

China and the Conflict in Darfur

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CHINA'S POLICY ON DARFUR, WHICH is based on its economic and political interests in Sudan and the wider region, requires some contextual background. Darfur, together with the rest of Sudan's geographical periphery, has continually been marginalized politically and economically. Although there are many reasons, including ethnic issues, for the outbreak in 2003 of conflict in Darfur, inattention to the region by the central government lies at the core of the problem. Even Sudan's ambassador to China, Mirghani Mohamed Salih, agreed, "The root cause of the problem in Darfur is the lack of development, as in other parts of Sudan."¹ What Salih failed to add is that there has been substantial development in the greater Khartoum area and, for a distance of about 50 miles, along the Nile north and south of the capital.

The mishandling of a severe famine in that began in 1984 Darfur by the national government in Khartoum underscored the marginalization of the region and set the stage for rebellion.² Instead of focusing on development, too much attention has been directed to so-called differences between the "African" and "Arab" inhabitants of Darfur. While they are all African, there are important distinctions between semi-nomadic pastoralists and settled agriculturalists. Religion was not one of the reasons behind the conflict—all the combatants and aggrieved are Sunni Muslim, and no party to the conflict has cited religion as a cause.³

Prior to the onset of conflict in Darfur, there was an important development in southern Sudan that would impact the situation in western Sudan. The peace process for ending the civil war between northern and southern Sudan resumed in 2000. By 2003, it was apparent that the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army

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(SPLM/A) would achieve major concessions from Khartoum that had the potential to end a costly war that neither side could win militarily. In 2005, the SPLM/A and the government in Khartoum signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that formally ended the war. The Sudanese government focused on working out the details of this agreement with southern Sudan while the humanitarian situation in Darfur again deteriorated.⁴

86 Facing a new humanitarian crisis, dissidents in Darfur almost certainly concluded that the only way to get the attention of Khartoum was to take a page out of the SPLM/A handbook. Consequently, they launched attacks against government forces early in 2003. Initially there were two principal competing rebel organizations: the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), supported largely by the Zaghawa people, and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), which drew most of its followers from the Fur people.⁵ The rebels subsequently splintered into numerous additional groups. The military situation was complicated because a high percentage of soldiers in Sudan's national army come from Darfur. Khartoum decided to crush the insurrection. Concerned that it could not rely on soldiers from Darfur, the government armed and mobilized indigenous Janjaweed militia in Darfur to confront the rebels. The situation quickly deteriorated. Khartoum either could not or would not rein in the vicious tactics and egregious human rights abuses of the Janjaweed. The Sudanese Air Force also indiscriminately bombed both rebel and civilian targets. By early 2004, an estimated 80,000 persons had died or been killed, 100,000 had taken refuge in neighboring Chad, and another million were internally displaced.⁶

Nearly everyone agrees that what happened and continues to happen in Darfur is terrible. There is no agreement, however, that it constituted genocide as defined in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.⁷ The United States was the first and apparently only government to officially declare that genocide occurred in Darfur. Addressing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 9 September 2004, secretary of state Colin Powell said, "genocide has occurred and may still be occurring in Darfur." He placed the blame on the Sudan government and the Janjaweed.⁸ Most human rights organizations agreed with this assessment. On the other hand, the United Nations, African Union (AU), and most governments have referred to the abuses in Darfur as "crimes against humanity" or "war crimes" but not genocide.⁹

The conflict in Darfur has significant regional implications that also impact the way China has reacted to the situation. Darfur is located next to Chad; the border divides ethnic groups that live on each side. In addition, more than 200,000 Darfur residents have taken refuge in Chad while smaller numbers of Chadians sought refuge in Darfur. The governments of both Chad and Sudan have supported rebel movements based in the border area that periodically try to topple each other's regime. A

Darfur-based Chadian rebel group attacked the Chadian capital of N'Djamena by entering through the Central African Republic (CAR), which borders southern Darfur. The CAR hosts a small number of Darfur refugees. Libya, which has a border with Northern Darfur, has a significant ability to influence all the rebel groups and has tried in recent years to play the role of mediator. Egypt is a major power in the region and has a border with northern Sudan but not Darfur. Egypt is primarily interested in maintaining the unity of Sudan. It also contributes 2,000 troops and police to the United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Eritrea shares part of Sudan's eastern boundary and initially supported Darfur rebel factions but seems to have stopped the assistance. Ethiopia has cordial relations with Sudan and contributes 1,500 troops to UNAMID.¹⁰

