

**THE TRIAGE OF CANADIAN FOREIGN
AND DEFENCE POLICY**

**A Comparative Analysis of the Current Canadian Forces
Mission in Afghanistan and a Potential Canadian Forces
Mission to Darfur**

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AFGHANISTAN OR SUDAN

The perpetual dilemma that surrounds any foreign or defence policy is whether or not the decision that is being made is the best one. Every mission short of those that mandate near-universal involvement, such as the World Wars or the Persian Gulf War, is second-guessed. While some legislators and pundits feel that this practice is necessary to ‘light a fire’ under decision-makers, as the axiom goes, it can be seen instead as another adage: the grass is greener on the other side.

This is proven with the case of the Canadian mission to Afghanistan. While internationally sanctioned by the United Nations (UN) and supported by international law through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Canadian Forces’ presence in Central Asia has encountered some scrutiny from politicians and the public alike. This is seen as rooted in a combination of derision for the United States-led War on Terror, the impact of a growing casualty in Afghanistan and views from certain camps challenging the execution of the mission. Quite often, this criticism has been compounded by noting that the Canadian Forces (CF) could be better used in the Darfur region of Sudan, where egregious human rights violations are widely believed to be taking place. While there is a certain merit in ceaselessly championing to prevent war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, it must be tempered by acknowledging the nature of both the Afghan and Sudanese cases.

This report will highlight the key areas that are vital in gaining a well-rounded comprehension of the complications that arise from seeking a Canadian redeployment away from Afghanistan and into Darfur. While the two nation-based sections do not parallel one another directly, this is due to the nature of the Afghan mission being a reality and the Darfur mission remaining, at the time, hypothetical.

AFGHANISTAN

While often an item covered in the media, the severity of the CFs’ involvement in Afghanistan is routinely understated. This is in great part due to the relatively limited casualties that the CF have taken in comparison to other nations in Afghanistan and to Canada in other wars. However, another measure of war, one that is almost never mentioned has the mission in Afghanistan surpassing some of Canada’s most hallowed forays – length of operation. While Canada fought for five and a half years in World War I and almost six years to the day in World War II, the Canadian Forces will have been engaged in Afghanistan for seven years by the fall of 2007, and eight and a half years by the time the mission is reviewed in 2009. This, combined with the unique counter-insurgency role that Canada has undertaken, places the Afghan mission in a unique place in Canadian strategic culture. In recognizing the importance of this mission, both at home and abroad, Canadian policymakers and people alike begin to do it justice.

Brief History

The era of the Soviet invasion (1979 to 1989) marked the complete collapse of any stability in Afghanistan. The citizens of that state were pulled in all directions, and one of those

directions was fighting the Soviets as Mujahideen.¹ While this would seem to imply cohesion among Afghans, there was very little in reality. On this, Robert Gates, current US Secretary of Defence and former CIA Director, and then-CIA Directorate of Intelligence chief, wrote, “No one should have any illusions about these people coming together politically – before or after a Soviet defeat.”² This statement has unfortunately proven quite accurate.

This insurrection was possible almost entirely through the funding and materiel provided by foreign sources. The major source was initially through the CIA’s clandestine services and began under the Presidency of Jimmy Carter. Funds and equipment were funnelled covertly to the Mujahideen through the Pakistani spy agency ISI, and this program grew in size and scope under President Ronald Regan. Operations and vast funding from the Saudi GID, who collaborated with the Americans, but maintained their own agenda in Afghanistan, paralleled this. These operations allowed the Mujahideen to take a heavy toll on the Soviet occupiers, and approximately 15,000 Soviet soldiers were killed from the beginning of the invasion to its end with a Soviet withdrawal a decade later in 1989.

While seen as a great victory, especially in the West, the removal of the Soviets from the picture removed the last vestiges of stability in Afghanistan. The highly tribal and factional Afghan communities, each backed by a different foreign group, had lost their common enemy. The occupation had cost, according to some estimates, 1 million Afghan lives and had displaced 5 million Afghans into refugee camps in neighbouring nations, with 3 million settling in Pakistan.³ While present through three presidential administrations, the US no longer saw its involvement as necessary beyond the Soviet withdrawal and lost interest in Afghanistan. Through this apathy, seen with all Western nations, Afghanistan saw the rise of the age of the warlord, as various factions of Mujahideen began a violent civil war. From this vacuum rose the Taliban, a group of Islamic hardliners who had been backed, if not created, by the Pakistani ISI to become a friendly ultra-Islamic state on the Pakistani border.⁴

The Taliban seized Kabul in 1996, and by 2000 had captured 95% of the country and imposed Islamic *Sharia* law. The period of Taliban rule was, up until that point, likely the most devastating seen in Afghanistan by Western standards. Women were banned from jobs, girls banned from education, and freedoms and human rights were generally disregarded or violated. However, the Taliban’s most damning legacy will always be their support, either latent or active, of Al-Qaeda’s terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and for sheltering Osama bin-Laden. It is this legacy above all else that was noted in the days and weeks following September 11, 2001.

