has explicit long-term ramifications for the West. Aside from undermining the country's ability to establish critical infrastructure, the diversion of resources and disorder resulting from the crisis opens the door for violent extremist activity. Placed in one of the most unstable regions in the world and sharing borders with nine states, South Sudan is a strategically important country for the West as a geostrategic bridge; the high degree of interdependence between these countries make the region even more volatile.

4 McElhinney, Helen. "Tackling the Food Deficit in the World's Newest Country." Oxfam, July 2012. <http://www.oxfamblogs.org/eastafrica/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Tackling-the-food-deficit-in-the-worlds-newest-country.pdf>.

5 Reeves, Eric. "Vast Humanitarian Crisis in Sudan – Again." The Christian Science Monitor, August 3, 2012. <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2012/0803/Vast-humanitarian-crisis-in-Sudan-again>.

01

Historical Background – A Concise Overview of the Conflict

The history of Sudan can be described as an unrelenting sequence of wars punctuated by oft-violated peace agreements. Since its independence on 9 July 2011, South Sudan faces various challenges to reconcile its entrenched regional, ethnic, and religious conflicts that will determine the trajectory of the state's viability. In a short time, the country has made significant progress towards normalizing relations to gain much-needed international recognition, including placement as a United Nations member state, a member state of the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and more recently (July 2012) a signatory of the Geneva Conventions.⁶ On 27 September 2012, a Presidential Summit took place in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, during which eight agreements were made. These included agreements over oil, citizenship and a Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ).⁷ A range of issues between Sudan and South Sudan have yet to be resolved: mainly, demarcation of the north-south border, a referendum on Abyei,

6 "Freedom House Congratulates South Sudan for Signing the Geneva Conventions" (announcement published on Freedom House website, 2012). <http://www.freedomhouse.org/article/freedom-house-congratulates-south-sudan-signing-geneva-conventions>.

7 "Prime Minister Hailemariam at the UN General Assembly." Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. November 10, 2012. <http://www.mfa.gov.et/weekHornAfrica/morewha.php?wi=618>.

the sharing of liabilities and assets, and human security.⁸ The final outcome of these negotiations will determine the feasibility of long-term stability, with far-reaching geostrategic implications for the rest of the region and the Western world.

South Sudan – Facts and Figures:

- **Location:** Part of East-Central Africa and the UN North Africa sub-region, South Sudan is a 647,095 square kilometers (about the size of France and a third of the size of its northern neighbor Sudan), landlocked country bordered by Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and now Sudan to the north.
- **Capital City:** The current capital is its largest city, Juba, although there are plans to move the capital's location in the future to Ramciel – the country's geographic center.
- **Government:** Currently headed by President Salva Kiir Mayardit, elected by popular vote in 2010 to serve a four-year term. Members of the National Legislative Assembly (332 seats) and the Council of States (50 seats) serve a four-year term as well as part of a bicameral National Legislature. Responsibilities are delegated across ten administrative divisions overseeing the ten states, according to the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan.
- **Population:** According to the most recent census (July 2012), the population is approximately 10,600,000 (about one-third of that of Sudan) with nearly half the population being under the age of fifteen. Only 27% of the population is considered literate. Eighty percent of the population is dependent on small-scale agriculture.
- **Official Languages:** English, Arabic, and several local dialects.
- **Natural Resources:** Contains a vast natural resource base and significant agricultural potential. Largest resources include petroleum, diamonds, limestone, iron ore, copper,

⁸ "South Sudan Referendum: Geopolitical and Geostrategic Implications" (presented by the African Prevention Conflict Programme at the Institute for Security Studies, based in Pretoria, February 22, 2011). <http://www.iss.co.za/eventitem.php?EID=692>.

silver, and hardwoods.⁹

Timeline of Events:

- **1899-1955:** Sudan is part of the larger Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, under joint British-Egyptian rule.
- **1956:** Sudan gains independence from British-Egyptian rule after a revolt lasting fifteen years, continuing with tension between the Arab-Islamic north and the African south.
- **1962-1978:** First Civil War breaks out, beginning in the north of the country.
- **1969:** Colonel Jaafar Muhammad Numeiri, initially pursuing socialist and Pan-Arabist policies, leads group of socialist and communist Sudanese military to seize power, establishing a policy of autonomy for the south.
- **1972:** As president of the ruling government, Numeiri concedes limited autonomy for southern Sudan as part of a peace agreement signed in Addis Ababa in an effort to end the civil war.
- **1978:** Oil discovered in Unity State in southern Sudan.
- **1983-2002:** Second Civil War breaks out between north and south Sudan, under the leadership of John Garang, a southern Sudanese Christian who headed the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).
- **1988:** As part of Sudan's ruling coalition government, the Democratic Unionist Party drafts a cease-fire agreement with the SPLM, but fails implementation.
- **1989:** The military seizes power across Sudan.
- **2001:** The Popular National Congress, led by Sudanese Islamist leader Hassan Al-Turabi, signs memorandum of understanding with the SPLM's armed wing.
- **2002:** The SPLM signs an agreement for a six-month renewable cease-fire in the central Nuba Mountains, a key rebel stronghold. Further talks in Kenya lead to a breakthrough agreement between the southern rebels and the Sudanese government, effectively ending the civil war and providing the Machakos Protocol declaring the south to

⁹ Data adapted from CIA World Fact Book's "About: South Sudan" (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html>) and Farm Africa's "South Sudan" (<http://www.farmafrica.org.uk/where-we-work/southern-sudan>). Both sources updated as of 2012.

seek self-determination after six years.