CHINA'S INTERESTS IN SUDAN AND THE REGION

Sudan and China established diplomatic relations in 1959. Ties were cordial but limited until the beginning of the 1970s when China offered its first loan and began a series of aid projects in the country. China supported Khartoum in its conflict with southern Sudan and benefited politically in 1971 from a failed coup attempt involving the Sudanese Communist Party that Khartoum believed had the support of the Soviet Union. This allowed Beijing to assume some of the influence previously held by Moscow. The seizure of power in 1989 by Umar Hassan al-Bashir, who is still Sudan's president, provided an additional opportunity for China to solidify its influence, especially as Sudan's relations with the United States and the West began to deteriorate.

Al-Bashir visited Beijing in 1990, which in the following year led to Iranian-funded purchases of Chinese arms. Sudan experienced increasing isolation from the West, especially the United States, which put Sudan in 1993 on its list of state sponsors of terrorism.¹¹ Chevron had previously discovered oil in Sudan and during the first half of the 1980s had begun to exploit it. Chevron shut down operations because of the north-south civil war and, in any event, was unable to return once the United States imposed sanctions on Sudan. In 1994, Sudan suggested to China that one of its companies replace Chevron in the development of Sudan's petroleum reserves.¹² This led quickly to a dramatic increase in China's engagement in Sudan.

In 1997, a consortium of oil production companies created the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC) to build the infrastructure for exploiting oil from three blocks in southern Sudan. The China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) took a 40 percent stake in GNPOC; today, the Malaysian state company holds 30 percent, the Indian state company 25 percent, and the Sudanese state company 5 percent. The China Petroleum Engineering and Construction Corporation then built

the pipeline from the oil fields to Port Sudan and the terminal at Port Sudan. CNPC took a 41 percent stake in a second consortium, the Petrodar Operating Company, to develop the infrastructure for two additional blocks in Upper Nile. Sinopec also has a 6 percent interest in Petrodar. Finally, CNPC has a 40 percent stake in block 13 and 35 percent interest in block 15, both along Sudan's Red Sea.¹³

The value of China's total investment in Sudan is elusive, although one knowledgeable Sudanese figure put it at about \$5 billion, most of it in the oil industry and \$300 million in the hotel sector.¹⁴ Chinese companies are getting most of the contracts for large infrastructure projects such as roads, dams, power stations, railways and government buildings.¹⁵ In recent years, China has imported between 65 percent and 82

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percent of Sudan's annual oil production. This constitutes 5 to 7 percent of China's total oil imports. In 2007, China imported \$7.3 billion worth of goods, almost entirely oil, from Sudan. It sold an equally impressive \$2.4 billion worth of products or almost 30 percent of

Sudan's total imports in 2007. No other country's trade ties with Sudan comes close to the importance China's.¹⁶

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While these economic links are critical to Sudan, they are of limited significance to China's massive economy. China has significant economic and political interests in three of the four countries that border Darfur and northern Sudan. It takes these interests into account as it calibrates its policy on Darfur.¹⁷ Egypt was the first country in Africa to recognize Beijing and has developed a "strategic" relationship with China. China almost certainly consults with Egypt on its policy towards Sudan generally and Darfur specifically. Egypt has been reluctant to criticize the al-Bashir government on its handling of the crisis in Darfur. China's ties with Libya have been hampered by the fact that Tripoli initially recognized Taiwan and did not switch to Beijing until 1978. Even today it is not a particularly close relationship, although China is working hard to develop the oil connection. The trickiest regional link concerns Chad, where China also has oil interests, although they are not as important as those in Sudan. When Chadian rebel groups with the backing of Sudan attacked government forces in Chad in 2006, authorities in N'Djamena suspected that China played some role behind the scenes.¹⁸

Chinese interests in the Central African Republic (CAR) are less significant. China has important ties with Ethiopia and cordial relations with Eritrea. Ethiopia is, however, more concerned about the future of southern Sudan, with which it shares a long border, than Darfur.