Background

On September 12, 2001 NATO invoked, for the first time, Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, more commonly referred to as the mutual defence clause. Through this, NATO member states could employ “collective self-defence” under international law.⁵ It was determined that the hijackers of September 11, 2001 had been members of Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organisation that

¹ The Mujahideen began an armed insurrection against the 110,000 to 150,000 Soviet troops in theatre and the 100,000 or so pro-communist Afghan troops supporting them.

² Coll, Steve. “Ghost Wars.” (New York: Penguin Press, 2004.): 131.

³ Ibid. 114.

⁴ Coll. 291.

⁵ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "NATO Basic Documents: The North Atlantic Treaty." *NATO On-Line Library* April 1949, (December 20, 2006): <<http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm>>.

had, if not receiving direct support from the Taliban government of Afghanistan, in the least, been allowed to operate, train and reside in that state. As such, it was deemed that the Taliban government of Afghanistan had been guilty of committing an act of war with the events of September 11, 2001.

This was followed by the launch of the American-led coalition mission known as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) against Afghanistan in October 2001, aimed at deposing the Taliban government and destroying Al-Qaeda. In December 2001, accordant to the Bonn Agreement, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created, and supported by UN resolutions 1386, 1413, 1444, 1510, 1563, 1623, 1659 and 1707.⁶ An important note is that full operational command of ISAF was given to NATO on August 11, 2003, and full operational control of Afghanistan was given to ISAF on October 5, 2006.⁷

ISAF at the outset only operated within the Afghan capital of Kabul but has since expanded its operations to the entire state, with 32,800 troops divided between five regional commands. The five commands are divided in terms of geography (north, south, east, and west), with the fifth command being focused in the capital region around Kabul. Each of these commands is sub-divided into Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT's) that are responsible for specific provinces.⁸

While the government, led by democratically elected President Hamid Karzai officially rules the country, its effective rule is restricted to the immediate area around the capital of Kabul. To support the government, plans call for Afghanistan to have a national police force of 50,000. Although the police officially are responsible for maintaining civil order, local and regional military commanders continue to exercise control in the hinterland. Also important, the police have often been accused of improper treatment and detention of prisoners. Similar situations plague the army, which is also being built up, and currently has 43,000 active troops, though varying in training and experience.

Canadian Involvement

The Canadian involvement in Afghanistan began initially with OEF but has since transitioned to the ISAF mission. This was predicated by our membership in NATO, and our agreement that an attack against one was an attack against all, as determined by Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. This internationalist approach is also seen in the official role of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan as stated by the Department of National Defence, in that:

“The Canadian government’s overarching goal in contributing to ISAF is to prevent Afghanistan from relapsing into a failed state that provides a safe haven for terrorists and terrorist organizations. Canada remains committed to the campaign against terrorism and, with our allies, will make a major contribution to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan.”⁹

⁶ “UN Security Council Resolutions on Afghanistan”

<<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1132599287314>>

⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. “History of the International Security Assistance Force.” (October 9, 2006): <http://www.jfcbs.nato.int/ISAF/about/about_history.htm>.

⁸ Canada was responsible for Regional Command South (RC-S) until command was transferred to the Dutch on November 1, 2006. Canada remains in command of PRT Kandahar under RC-S.

⁹ Department of National Defence Canada. “Canadian Forces Operations in Afghanistan.” (August 21, 2006): <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=1703>.

This is supplemented by noting that we aim for a stable nation that is not a haven for terrorism, a country that meets the needs of its people, and an Afghanistan that is a fully integrated member of the international community. These are noted to relate back to the three root goals as defined by the Department of National Defence, namely:

- Defend Canadian interests at home and abroad by preventing Afghanistan from relapsing into a failed state that provides a safe haven for terrorists and terrorist organizations;
- Provide the people of Afghanistan with the hope for a brighter future by establishing the security necessary to promote development, and;
- Help the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its people to build a stable, peaceful and self-sustaining democratic country¹⁰

This understanding reflects that the CF mission has implications for the security of both nations involved. It is also based on the belief that states, especially middle-powers like Canada, cannot function in the global sphere unilaterally and must be involved multilaterally in matters important to our allies, as well as ourselves. The CF has been involved in other missions beyond the ISAF mission, most notably the naval patrols conducted during Operation Apollo, which saw sixteen of eighteen Canadian warships serve at least one tour in the Persian Gulf. However, the issues that are the most vital to this discussion are those related to Operation Athena, the Canadian Army mission under ISAF, as discussed below.

Critical Issues

The mission in Afghanistan undertaken by the West, including Canadian troops, is one that has three key elements acting against it, but supporting each other. The first is the insurgency and attempted return to power by the Taliban and/or Al Qaeda. The second is the shortage of boots on the ground, or combat troops. The final issue is the open border with Pakistan allowing the free movement of insurgents and supplies.