- 2005: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) provides for a more permanent ceasefire between the north and south. Includes referendum on autonomy for the south and provisions for power-sharing. Former southern dissident leader John Garang is sworn in as first vice-president, only to be killed a few months later and replaced by Salva Kiir, an officer during the First Sudanese Civil War, born in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in 1951. An autonomous government is ultimately formed in South Sudan under Mayardiit, consisting of an administration dominated by former dissident leaders.
- 2006: The African Union extends a mandate of its peacekeeping force in Darfur for six months, but conflict breaks out in the southern town of Malakal after failed peace talks between northern Sudanese forces and their former southern rebel challengers.
- 2007: The SPLM temporarily suspends participation in the national unity government after accusing Khartoum of failing to honor the 2005 CPA.
- 2008: Tensions rise over clashes between an Arab militia and the SPLM over the disputed oil-rich Abyei area located on the north-south divide. Southern Sudanese leader Salva Kiir and Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir seek international arbitration to resolve the dispute.
- 2009: The Khartoum government is accused of supplying arms to ethnic groups in the south in an attempt to destabilize the region. The Hague issues a ruling to deescalate the conflict in Abyei, placing the major Heglig oil field in the north.
- 2010: Sudanese President Al-Bashir accepts referendum results for South Sudan independence.
- 2011: The people of South Sudan vote in favor of full independence. Clashes break out between the Army of Sudan and the SPLM over the Nuba Mountains and Abyei.
- March 2011: The government of South Sudan accuses Bashir of aerial bombardments and of planning a coup.
- May 2011: The North occupies the disputed border region of Abyei.
- June 2011: Governments of north and south Sudan sign accord to demilitarize the disputed Abyei region and let in an Ethiopian peacekeeping force.
- July 2011: South Sudan officially gains independence.
- August-December 2011: Tension escalates when ethnic

clashes break out in South Sudan's Jonglei state following accusations by local tribes of stealing each other's cattle. South Sudan's cabinet votes to designate Ramciel as the future capital. As South Sudan's new president, Salva Kiir makes first visit to Khartoum to create committees tasked with resolving outstanding disputes between the two countries.

- 2012: South Sudan declares humanitarian crisis in Jonglei State after ~100,000 flee clashes between the rival ethnic groups.
- February 2012: Sudan and South Sudan sign non-aggression pact on outstanding secession issues, followed by an attempt by the North to shut down the South's oil export pipelines over financial disputes.
- March-April 2012: After weeks of fighting at the borders, South Sudanese troops temporarily occupy the oil field located at Heglig. Meanwhile, Sudanese warplanes continue to attack the Bentiu area, amongst other locations, engaging in cross-border bombings.
- May 2012: Sudan pledges to pull its troops out of the border region of Abyei as part of continuing bilateral peace talks.¹⁰

Implications of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA):

When Sudan obtained independence in 1956 from Anglo-Egyptian rule, it was with the understanding that the Southerners would be able to participate fully as regular citizens in the political system. When the Arab Khartoum government reneged on its obligations, a mutiny began that led to two prolonged periods of conflict (1956-1972 and 1983-2005, respectively). Ongoing peace talks resulted in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005. As part of the agreement, the South was granted a six-year period of autonomy to be followed

10 Adapted from sources: "South Sudan Profile: A Chronology of Key Events." BBC News, August 10, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14019202>.

"South Sudan Referendum: 99% Vote for Independence." BBC News, January 30, 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12317927>.

"South Sudan Clashes Leave 40 People Dead, UN Says." Bloomberg Business Week, December 9, 2011. <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-12-09/south-sudan-clashes-leave-40-people-dead-un-says.html>.

by a referendum on final status. Following a vote of 98% in favor of secession, South Sudan was granted independence on 9 July 2011.¹¹ The CPA had essentially ended a 22-year civil war that resulted in the deaths of 2 million people and the displacement of over 4 million. Apart from restructuring the center of power for Sudan in Khartoum and the South Sudan in Juba, the CPA provided a road map for political transformation, addressed economic marginalization, asset-sharing provisions, and security arrangements that would take into account the country's vast diversity.¹²

Although the CPA contains numerous ambiguities (namely, border demarcation and resource sharing), the clearly outlined tactical agreements between the major military protagonists have proved useful for continuing dialogue. The three main categories covered by the CPA include:

(1) **The Power Sharing Agreement:** Originally laid the foundation for an autonomous government in South Sudan, setting a timetable for a referendum regarding full independence while promoting broader participation in the government and civil service of the then-existing government. Today, the Agreement outlines the restructuring of critical national institutions, such as the judiciary, and the formation of the national constitution; acknowledges human rights and freedoms, including a bill of rights and basic freedoms of expression, religion, and association.

(2) **The Wealth Sharing Agreement:** Presents a framework for resource allocation, so that 2% of oil revenue would be given to the oil-producing states in southern Sudan in proportion to their output, while the remaining net revenue would be divided evenly (50/50) between the new Government of South Sudan and Sudan. The South is also granted the right to maintain its own banking system within the existing structure of the Central Bank of Sudan. Agreement also promotes sustainable decentralization, establishing comparative underdevelopment and war-affected status as the key criteria for prioritization of public revenue distributions.