CHINA, DARFUR AND STATE SOVEREIGNTY

Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is one of China's original "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" that dates back to the 1953 preamble for the Indian-Chinese Trading Treaty in Tibet.¹⁹ China periodically reaffirms these principles. In the case of Africa generally and Darfur specifically, this has played out in China's great reluctance to interfere or intervene in the internal affairs of an African country.²⁰ China's policy on support for sovereignty and its willingness to intervene has, however, evolved over time. Since the Tiananmen Square crisis in 1989, Beijing has supported the international community's right to intervene under certain conditions. Intervention must be legitimate, have UN authorization, occur at the invitation of the affected state, and respect the sovereignty of that state. Force should be used only when all other options have failed.²¹ Chinese policy on its approach to sovereignty, however, has evolved. For example, Beijing has become a significant participant in UN peacekeeping operations, especially in Africa, where it has contributed troops to both of the UN operations in Sudan. China's policy on Darfur came perilously close to violating its own principles on non-interference.

There are, of course, important Chinese domestic reasons for strongly supporting state sovereignty and non-interference. It is inconceivable that China would permit UN peacekeeping forces to enter its territory in the event of conflict in Tibet or the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. In the past, it quickly and forcefully dealt with conflicts in those regions on its own. In the case of Darfur, China expected the Sudanese government to do the same when conflict broke out in 2003.²² Sudan's inability to end the challenge quickly put China in a difficult position vis-à-vis Khartoum and the international community. President Hu Jintao made a critical visit to Sudan in February 2007 that resulted in Sudan's reluctant acceptance of a hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur. On that occasion, Hu Jintao proposed four principles—the first of which was respect for Sudan's sovereignty and territorial integrity—for handling the crisis in Darfur.²³

CHINA AS AN ARMS SUPPLIER TO SUDAN

The sale of arms to Sudan is one of the most frequent criticisms, especially by human rights groups, of China's policy on Darfur.²⁴ It is a fact that China has been a significant source of military equipment for Sudan over many years. China also helped Sudan establish its own arms industry, which is now the third largest on the African continent after South Africa and Egypt. Historically, the Soviet Union/Russia provided by value about three-quarters of Sudan's major weapons systems. This includes MiG-29 attack aircraft

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and Mi-24P helicopter gunships. China has sold advanced aircraft to Sudan since the late 1960s. China delivered six or seven F-7M fighter aircraft in 1997 and continued aircraft sales after the outbreak of conflict in Darfur. China sold, for example, twenty A-5C Fantan fighter bombers in 2003 and six K-8 advanced trainer aircraft in 2006. China's Dongfeng Company delivered more than 200 military trucks in 2005. Sudan displayed at its Independence Day ceremony in 2007 late model tanks and infantry fighting vehicles from China. Between 2003 and 2006, China was Sudan's largest supplier of small arms, selling each year an average of \$14 million worth.²⁵

In 2004, the UN Security Council imposed a mandatory embargo on weapons transfers to all nongovernmental entities and individuals in Darfur. A year later, the United Nations extended the embargo to transfers of arms to the Sudanese armed forces operating in Darfur. Although China abstained on both resolutions, they were still binding. China continued to sell military equipment, including grenade launchers, ammunition for assault rifles and heavy machine guns, to Sudan after the embargo. These sales did not violate the embargo unless Sudanese armed forces used the weapons in Darfur. There is compelling evidence that weapons produced by a number of countries, including China, have been used by Sudanese government forces in Darfur and by Chadian armed groups across the border.²⁶ In 2006, a UN panel of experts collected shell casings in Darfur of ammunition manufactured in China and identified 222 Chinese military vehicles in use in Darfur. Sudan may have decided on its own to use this equipment in Darfur without any reference to China.²⁷ A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman argued that China stipulates weapons sold to the Sudan government are not to be used in Darfur and that it does not sell arms to non-state entities.²⁸

China's supply of arms to Sudan has resulted in a direct threat to Chinese companies that have been looking for oil in Southern Kordofan province, which borders Darfur. In October 2007, the JEM briefly seized Chinese oil facilities at Defra as a warning to China to cease its military and political support for Khartoum. In December 2007, JEM attacked the Heglig oil facility run by the Great Wall Drilling Company. JEM's leader announced that it is carrying out the attacks because China is trading Sudan's petroleum for Darfurian blood. The most serious incident occurred in October 2008 when an unknown group carried out a third attack that resulted in the kidnapping of nine Chinese employees of the China National Petroleum Corporation in an oilfield near Darfur. The rebel group killed four of them while four others were rescued and one remains missing.²⁹