Counter-insurgency is an element of the ISAF mission that has never been tackled before by NATO and one that they now have a premier role in. While previous NATO missions have had the potential of devolving into counter-insurgency operations, most notably the missions in the Balkans, NATO has never actually dealt with the situation it currently faces. This is especially the case with the nature of asymmetric warfare¹¹ that is so prevalent in modern insurgencies. Dealing with modern insurgencies is also more than a matter of asymmetric warfare; it is also a battle of hearts and minds, and this is something that the insurgent side is highly conscious of. This consciousness is seen with suicide attacks and tactics that would be normally deemed irrational. This has been shown in the Afghan case, as well as the American case in Iraq, as local support in theatre is something the insurgents thrive on and continue to work to build. Dr. Sean Kay puts it succinctly, when he notes “NATO has no historical experience or capacity for directly engaging such insurgency movements though by summer 2006, it had been placed at the center of counter-insurgency operations in Afghanistan.”¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Asymmetric warfare is used in situations where the warring parties are of unequal strength and sees the weaker side rely on tactics and strategies that are not considered in the realm of conventional warfare. In the Afghan case this includes guerrilla-styled unconventional combat, which includes the use of suicide attacks and bombings.

¹² Kay, Dr. Sean. "NATO and Counter-Insurgency." Westcoast Lecture Series. School of Policy Studies, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario. (November 22, 2006).

The issue of boots on the ground is also troubling. The ISAF force in Afghanistan consists of 32,800 soldiers, with two thirds being concentrated in the South and East of the nation. This is a practical matter in that the South and East of the nation represent the two regions that ISAF forces have yet to secure and stabilize. Indicative of this problem is the fact that all NATO officials and officials of the member states in these two areas note that there is a shortage of troops for dealing with the level of insurgency faced. Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) for NATO, Gen. James L. Jones, and his colleague, ISAF Commander Gen. David Richards have both stated that ISAF is undermanned by approximately 15%, or 2,500 soldiers.¹³ This by many accounts has been a very conservative estimate. On the opposite end of the spectrum from Gen. Jones and Gen. Richards is retired Canadian Maj.-Gen. Lewis Mackenzie. Mackenzie was the first NATO commander on the ground in the Balkans in the 1990's and was in charge of the NATO force that, many would argue, has come the closest before ISAF to acting in a counter-insurgency role. As such, it comes with some gravity when he notes "Gen. Richards does not need 2,500 more soldiers. He needs to double his force with 30,000 more front-line troops."¹⁴ This increase, twelve times what Gen. Jones and Gen. Richards have said they need, seems so large as to be irrational. However, compared with the NATO mission to Kosovo, or KFOR, the ISAF mission can be seen to be woefully undermanned when compared to KFOR.

Firstly, the KFOR mission in Kosovo was responsible for the security in an area of 10,912 km². For that mission, in an area of 2.1 million inhabitants, 46,000 NATO soldiers were deployed, or one soldier for every forty-five citizens. Compare this to the ISAF mission: Afghanistan is a territory of 652,090 km² and has roughly 31 million inhabitants, although the actual number is hard to come by due to the porous border with Pakistan and the displacement of persons caused by ongoing conflict in the state. As noted previously, ISAF has at its disposal 32,800 troops. Unfortunately for ISAF, and for Canada as a participant, this works out to one ISAF soldier for every nine hundred and eight citizens. What marks the situation as even more grim is the knowledge that before KFOR took control of Kosovo on the ground, NATO air forces has been bombing the Serbian Army into submission, thereby lessening the amount of combat that KFOR would face.

The final issue is that of the Pakistani border, one that is, in areas, manned by upwards of 80,000 Pakistani troops.¹⁵ However, it is in the other areas, and they are more prevalent than those guarded by the army, that Pakistan holds virtually no control. It is widely purported that these tribal areas are now the haven of countless Taliban militants, Pashtun insurgents, and any number of notorious terrorists, up to and including Osama bin Laden. The lawlessness of these areas is what allows the unchecked trans-border migration, and the ability of insurgent forces to escape across the border to rearm and re-supply.

The reality of the situation in Pakistan is one of both inability and complacency. Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, an army general who came to power through a coup d'etat, must be careful not to alienate the strong fundamentalist section of the population, as his credibility is already questioned for the participation in the War on Terror. Even should he choose to resort to

¹³ "NATO: Afghan Mission needs 2,500 more troops." *CTV.ca* (Nov 22, 2006): <<http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20061122/n...>>.

¹⁴ Mackenzie, Lewis. "Go Big, Go Bold, and get it done." *Globe and Mail Online*, (November 22, 2006): <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com//servlet/story/RTGAM.20061122...>>.