11 Data adapted from CIA World Fact Book's "About: South Sudan". Updated as of 2012. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html>.

12 Roque, Paula Cristina and Paul-Simon Handy. "Sudan Scenarios to Strategies" (paper presented at a workshop at Leriba Lodge, South Africa, March 14, 2011). <http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/30917/1/SudanScenariosStatDec2009.pdf?1>.

(3) **The Security Protocol:** Outlines a collaborative approach to security issues by providing for two armed forces (i.e. the new Government of South Sudan and the SPLM units in the north.) and joint integrated units as a foundation for a future national army; this structure now forms the nucleus of the present national military in the South, while enabling both parties to continue downsizing their forces and mobilizing resources. Establishes special provision on education and security, the right to solicit external aid, and a unique administrative status for Abyei.¹³

Interests in Energy Resources:

Disputes over the allocation of petroleum and natural gas resources are a key factor in the ongoing conflict between the two states, affecting the strategic balance of influence for several other involved countries. Moreover, the practical application of the wealth sharing agreement in the CPA as it relates to oil revenue controlled by the respective governments will likely exacerbate local tensions, as issues affecting the livelihoods of the rural population (such as water and land rights) will be disrupted as part of continuing developments.¹⁴ According to recent estimates, South Sudan owns a majority portion of hydrocarbon resources with 70% of Sudan's former oil supply located in its territory; however, all existing oil export pipelines in the South cross through the North. (The oil is shipped for export at Port Sudan and all refineries are located in the North as well.)¹⁵ In addition, the sovereignty of oil-rich Abyei has yet to be resolved, providing a vacuum of power that makes the region increasingly vulnerable to external influences.

13 Adapted from sources: Jooma, Mariam. "Feeding the Peace: Challenges Facing Human Security in Post-Garang South Sudan" (situation report presented at the Institute for Security Studies, August 23, 2005). <http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/31295/1/050823SUDAN.pdf?1>.

Kone, Solomane. "Country Brief: Sudan – 2010/2011." African Development Bank Group, October 2010. <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/SUDAN%20-%20Country%20Brief%202010-2011.pdf>.

14 "Feeding the Peace: Challenges Facing Human Security in Post-Garang South Sudan." op.cit.

15 Yang, Mian. "Oil Factors Behind Southern Sudan Referendum and Implications to Chinese Oil Investment in Sudan." 16 (5): 24-33. May 2011. <http://md1.csa.com/partners/viewrecord.php?requester=gs&collection=TRD&recordid=15777063EN&q=south+sudan+strategic+implications+for+the+west&uid=791936303&setcookie=yes>.

The Role of Israel:

As part of the Israeli government's "periphery strategy"¹⁶ Israel has taken an interest in supporting the animist-Christian southerners against the Muslim majority in an effort to fend off growing militant influence in the region. Israel's support was most notable during the first Sudanese civil war (1956-1972), providing moral backing, diplomatic assistance, and armaments to the southern Sudanese. In addition to offering access to much-needed natural resources (especially oil), the new republic represents an inspiring example of a non-Muslim population resisting Islamic imperialism, echoing the struggles that Israel has faced since its inception. Other Westerners are now joining the Israelis in supporting South Sudan's development in agriculture, health services, education, and a model of defensive security that encourages avoiding wars of choice.¹⁷ In light of Khartoum's ongoing assistance to militant anti-Israel groups, as well as its more recent cooperation as a conduit for Iranian arms shipments into Egypt,¹⁸ Israel has an added incentive to support a stable, democratic administration in South Sudan.

16 "Periphery strategy" refers to the Israeli strategic perception that Israel is surrounded by militant Arab states; accordingly, Israel set out to establish relationships with countries on the periphery of the Arab Middle East under common threat from the Arab/Muslim mainstream.

17 Pipes, Daniel. "South Sudan, Israel's New Ally." *The Washington Times*, January 2, 2012. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jan/2/south-sudan-israels-new-ally/>.

18 "Special Report: Israelis, Arabs Tied to Sudan Oil Conflict." *United Press International*, January 18, 2012. http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2012/01/18/Israelis-Arabs-tied-to-Sudan-oil-conflict/UPI-88451326915775/.

02

Analysis of the Present Situation

The Political-Strategic Position:

Hassan al-Turabi has reportedly claimed that South Sudan is like his 'Iron Curtain' – if he could break South Sudan, he would get "militant Islamism all the way to Capetown". This comment underscores the strategic importance of South Sudan as a non-Islamist bulwark against the spread of militant Islam across the region and beyond. It also underlines the crucial significance of South Sudan, especially in light of ominous declarations of intent by President Al Bashir, most specifically his declaration of commitment to turn the Republic of Sudan into a "unified Arabic Islamic nation" following the South's independence.¹⁹ Such statements stress the pressing need to mobilize outside support for South Sudan as it struggles to defend its civil society against a militarily aggressive and ideologically militant northern neighbor. Moreover, South Sudan shares its borders with a number of countries, including Kenya and Uganda in the south, which are experiencing a sharp increase in Islamic activity in recent years.²⁰ The struggle to dominate resource allocation in the energy-rich country only complicates the situation as both internal and external actors vie for control – circumstances that

19 Lord Alton of Liverpool. "Lord's Resistance Army – Questions" (presented to Her Majesty's Government by the Grand Committee, publication by UK Parliament, March 26, 2012.) <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201212/ldhansrd/text/120326-gc0001.htm>.

20 From "Travel Warnings" posted by the U.S. Department of State, July 18, 2012. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa_pa_4787.html.

can either promote democratic rule or fuel Islamic expansionism, depending on the source of influence.

The Racist and Islamist Policies of President Omar Al-Bashir –

As mentioned, President Omar Al-Bashir has unequivocally stated his objective of turning the Republic of Sudan into a unified, Arabic, Islamic nation and has been pursuing policies of proposed expulsion of citizens who are defined as “Southerners”. His latest actions – targeted air bombardment of the African people of Abyei (under special administrative status), South Kordofan, and the Blue Nile (located in Sudan), as well as extrajudicial detention of civilians, looting of civilian property, and denial of access by aid organizations to the victims of these attacks – could be termed as outright ethnic cleansing. Thousands of mainly African Sudanese have already fled their homes as a result of these threats; many are now living in temporary camps in appalling conditions, which have become even more dire with the onset of the rainy season.²¹ Without greater pressure on Khartoum, Al-Bashir will only continue pushing forward with his discriminatory and aggressive course of action, creating a refugee crisis that will have consequences for years to come.

According to the International & Foreign Law Community, in April 2012 Al-Bashir was further accused of pursuing racist policies after encouraging a mob of fundamentalist Islamists to burn down a church in Khartoum – a move considered to intimidate the predominantly-Christian South Sudan. The attack allegedly took place in response to South Sudan’s military takeover of the oil-rich Heglig region on the disputed border, prompting Al-Bashir to describe the ruling Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) as “an insect” whose members must be disciplined by “the stick” (a reference to a well-known Arabic phrase “don’t buy a slave without the stick”).²² Preceding these acts, on 13 July 2011 the Parliament of Sudan revoked the

21 Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART). “Asked by Baroness Cox.” Last modified in 2012. <http://www.hart-uk.org/hart.php?page=665>.

22 Adapted from sources: “Sudan Threatens Religious War Against South Sudan.” International & Foreign Law Community, April 26, 2004. <http://www.lexisnexis.com/community/international-foreignlaw/blogs/issues-spotlight-rol/archive/2012/04/26/south-sudan-war-human-rights-rule-of-law.aspx>. “Arman Holds ‘Racist’ Bashir for Church Attack in Sudan’s Capital.” Sudan Tribune, April 24, 2012. <http://www.sudantribune.com/Arman-holds-racist-Bashir,42377>.

citizenship of thousands of Christian Southerners and fired all Southerners working in the public sector.²³

SPLM Secretary-General Yasir Arman has criticized the silence of the international community in the face of “racism, fascism and the use of food as a weapon” as Al-Bashir’s government continues its efforts to exhaust the resolve of his own civilians in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile and, indirectly, the South Sudanese.²⁴ Upon closer inspection, what is taking place is reminiscent of Syrian President Bashar Assad’s “Scorched Earth” policy: systematically cutting off food and energy supplies to the civilian population, intensifying indiscriminant bombardment by land and air, and intimidation of civilians, in a move to “purge” inhabited areas. Although the western world has expressed its concerns over the situation, little has been done so far to curb the onslaught.

Moral Equivalence and the Perception of Racism

After the massacres in Rwanda, the British government famously said that it would never turn a blind eye to genocide again, yet this is precisely what it is now perceived to be doing as the humanitarian situation in South Sudan rapidly deteriorates. Many South Sudanese have asked why the West intervened so powerfully in Libya and is so engaged with Syria, while doing little to protect Sudan and South Sudan from Khartoum’s aggressive policies. After having witnessed Britain’s rigorous intervention in Libya, there seems to be a sort of moral equivalence taking place as the British government continues to engage Khartoum in dialogue while doing little to stop the systematic aerial bombardment and displacement of civilians by Al-Bashir. This has led many South Sudanese to question whether the UK’s foreign policy is not tainted by racism on some level.²⁵ The British government is not doing enough to differentiate between the genocidal intent of the leadership in Khartoum and

23 “Sudan: Citizenship Changed for Residents from the South.” Library of Congress in Washington D.C., July 20, 2011. http://www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc_news?disp3_l205402753_text.

24 “Arman Holds ‘Racist’ Bashir for Church Attack in Sudan’s Capital.” op.cit.

25 Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART). “Asked by Baroness Cox.” Last modified in 2012. <http://www.hart-uk.org/hart.php?page=665>.

the legitimate civilian resistance, resulting in a detrimental onus upon the victims of the conflict. If this position continues, it will significantly affect South Sudan's ability to emerge from decades of war and humanitarian crises as a stable, democratic entity.