¹⁵ Hasan, (ret.) Amb. Naeem . Global Institutions. School of Policy Studies, Queens University, Kingston, Ontario. (November 20, 2006).

hard power approaches, the reality of the situation is that the Pakistani Army has lost five hundred to six hundred soldiers in the region recently, a figure that both sobers the spirit and stems the support of the mission.¹⁶ This is further complicated by the fact that Afghan President Hamid Karzai has refused to have the border fenced for security reasons, as that action would firmly establish the border which Afghanistan still contests.

Canadian Politics

At the state level the Canadian position has not been affected greatly by its involvement in Afghanistan due to the status of legitimacy granted to involvement through the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions mentioned earlier and the presence of NATO. Another major factor is that Canada's involvement is being directly lauded and asked for by the democratically elected Government of Afghanistan. This was seen as being utterly explicit and outlined by Afghan President Hamid Karzai when he addressed the legislature in Ottawa in September 2006.

If any animosity has arisen it has been due largely to the border issue with Pakistan. On being criticised for not doing enough on his end, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf chastised Canada for not understanding the politics of the region and for not being able to stomach the casualties that are seen with combat, noting that his armed forces had lost over ten times the number of troops that the Canadian Forces had. While appearing as highly problematic, this was only a minor rift and its effects were largely absent in actual diplomatic politics with Pakistan.

Similar to the border issue, was the political browbeating that occurred in regards to where NATO members had their troops and especially regarding caveats that may have been placed on them. Canadian Minister of Defence Gordon O'Connor publicly criticized nations like Germany, Spain and France for keeping their troops away from direct combat and making them even more effective by restricting their activities to the confines of their bases after dark.¹⁷ This too appears to have quieted down after the NATO summit in Riga, Latvia, where these nations, at least in principle, pledged to be available for combat anywhere in the state if the need arose.

Moving to domestic issues, if there is one thing that can challenge the support of any government, it is the return of the nation's sons and daughters from lands far away in flag-draped coffins. While in the past this has been something that was not as highly publicized, the Afghanistan mission has, as noted earlier, been front and centre in the public eye. Furthermore, this mission has not had the political benefit of receiving complete support from all sides, both in the House of Commons as well as in the public at large. While it is not necessarily the case that a lack of political consensus will encourage public criticism of a particular action, it can certainly be understood that the vehement opposition to the nature of Canada's current participation in Afghanistan by the New Democratic Party is one of the main catalysts that progresses questioning of the mission, both openly and often.¹⁸ This operational skepticism has become something that has polarized the Canadian public. While this does not necessarily pass judgment on the morality of the mission, the open criticism has also been reflected in countless polls that show that Canadian support for this mission is undeniably low.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "More words than help from NATO." *The Gazette* (Nov 30, 2006): <<http://www.canada.com/components/print.aspx?id=62919a77-1540->>.

¹⁸ Layton, Jack. "Jack Layton's Speech at the Bring the Troops Home Rally." *NDP Speeches*. (October 28, 2006): <<http://www.ndp.ca/page/4495/print>>.

One strong example of this is a Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute (CDFAI) poll that was conducted over a series of months in 2006. The poll compared the changes in support from June 2006 to the results of October 2006. What the results clearly indicated was that domestic support for the Canadian mission was falling, and was doing so drastically in line with the increase in casualties experienced. Among many questions, participants were asked if they supported the troops being in Afghanistan. In June 2006, 59% of those polled answered in the affirmative as opposed to a decline to 54% in October 2006. They were also asked whether they believed that Canadian troops were making a positive difference in Afghanistan. In June 2006, 61% felt that they were, which can be seen as two thirds of the population, or a clear majority. However, by October 2006 this number had dropped to 54%, or barely one in two. While the realities of the mission may not be well reflected by this data, it can be clearly seen that Jack Layton's allegation of Canada's participation in Afghanistan being an unbalanced one is taking hold.

However, there is an important understanding, namely that this mission and Canada's participation in it are far from determined. The decision on how to progress, and subsequently, how domestic political support evolves, is in the hands of the Government of Canada. The fate of this mission will depend on a thorough examination of the options available and a mind to the fact that Canada should always be in control of its commitment, be it in continuing the mission as is, altering it in some way, or choosing to cease operations.

Options

The solutions in dealing with the three critical issues are, while visible, not necessarily achievable in any extensive manner in the current political climate. With that said, there are still options that remain for Canada. There remains the option of staying the course, and continuing the mission, until at least spring 2009, as it is mandated today. While this may be chosen, there are also options that mandate variations in the mission in some form. They include: waiting for the Afghan National Army (ANA) to take over national security; receiving support from allied states, such as Britain and the United States as troops begin to pull out of Iraq (if this occurs in any significant number); additional troops from NATO to support ISAF; and lastly a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan.