Increased External Influence Resulting from Insipid Response in the West

The ambiguous involvement of the West is allowing a power vacuum that is quickly being taken advantage of by other interested parties, most notably China. As American companies scramble for Sudanese oil resources, China has firmly positioned itself as Sudan's largest trade partner, permeating all links of the Sudanese oil industrial chain.²⁶ China's proactive measures to secure oil interests in the country strengthens Chinese strategic influence in the region and will certainly make it more difficult for the West to exercise influence over its future prospects. China has also positioned itself as one of the principal suppliers of arms to Sudan, thereby helping prolong the violent conflict. (According to a recent report, 302mm Chinese Rockets packed with ball bearings designed for hitting soft targets have been identified in Nuba.)²⁷

The Chinese government caters to both the North and South, providing infrastructure investment and loans to help the countries pay off their external debt to international financial institutions – a move that further shackles South Sudan to future Chinese interests.²⁸ (In accordance with the latest transactions, it is estimated that nearly two-thirds of Sudanese oil exports will go to China, making the country Sudan's largest trading partner; the state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation currently controls 40% of the largest oil consortia located in

26 Yang, Mian. "Oil Factors Behind Southern Sudan Referendum and Implications to Chinese Oil Investment in Sudan." 16 (5): 24-33. May 2011. <http://md1.csa.com/partners/viewrecord.php?requester=gs&collection=TRD&ecid=15777063EN&q=south+sudan+strategic+implications+for+the+west&uid=791936303&setcookie=yes>.

27 "Bombs and Imminent Rain" (widely distributed draft report from HART, April 2012).

28 Jooma, Mariam. "Feeding the Peace: Challenges Facing Human Security in Post-Garang South Sudan" (situation report presented at the Institute for Security Studies, August 23, 2005). <http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/31295/1/050823SUDAN.pdf?1>.

Sudan.)²⁹ Although South Sudan may skew towards American and West European oil companies for long-term resource investment policies, China's organized efforts to dominate the local industries will certainly influence relations.

Meanwhile, the competition over South Sudan's oil resources is becoming increasingly linked to the Arab-Israeli conflict, spilling over into the issue of the spread of Islamic influence in the region. As Israel seeks to strengthen alliances with the predominantly Christian South Sudan (in what appears to be a "transaction" involving the provision of infrastructure developments for access to oil resources), the leaders of fundamentalist Palestinian movements operating in the Gaza Strip are allying themselves with the Muslim regime of Al-Bashir in Khartoum.³⁰ The decision-making processes surrounding resource interests will take prominence in the development of the domestic economy, while shaping foreign policy strategies that will have lasting consequences in the international arena.

The Role of Israel in Building Infrastructure and Encouraging Democracy

Out of all the interested parties involved in South Sudan, Israel is particularly well-placed to accelerate the country's development with positive results. Israel has already begun to invest in South Sudan's infrastructure and encourage economic growth via a transparent system of accountability that is in line with the democratic environment that South Sudan is trying to form. Relations between the two countries were initiated by Israel's recognition of South Sudan the very day after its independence; full diplomatic relations were established shortly after on 28 July 2011.³¹ (This move has added strategic implications considering that Sudan and Israel have no diplomatic relations, as the former refuses to recognize the sovereignty of the latter.) In addition to the increase in economic ties, Israel also maintains close dialogue with South Sudan with regards to the thousands of

29 "Background: Sudan's Oil Industry." Al Jazeera, July 2, 2011. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/southsudanindependence/2011/07/20117216441419555.html>.

30 "Special Report: Israelis, Arabs Tied to Sudan Oil Conflict." United Press International, January 18, 2012. http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2012/01/18/Israelis-Arabs-tied-to-Sudan-oil-conflict/UPI-88451326915775/.

31 "South Sudan Will Have Relations With Israel." Reuters, July 15, 2011. <http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFLDE76E1EA20110715>.

South Sudanese refugees who fled to Israeli territory and are now in the process of returning to their homeland.³²

On 24 July 2012, Israel and South Sudan signed its first official agreement to cooperate on water infrastructure and technology development. In a warm ceremony at the Israeli Parliament in Jerusalem, Energy and Water Minister Uzi Landau declared Israel's admiration of "the spirit of freedom and adherence to an idea" of the people of Sudan, concluding, "We will continue to do everything possible in order to assist you. You are among friends." In exchange for Israel's assistance in providing much-needed desalination, irrigation, water transport/purification, and other needs, Landau also suggested that in the framework of bilateral cooperation the country should transfer its oil to Israeli facilities.³³ With increased support of Western countries alongside Israel, it becomes more likely that South Sudan will develop into a stable regional power and a stalwart ally.

The Humanitarian Position:

Developments in infrastructure and security must be matched by swift improvements in the humanitarian sector, as it is difficult to maintain "democracy on an empty stomach". International NGOs have stated that food security has dangerously deteriorated, and that many aid organizations have found diminishing opportunities to deliver humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable. There are concerns that if aid is only provided along the border areas, masses of refugees from the most affected areas in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile states will be forced to migrate in search of better conditions. (The Government of Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission assessment of South Kordofan in early 2012 claimed that the humanitarian situation was "stable" – The report was compiled without international participation and excluded the eight districts affected most heavily by the conflict.) Moreover, continuous aerial bombardment from Sudan has made it nearly impossible for these refugees to plant and harvest the necessary

provisions that many natives are dependent on.³⁴ According to the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as many as 4.7 million people in South Sudan do not have enough to eat or are facing imminent food shortages.³⁵ In summation, humanitarian access is urgent and vital, requiring international coordination. Without this external support, the struggling population will become more vulnerable to Islamic proselytizing and other interested parties claiming to provide humanitarian relief.

The Unilateral Aerial Bombardment of Civilians by Khartoum

Clearly, it is difficult for the newly established South Sudan to develop stable governance in the face of a hostile neighbor committed to aggressive policies. These difficulties are exacerbated by President Al-Bashir, who has clearly expressed his resolve to achieve his objectives through militarily targeting the African people of Abyei, South Kordofan, and the Blue Nile states, while denying its victims access to aid organizations. Khartoum's ongoing aerial bombardment – which has included the use of Antonovs, MIGs, helicopter gunships, and long-range missiles – is directed at populated civilian locations, resulting in countless casualties and damage to infrastructure. Over a quarter of a million civilians from South Kordofan and the Blue Nile area have fled their homes in search of a safe haven, many living in dire conditions in caves and forests.³⁶

Such overt aggression is a serious provocation and should be condemned by the international community, as it further aggravates the destabilization of South Sudan. The following developments and their consequences should be considered when assessing the humanitarian situation in the region:

- In Southern Kordofan, 300,000 civilians are displaced and currently living in dismal conditions in the Nuba Mountains.
- In the Blue Nile area, approximately 100,000 displaced

32 Ravid, Barak. "Netanyahu: Israel Recognizes South Sudan as Independent State." Haaretz, July 10, 2011. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/netanyahu-israel-recognizes-south-sudan-as-independent-state-1.372460>.

33 Udasin, Sharon. "Israel Signs 1st Agreement, On Water, With South Sudan." The Jerusalem Post, July 24, 2012. <http://www.jpost.com/Sci-Tech/Article.aspx?ID=278657&R=R1>.

34 "Bombs and Imminent Rain." Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), April 2012. http://media.hart-uk.org/all/hart_visit_to_south_sudan_-_april_2012_final.pdf.

35 Pflanz, Mike. "Five million in South Sudan facing severe food shortages." The Telegraph, May 16, 2012. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/south-sudan/9270038/Five-million-in-South-Sudan-facing-severe-food-shortages.html>.

36 Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART). "Asked by Baroness Cox." Last modified in 2012. <http://www.hart-uk.org/hart.php?page=665>.

persons are hiding in the forests to avoid the aerial bombardments.

- In both regions, civilian access to basic healthcare and other services has been blocked by ongoing attacks, preventing the majority of the displaced from planting or harvesting crops. (Estimates suggest 60-70% of those displaced inside the Nuba Mountains are facing a severe food shortage.)
- With the rainy season approaching, the humanitarian situation has worsened, resulting in large numbers of deaths from hunger and disease.
- Many of the civilians displaced from Abyei have been living in similarly harsh conditions in improvised camps in Bahr-El-Ghazal.
- The Government of Sudan has yet to permit any humanitarian access to the Nuba Mountains. Khartoum's Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) refuse to withdraw from Abyei and have allowed a negligible amount of humanitarian aid into other areas under its control.
- There has been no access for international humanitarian assistance in any non-government held area for over a year.
- While the SPLM has already agreed to the tripartite (UN, African Union, and League of Arab States) proposal to support negotiations over humanitarian access to conflict zones, Khartoum has yet to respond.³⁷

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW) have been working throughout the conflict to document the attacks on civilians, destruction of property, and the looting of food sources by armed militias. Three successive UN-designated rapporteurs commissioned by the Canadian government have chronicled these human rights abuses, focusing on attacks by militias against civilians to clear specific areas for oil exploration. As one political analyst involved in the commission reported, the majority of these militia activities are part of the "scorched earth" strategy as an effort to clear civilians from oil-rich areas by burning their crops, thereby making their villages uninhabitable.³⁸

37 "Bombs and Imminent Rain." Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART), April 2012. http://media.hart-uk.org/all/hart_visit_to_south_sudan_-_april_2012_final.pdf.

38 Jooma, Mariam. "Feeding the Peace: Challenges Facing Human Security in Post-Garang South Sudan" (situation report presented at the Institute for Security Studies, August 23, 2005). <http://dspace.cigilibrary.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/31295/1/050823SUDAN.pdf?1>.

Since the outset of the second war in 1983, successive regimes have directed militias to exacerbate the humanitarian situation on the ground as a method of destabilizing areas of opposition. It is currently estimated that 32 such militias are operating in South Sudan, encouraging the further proliferation of arms from neighboring countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, northern Uganda, and eastern Chad.³⁹ These militias present one of the most unpredictable elements in the humanitarian picture, not to mention the strategic picture as a whole.

Khartoum's Racist Policies and other Dilemmas of Perceptions in the Conflict

External perceptions of the conflict, coupled by President Al-Bashir openly racist policies, present complications for implementing successful aid policies to improve the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan. Al-Bashir had gone as far as to deny citizenship to those with family connections in South Sudan.⁴⁰ The threat of expulsion has caused tens of thousands of residents to flee to South Sudan, presenting a great logistical challenge for the international NGOs who must figure out how to integrate this influx of expatriates with existing refugees in the area. Despite the fact that NGOs are often subject to the strategic interests of their respective governments, they can nevertheless exert significant influence on future policies depending on how they manage and portray humanitarian crises. Key donor governments manipulate relief aid in pursuit of interest-driven objectives, usually connected to regional security and oil interests.⁴¹ Such policies often leave the victims most in need at a disadvantage as their well-being comes second to governmental strategic interest. This is why the awareness of the conflict by major foreign governments – with an emphasis on the West – is critical for resolving the humanitarian situation and promoting long-term stable governance.