As noted earlier, the most preferred solution to the issues faced by Canadian Forces in Afghanistan would be any one, or a combination of the options that do not result in withdrawal prior to 2009. The infusion of more troops from any source, and/or a potential resolution to the porous Pakistani border would bode well in Canadian domestic support. This would include a lessening in the Canadian casualties, as either there would be more troop support or less insurgent action along the border. Greater security and stability would be the result of that, an end in itself as this would present an environment in which aid and development could be greatly increased. The latter actions would then serve to balance the unbalanced commitment so often decried by Jack Layton. Not only would general derision for the mission decrease with the slowing of casualties, main causes in terms of mission mandate would be addressed by the subsequent increase in aid and development. While the achievement of these options is desired, it is far from a reality at this point, and other courses of action must also be considered.

SUDAN

Half a year has gone by since the passing of UNSC Resolution 1706, which calls for a force of 20,600 UN personnel to be deployed to Darfur to stem the violence there. Close to 450,000 thousand people have died and a further 2 million people have been driven from their homes in Darfur since the escalation of the conflict in 2002. Receiving material and financial aid from the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) in Khartoum, the now infamous Janjaweed militias have and continue to wreak havoc on Darfur, turning this conflict into what some consider a genocide. Despite the international outcry, Khartoum has demonstrated little interest in stopping the conflict within its borders or in allowing a UN peacekeeping force a full-mandate in Darfur, leaving the untested and fledgling African Union Force in Sudan (AMIS) to try and bring peace and stability to this troubled region.

Canada, as the proud founder of peacekeeping and its principal doctrine – “the responsibility to protect” – has voiced its concerns about the violence that continues to take place in Darfur. However, outside of some material and financial aid¹⁹, it remains debatable whether Canada can commit to any responsibility larger than this. This is, of course, because of its prior commitment to the NATO-led ISAF in Afghanistan. Though passing by a slim majority²⁰, the Conservative Government in May of 2006 committed Canada and its CF to Afghanistan until 2009, at least. Assuming that Canada will not renege on its Afghanistan commitments, is there room for a security and development operation in Sudan as well?

The answer to this question is contingent upon a variety of factors. First, is the obvious question of whether Canada maintains the military and political wherewithal to commit to Sudan. Second, is the more important question of whether there is the international support for such an operation, since this paper will not assume Canada could ‘go-it-alone’ in Sudan. However, the troublesome reality is that over five years has gone by since ‘Darfur’ started appearing on the six o’clock news, and, yet, the violence still continues. If there has not been any effective international action in the last five years, who can guarantee the next five will not be the same?

History

In order to understand the roots of the Darfur conflict it is important to realize that it represents one of the many sub-national conflicts that Sudan has had to deal with since its independence from the British in 1956. Some suggest that, as negotiations between Khartoum and tribal leaders in eastern Sudan deteriorate further, the human cost may surpass that of what is currently taking

¹⁹ Canada has contributed \$190 million to the UN and AU missions in Sudan; mostly to the latter. These contributions include “leased commercial helicopters and transport aircraft; the loan of Canadian armoured personnel carriers; financial support for aviation and ground fuel; support to civilian police operations; the provision of basic equipment, including helmets and protective vests; and Canadian military, police and civilian experts to assist with strategic planning, logistics and air operations, training, information support, and communications.” It has also deployed 32 military and civilian police, primarily training AMIS security forces. Government of Canada. “Canada’s Contributions toward Peace, Stability, and Poverty Reduction in Sudan,” *Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*, (October 12, 2006) <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canadasudan/backgrounder-contributions-en.asp>.

²⁰ On May 16, 2006, the House of Commons voted on whether Canada should extend its commitment in Afghanistan until 2009. The ‘free vote’ won with a 149-145 majority.

place in Darfur.²¹ There is also South Sudan where nearly 2 million people have lost their lives in two bloody civil wars.²² Only in 2005 with the signing of the *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* (CPA) by the NCP and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) has the violence in South Sudan subsided. The presence of the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) has greatly assisted in ensuring that the fragile peace is sustained.²³

Therefore, when speaking of the need to ‘stop the violence in Darfur’, it is important to realize that it represents just one of the many problems that currently confront Sudan.²⁴ As a country eager to bring peace to the Darfur region, Canada should realize that Darfur is not an isolated conflict, nor is it the only one currently taking place in Sudan. What does connect each of Sudan’s conflict is that it is characterized by a power-struggle between the highly centralized government in Khartoum and its periphery regions. This is by no means a new development. The roots of these circumstances are legacies of Sudan’s colonial past.

The Egyptians first colonized Sudan in the 1820s and then by the British in the 1870s until Sudan’s independence in 1956. It was the colonial rule of the British, however, that would have the greatest impact on Sudanese society; an impact that has framed today’s conflicts.²⁵ Faced with the challenge of administering their colonies, the British created new educated classes within the indigenous population. In the case of Sudan, the ‘educated class’ was primarily comprised of the riverain Sudanese (Arabs) who were located in and around Khartoum, spoke Arabic, and identified religiously and culturally, with Muslim Arabs.²⁶ Thus, when the British granted independence to Sudan in 1956, the power was almost exclusively handed over to this same geographically concentrated group. And while, over the course of its half-century history, Sudan has had many governments of varying types, the political “actors, [civilian or military], were almost exclusively members of the western-educated Arabs.”²⁷ This state of affairs created an environment where those Sudanese who did not or could not identify with the Arab culture were subjected to second-class citizen status.