39 "Feeding the Peace: Challenges Facing Human Security in Post-Garang South Sudan." op. cit.

40 "Bombs and Imminent Rain." op. cit.

41 Taylor, Hannah. "Under what circumstances are NGOs unable to gain access to vulnerable populations?" (sources adapted from dissertation on "Broadening Global Development Discourse," January 13, 2012). http://www.hiidunia.com/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/02/Under-what-circumstances-are-NGOs-unable-to-gain-access-to-vulnerable-populations_-What-are-the-implications-for-aid-policy_.pdf.

Media Coverage and Foreign Policy:

In the aftermath of the country's independence, one of South Sudan's biggest challenges has been creating a balance in its relations with the West and other powers in order to receive the necessary support for state-building.⁴² The mass media plays an influential role alongside citizens and elites abroad in shaping the public's influence on foreign policy, including the relationships among the range of power-holders involved in the conflict. Many citizens of the new republic are asking why the West intervened so powerfully in countries like Libya in recent years, while taking a more passive stance in the face of South Sudan's struggle. Furthermore, there has been a widely perceived tendency in the international media (including the BBC) to provide more sympathetic coverage for Khartoum than for the South. This encourages lax foreign policies that allow Khartoum to act aggressively against the South with impunity, further destabilizing the country and undermining the aspirations of the South Sudanese.

Reactions in the West and International Support

As one journalist at The Guardian put it, "Sudan burns – and the world yawns."⁴³ One of the consequences of the set-piece media reports dealing with Africa is that coverage of the region tends to focus on narrations of conflict: civil wars, the abuses of authoritarian regimes, refugee crises, and so on. Such reporting means that any positive news taking place in the region tends to get eclipsed. Yet, what The Economist distinctly labeled as the "hopeless continent" a little over ten years ago is now home to six of the world's fastest growing economies. As a whole, African economies are expected to grow faster this year than any other region apart from China and India, with a total gross

domestic product of \$2.6 trillion by the end of the decade.⁴⁴ Not only is South Sudan rich in natural resources in a time of global energy setbacks – it shares its borders with several major African countries that are poised to have a critical impact on the future of international strategic interests.

The media coverage of Sudan in general by the West has been minimal. Although the BBC and a few other major European outlets are marginally increasing their coverage of the developing situation, the American media normally only publishes short dispatches related to the country. This is especially troubling considering that most Sudanese depend on outside sources for their news.⁴⁵ In addition to connecting citizens with each other, international media coverage imposes constraints on deleterious leaders to a certain degree; President Al-Bashir, for example, has indicated that during certain events his regime's decision-making priorities were altered by international criticism vis-à-vis the media.⁴⁶ Yet, public declarations of sanctions and other efforts to curb Al-Bashir's activities have been weak and inconsistent in the media.

Khartoum's parliament has branded the newly independent South Sudan as an enemy state, as well as continuing to exacerbate the humanitarian situation with ongoing strikes against civilian targets; however, there has been little effort on the part of the West to contradict Khartoum's framing of the conflict. The West's lukewarm reaction is puzzling in light of the fact that Britain, the U.S., and other major guarantors were deeply involved in securing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the two countries in 2005. The deal was widely supported at the time and publicized in the media, leading in due course to the effective secession of the south. According to the official Sudan News Agency, Al-Bashir has been courting the international community ever since with tailored statements referring to "Sudan's right to respond. . . in any

42 "News Analysis: South Sudan Needs Equation on External Relations to Satisfy All Parties." Xinhua China Weekly, July 11, 2011. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-07/11/c_13976792.htm.

43 Jones, Adam. "The International Community Must Wake Up to Looming Sudan Disaster" (compiled by author as part of ongoing project on Genocide Studies Media File, April 19, 2012). <http://jonestream.blogspot.co.il/2012/04/sudan-south-sudan-south-kordofan.html>.

44 "Intel Brief: Islamist Extremists Threaten Africa's Rise." The Soufan Group, June 27, 2012. http://soufangroup.com/briefs/details/?Article_Id=325.

45 "The Sudanese Stand Up: The Best Way to Help the Protestors in Sudan? Cover the Story." Foreign Policy, June 27, 2012. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/06/27/the_sudanese_stand_up_by_christian_caryl.

46 Warham, Olivia. "President Al-Bashir Feels Heat from 'Sudanese Spring.'" CNN, July 30, 2012. <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/06/29/world/africa/sudanese-spring/index.html>.

manner that guarantees its security, sovereignty and stability.”⁴⁷ As South Sudan struggles to establish itself, international support has become increasingly ambiguous with disputes over border demarcation and oil sharing taking center stage. Without unequivocal support from the West, other actors will fill the power vacuum and affect the trajectory of South Sudan’s evolution for their own strategic purposes.

47 Jones, Adam. “The International Community Must Wake Up to Looming Sudan Disaster” (compiled by author as part of ongoing project on Genocide Studies Media File, April 19, 2012).

03

Policy Recommendations

Recommendation1: The Need to Support South Sudan’s Survival:

Support for the new state is urgently needed, especially in light of the long-term political implications for the international community. A committee should be set up to coordinate and monitor the international community’s assistance, which should include:

- Immediate aid to address the major humanitarian crisis on the ground.
- Resources for self-defense, especially against aerial bombardment.
- Resources for capacity building of civil society and infrastructure.
- Ongoing essential services, such as education and healthcare.