Background to the Conflict

The historic marginalization that has taken place at the hands of the Arab-dominated northern Sudanese, while troublesome, must be carefully dealt with should there be a significant international security and development force deployed to Darfur. Representing nearly 40 percent of the population²⁸, the Arabs should be part of the peace-building process rather than on its

²¹ International Crisis Group. “Backgrounder”

²² The Treaty of Adidis Ababa ended the first civil war between the North and South

²³ In March 2005, UNSC Resolution 1590 was passed. As a result, UNMIS sent roughly 10,000 UN personnel to southern Sudan to help facilitate the terms of the CPA. This force is comprised of close to 9,000 troops, 600 military observers, and 650 military police. There is also a support for of 800 international civilian personnel, 2,200 local civilians, and 190 UN volunteers. United Nations. “Sudan,” *UNMIS - Facts and Figures*, (February 27, 2007), <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmis/facts.html>

²⁴ The western media has typically almost exclusively focused on Darfur, while the conflict within and outside of that region are far more complex than what the average onlooker in lead to believe. See Prunier, Gerard. “The Politics of Death in Darfur,” *Current History*, 105, 691 (May 2006): 195-202.

²⁵ See Sharkey, Heather J. “Living With Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.” (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)

²⁶ O’Fahey, R.S. “Islam and Ethnicity in the Sudan,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 26, 3 (August, 1996): 261-62.

²⁷ Ibid. 261.

²⁸ CIA World Factbook. “Sudan.” <<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/su.html>>

periphery. Not only do they represent a significant portion of the population of Sudan, they also have historically enjoyed the political and economic benefits of being Sudan's 'first-citizens' for well over a century. Taking this away from them will perhaps cause more problems than it was meant to fix. Comparisons could be made with the manner in which the Ba'ath party and the Iraqi military was dismantled by the United States (US) after it had occupied Iraq. Thus, as immoral as it may seem to many, the NCP must be seen as partners rather than adversaries in any long-lasting peace building initiative.

A final factor that merits some attention is the inter-state dimension to the Sudanese conflict, particularly in the Darfur conflict. A proxy war has developed between the governments of Chad and Sudan. Chad provides logistical and financial support to the NRF in Darfur while the Government of National Unity (GNU) does the same for the Coordination of Political Parties for the Defence of the Constitution (CPDC) and the Federation Action for the Republic (FAR) in Chad.²⁹ This has created a conflict within an even greater and more complex conflict. To resolve one independently of the other seems to be an unlikely option.³⁰ This reality prompted a section within UNSC Resolution 1706, which called for the UNMIS to establish a presence in "key locations" in Chad in order to stem the violence occurring on either side of the Sudan/Chad border.

This short backgrounder highlighted some of the more important factors that should be considered if or when a security and development force is deployed to Darfur. What can be extracted from these factors is that bringing peace and stability to Sudan would be a major commitment for Canada and the international community. It would not be limited to 'guard duty' along the Sudan/Chad border or handing out foodstuffs to those in need. It will have to be an effort, which works towards bringing the historically marginalized people of Sudan into the political framework that has been initiated with the creation of the GNU.³¹ At the risk of sounding contradictory, this effort must also work to keep the NCP and the Arab population of Sudan within the political process. Though to some, it will be viewed as an insult to those who have suffered so much under its iron rule; it must be considered a necessary reality when the goal for involvement in Sudan is its peace and stability.

International (In)Action

The passing of UNSC Resolution 1706 in August 2006, gave the UN legal right to intervene in the Darfur crisis under the auspices of Chapter VII's 'responsibility to protect'. As stated earlier, however, little progress has been made in stemming the violence that takes place in Darfur. In a time where getting international approval for state intervention is considered a rare commodity, why is it then, with the authority of the UNSC behind it, so difficult to get the UN into Darfur?

²⁹ International Crisis Group. "Chad: Back Towards War?" ICG Africa Briefing, 111 (June 1, 2006): i-38.

³⁰ Ibid. ii.

³¹ The GNU, brought into affect with the signing of the CPA in 2005, is a power-sharing agreement between North and South Sudan. The signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) in May 2006 is meant to bring the many factions of Darfur into the political framework of the GNU. In practice however, there has been little progress in realizing the terms and goals of the DPA. Not only did many key actors abstain from signing the agreement, those who have signed have also broken the terms of the agreement. See International Crisis Group. "Getting the UN into Darfur."

The answer is that Sudan is home to many international actors with many competing interests. Stopping the death and destruction that characterizes the Darfur conflict may be the chief interest for many within the UN; however, it is not reflective of all of the involved actors. While UNSC Resolution 1706 passed and is thus seen as ‘legitimate’, it should be highlighted that two of the P-5 members on the UNSC abstained from the vote; they being Russia and China. Though an abstention does not equal a condemnation of Resolution 1706, it certainly does not suggest that Russia and China are supportive of the resolution. It is also interesting to note that Qatar, though a non-permanent member of the UNSC, abstained from the vote as well. What can each of these abstentions tell us about the lack of UN progress in Darfur?

Russia’s abstention is perhaps the easiest to understand. Since the late nineties Russia has faced mounting criticism over its actions in the Russian province of Chechnya. The Russians have always contended that what occurs within its borders is its concern and not that of the international community – the classic state sovereignty argument.³² It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that Russia’s abstention was done so as not to condone international intervention in a conflict that is similar in nature to Russia’s Chechnya, albeit far smaller in scale.

China’s abstention represents a much more interesting and pertinent case. As China’s appetite for more non-renewable energy resources increases with every passing day³³, it is forced to find reliable and plentiful sources of non-renewable sources of energy outside of its borders. In the pursuit of this objective, China has made deals with what many in the international community would call ‘pariah’ states; states such as Uzbekistan, Iran and, of course, Sudan. China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), a major Chinese owned oil company, currently holds a 40 percent stake in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operation Company, Sudan’s primary producer of petroleum products.³⁴ China also has a “substantial stake” in many other Sudanese petroleum producers. Furthermore, it has constructed a 930-mile pipeline from the south of Sudan to Port Sudan on the Red Sea and built a refinery in Khartoum.³⁵ One estimate held that 80 percent of Sudanese oil was destined for Chinese ports.³⁶

China’s relations with Sudan do not end with its petroleum relationship, nor are they affected by Khartoum’s involvement in Darfur. It has just recently given substantial amounts of financial aid to the NCP dominated GNU where it has been ‘properly’ spent on a badly needed new Presidential Palace and two schools in Khartoum.³⁷ The Chinese financial aid was not directed towards the Sudan’s peace-building efforts.

The China-Sudan relationship is important because it highlights that Khartoum, which is frequently blamed for what occurs in Darfur by much of the international community, has a powerful ally; one that not only is a P-5 member but is also a significant economic and military

³² See Keohane, Robert O. and Nye Joseph. “Complex Interdependence and the Role of Force.” Ed in Robert J. Art and Robert Jervis. *International Politics 4th Edition*. (New York: HarperCollins College Publishers, 1996): 236-252.

³³ In 1993, China was completely self-sufficient when it came to petroleum consumed. By 2004, 48 percent of China’s petroleum consumption was imported and by 2025 this number is expected to be in the vicinity of 75 percent. See Klare, Michael T. “Fueling the Dragon: China’s Strategic Energy Dilemma,” *Current History*, 105, 690 (April 2006): 180-185.

³⁴ Ibid. 183.

³⁵ Klare, Michael T. 183.

³⁶ Mallaby, Sebastian. “A Palace For Sudan: China’s No-Strings Aid Undermines the West,” *Washington Post*, (February 5, 2007).

³⁷ British Broadcasting Company. “Chinese Leader Boosts Sudan Ties,” *BBC*, (February 2, 2007): <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6323017.stm>

power, second only to the United States. Since Resolution 1706 passed, the GNU and its president, Omar al-Bashir, have consistently rejected a UNMIS mission in Darfur knowing full well that much of the international community would dare not risk a sour relationship with China. Thus, whether China abstains or rejects any further UNSC resolutions on Darfur, the same will result. Furthermore, this reality only strengthens the need for the international community to deal with, rather than without the GNU, since its deep relationship with China suggests that it will not be going anywhere anytime soon.

While not a burgeoning superpower, Qatar's abstention can be linked to the broader interest that the Arab League (of which Qatar is a member of) has or, in some cases, does not have in Sudan. Until the Abuja peace process began in 2004, the Arab League had been conspicuously absent from Sudan's conflict. To some observers this was rather strange as the Arab League had been a vocal supporter in other conflicts well outside of the Arab region as its participation and support for the Muslim minorities during the Balkans crises of the 1990s demonstrated.³⁸ Instead of a proactive policy similar to the Balkans, the Arab League has supported the government of Khartoum (themselves an Arab dominated government) and has, on more than one occasion, made it difficult for the UN to pursue its 1706 mandate in Darfur.³⁹ When the Arab League has been involved in Sudan, it has been outside of the UN effort and is geared towards asserting its own legitimacy and dominance within the region.⁴⁰

No analysis would be complete without a quick explanation on where the US stands on the Darfur issue and, more generally, on Sudan itself. While the US did indeed support Resolution 1706, US policy towards Sudan is two-sided. The first side supports the UN and its continued involvement towards reaching a stable and long-lasting peace in Sudan. The second has the US government, most notably its intelligence agencies, working closely with Khartoum as a partner, albeit covertly, in America's 'War on Terror.'⁴¹ For example, when he is not orchestrating terror campaigns against Darfurian civilians, Salah Abdullah Gosh, an intelligence official in Khartoum, works closely with the Central Intelligence Agency on counter terrorist efforts.⁴² This is remarkable, considering that Gosh also worked closely with Osama bin Laden while bin Laden and his Al Qaeda organization were based in Khartoum.⁴³

The dual policies that the US has towards Sudan, one that is humanitarian and multilateral and the other grounded in the American 'War on Terror', seems to contradict itself. It is, however, reasonable to assume that the latter of these two policies will take precedence over the former, thus making it difficult for the international community, which is often guided by what the US says and does, to make any real progress in Darfur.