The international community should unite in support of the Tripartite Proposal (UN, African Union, and Arab League of States) to pressure Khartoum into allowing access to the most affected civilian areas. Such negotiated access must be supported and monitored by international institutions and

applied under standardized humanitarian principles.

Recommendation 2:

Calling Khartoum to Account for its Belligerent Policies:

Khartoum must be held accountable in order to stop its continuous bombardment of civilians and other abuses. The international community should investigate Khartoum's belligerent policies more meticulously, and enact the following remedies:

- Restrictions on visas and the freezing of assets of leading members of the Khartoum government.
- Implementation of a "no-fly" zone to curb the aerial bombardment of civilians.
- Initiation of an international independent committee of inquiry to investigate and monitor human rights violations.
- A trade embargo and other diplomatic sanctions imposed on senior politicians in Khartoum's ruling party, including the downgrading of diplomatic relations with the Government of Sudan.
- Targeted sanctions to degrade Khartoum's arms transfers capacities, including acting against companies that sell military equipment to the government.

Recommendation 3 :

The International Community's Support for the Resolution of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA):

Unresolved issues of the CPA, such as border demarcation and arrangements for oil revenue, must be addressed in a more timely fashion, as many of the disagreements potentially serve as a *casus belli* that is clearly prolonging the problems between the two countries. The following remedies should be considered in an effort to resolve outstanding disputes:

The development of a single comprehensive approach to responding to the CPA, so that the UN, African Union, Arab League, and the rest of the East African community can coordinate efforts in a more unified process despite points of contention that arise.

- A credible joint envoy and better command-and-control of the fragmented UN/African Union missions taking place in Sudan.

- A primary commitment to genuine reform and stability, with a focus on improving the relationship between the center of the country and its marginalized peripheries.
- Recognition and prioritization of the most critical points of contention continuing to fuel discord – namely, the sharing of oil revenue, border demarcation, disputes over the Abyei region, the settlement of general debts and assets, and a resolution to ambiguous citizenship issues and the right to self-determination.

Recommendation 4:

Media Coverage Needs to be Genuinely Impartial and Well-Informed:

The general "moral equivalency" that often takes place when covering the conflict encourages Khartoum to remain confident in its position of immunity, while discouraging the South from its aspirations. Media coverage must be held to the standards of professional impartiality and accurate dissemination of information, which should be encouraged by the following actions:

- Western countries, with an emphasis on Arabic-language news broadcasts, should sponsor media outlets to promote increasing coverage of the conflict and related problems in a more balanced manner.
- Broadcasts and programming from Western outlets must be made readily accessible to the Sudanese to provide non-aligned coverage and encouragement of positive endeavors on the part of the civilian population.
- Editors of large Western media outlets should be supported in sending more reporters into the region to illuminate the quick-paced developments of events.

Recommendation 5:

Supporting Israel and Christian Groups Building Infrastructure in the Region:

Without solid foundational structures to support the economy, education, and so on, the country will only face increasing challenges to stimulate productive sectors and support a stable, democratic government. With this in mind, there is a pressing need to establish infrastructure in South Sudan; without the

support of the West, other interested parties are already stepping in to fill the vacuum. There are currently a number of beneficial Christian groups operating in the region that should forge closer ties with Israel, which is already providing South Sudan with advanced technology and other support. This “coalition” is well-positioned to accelerate the development of the country by:

- Integrating central support activities through coordinated planning, monitoring, evaluation, program development and resource mobilization.
- Promoting quick impact projects alongside the more long-term endeavors to prioritize needs and provide timely relief.
- Encouraging self-reliance and long-term stability by endorsing significant inward investment throughout the country’s sectors.
- Taking subtle yet effective action (by the West) to counteract the problematic influence of China and Islamic extremist groups.
- Creating a system that allows the international community to participate in monitoring transparent systems of accountability in an effort to combat endemic corruption.



Baroness Caroline Cox was created a Life Peer in 1982 for her contributions to education and served as a Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords from 1985 to 2005. Lady Cox now sits in the Lords as a crossbencher and is a frequent contributor to Lords debates on Sudan and South Sudan, Nigeria, Uganda, and Burma. Currently she is the Chief Executive of HART (Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust). Baroness Cox's humanitarian aid work, for which she has received numerous prestigious international awards, has taken her on many missions to conflict zones, allowing her to obtain first hand evidence of the human rights violations and humanitarian needs in areas such as Sudan; the Armenian enclave of Nagorno Karabakh; Nigeria; Uganda; Burma; and Indonesia. Lady Cox is a member of the advisory board of the Israel Institute for Strategic Studies.

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South Sudan is a "line in the sand" in a geopolitical struggle that has critical implications for the Western world. As the newly independent country struggles to establish itself, the West should undertake a comprehensive initiative to develop its ties with the Republic of South Sudan.

The humanitarian crisis in South Sudan has explicit long-term ramifications for the West and Khartoum's denial of humanitarian access within its borders is severely exacerbating the situation on the ground. As an ideological bulwark in a region, plagued by the spread of Islamic extremism, it is vital that South Sudan be given the adequate assistance to secure its borders, function autonomously, and establish a stable form of governance that will maintain strategic ties with the West.