What Does Canada Do?

The conflicting international interests on Sudan make it difficult for Canada to make any real progress to the ongoing violence. Its financial and material support for the UNMIS in the

³⁸ Slim, Hugo. "Dithering over Darfur: A Preliminary of the International Response," *International Affairs*, 80, 5, (2004): 811-828.

³⁹ Hoge, Warren. "Egyptian President Rebuffs UN Secretary General on Darfur," *The New York Times*, (March 24, 2007).

⁴⁰ For example, take the Tripoli Agreement of February 2006, an Arab League AU effort.

⁴¹ Clark, Wesley and Prendergast, John. "A US Plan for Darfur," *Boston Globe*, (April 10, 2006)

⁴² Clark.

⁴³ Ibid.

south and the AMIS in Darfur has not had its desired outcome. This reality leaves Canada with a limited set of options that it can pursue. First, Canada can continue to support the UNMIS and AMIS in the hope that Khartoum will eventually allow a more robust international force to operate within Sudan, especially within Darfur region. The financial and material support has made a real difference to the troops on the ground, whether it is with the UN or AU.⁴⁴

Second, Canada must do what it can to try and get key international players to join in on the effort to stem the violence in Darfur. This will be a difficult task. The Russians, Chinese, Americans, and the Arab League each have their own set of reasons for their inaction on the Darfur issue. In the cases of the Chinese and Americans, perhaps the two most important state actors on the Sudan issue, other interests have trumped UN action in Darfur. Canada should diplomatically work with both governments in an effort to re-assure that the principal interests of the Chinese (its need to have unobstructed access Sudan's oil wealth) and Americans (its partnership with Khartoum on the War on Terror) would not be at risk should the UN be permitted to go into Darfur. If that can be achieved, the influence that each of these actors has over Khartoum could force them into accepting the terms of Resolution 1706.

Third and drawing from the last point, Canada must build a broad international coalition of support which will not only pressure the international actors which are opposed or ambivalent to action in Darfur, but also directly pressure Khartoum itself. Targeted sanctions, travel bans, and the freezing of assets (targeted at the ruling NCP elites) are all options that Canada, in conjunction with other like-minded states, can pursue.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While not explicitly stating so, certain conclusions can be reached from the two state-based analyses completed here. Firstly, with the under-manning of the Canadian Forces mission to Afghanistan, Canada can not be involved in Darfur, or any other theatre, in any great numbers, while still involved in Afghanistan. This is not to detract from the importance of the situation in Darfur. However, it would be the height of negligence to leave Afghanistan prematurely and have the hard work and lives lost there account for nothing. Canada is committed to the Afghan mission until the spring of 2009 at the earliest, and possibly longer should the government decide to do so.

While there have been calls for an earlier withdrawal it is the opinion of the authors that Canada should honour its commitment to Afghanistan until 2009, as it has stated it will do. This is for two reasons: first, that Canada's international reputation relies on being seen as reliable and committed to its goals and those of our allies; and second, more practically, that there appears to be no international coalition forming currently that would be necessary for Canadian involvement in Darfur. While the authors acknowledge the possibility of a mission to Darfur in the future, they also note that it would come at the cost of continuing Canadian support to Afghanistan directly. To this point, policy makers must realise that this presents a potential for the regression if not complete negation of the accomplishments of the CF, unless the void created by their departure is filled by other ISAF or Afghan troops.

Based on this, unless an early pullout of CF personnel is undertaken, which the authors would argue against, 2009 is the earliest that a mission to Darfur can be considered for Canada.

⁴⁴ Mozersky, David and Rock, Allan. "Canada Should Lead in Darfur. 'Responsibility to Protect' More than A Slogan," *Toronto Star*, (October 25, 2006).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

However, as pre-empted above, there are several caveats that *must* be understood when considering this potential mission. First, any Canadian mission must be both multilateral and seen as legitimate, and supported by international law. Second, any commitments must be within the means of the CF. Third, the obstacles presented by the United States, Russia, China and the Arab League must be overcome through soft power means. If these conditions were met, Canada would be in a position to contribute to a mission in Darfur. If they are not, any Canadian involvement in that state would end in failure, and come at the expense of the Afghan people that have lost Canadian support, the people of Darfur, who will continue to go unaided, and the lives of the CF members themselves. These are the stakes.

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