EVOLUTION OF CHINA'S DIPLOMACY ON DARFUR

China and Sudan support each other on controversial issues that come before interna-

tional forums and attract foreign press attention. China uses its seat in the UN Security Council to prevent sanctions against Sudan on human rights violations and both countries vote in unison if they are serving on the UN Human Rights Council. Sudan has publicly backed Chinese policy in Tibet and the Chinese response in 2009 to end violence between the Uighur and Han people at Urumqi in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. During a visit to Beijing in 2009, Sudan's defense minister reportedly firmly supported the Chinese government's measures to deal with the incident.³⁰

While China's rhetoric consistently opposed the imposition of sanctions against the government of Sudan over its policy in Darfur, it abstained on UN Security Council resolutions that called for sanctions. In fact, until 2007, it abstained on most Security Council resolutions concerning Darfur. China has a history of rarely using its veto in the UN Security Council. Beginning with the first Darfur resolution in 2004, China also consistently removed or tried to remove harsh language critical of Khartoum.³¹ China abstained on a resolution in July 2004 that demanded the disarmament of the Janjaweed, one in September 2004 that called for a commission of inquiry to investigate human rights violations in Darfur, one in March 2005 that requested sanctions against those responsible for committing violence in Darfur, and another the same month that referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court.³² In April 2006, China abstained on a UN resolution requesting sanctions and a travel ban against four Sudanese individuals, and in August it abstained on one that expanded the UN peacekeeping mission in southern Sudan to Darfur.³³

By late 2006, China, under considerable pressure from western countries and with an eye on international attendance at the 2008 summer Olympic Games in Beijing, began slowly but methodically to alter its position on Darfur.³⁴

In November 2006, President Hu Jintao told al-Bashir during his participation at the Africa Summit in Beijing that while China understands Sudan's concerns with Darfur, it "hopes Sudan will strengthen dialogue with all parties, coordinate stances, and strive to reach an appropriate solution."³⁵ Hu Jintao visited Khartoum in February 2007 where he pledged a \$13 million interest-free loan to build a new presidential palace, \$4.8 million in humanitarian assistance to Darfur, and wrote off \$70 million of Sudan's debt to China. While he made no public comment on his discussions with al-Bashir over Darfur, he insisted privately that Khartoum resolve the four-year-old conflict.³⁶ A few days later, China's Ambassador to the United Nations, Wang Guangya, announced that the Chinese president told Sudan to accept a UN-AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur. Ambassador Wang said China sent a clear, strong message that the proposal for a hybrid peacekeeping mission by Kofi Annan is a good one and that Sudan had to accept it. He added that China "never twists arms," but Sudan "got the message."³⁷

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Some analysts concluded that this and subsequent interventions constituted a departure from China's traditional policy of non-interference in a nation's internal affairs.³⁸

Hu Jintao used the occasion of his visit to Khartoum to establish four principles for handling the Darfur crisis. First, he reiterated respect for Sudan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and supported the continuation of Sudan's unity. Second, he called on the disputing parties to resolve the problem through dialogue and consultation on an equal basis and through peaceful means. Third, he said the African Union and the United Nations should play a constructive role in the Darfur peacekeeping process. Fourth, he urged the promotion of stability in Darfur and improvement in living conditions for local people.³⁹ Recognizing the need to prepare for the probable secession of southern Sudan, the Chinese president also invited Sudanese First Vice President and SPLM leader Salva Kiir to China.⁴⁰

The U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, Andrew Natsios, initially expressed disappointment at the results concerning Darfur of Hu Jintao's visit to Khartoum. Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Natsios said he was hoping for more diplomatic pressure from the Chinese.⁴¹ China's announcement that it offered an interest-free loan to build a presidential palace in Khartoum particularly angered powerful groups in the United States that opposed Sudan's policy in Darfur. Less than a month later, however, the U.S. State Department spokesperson commended China's decision to remove Sudan from its list of countries for which it provides financial incentives to Chinese companies to invest there. The State Department also welcomed China's efforts that encouraged Sudan to permit establishment of the hybrid UNAMID force in Darfur to replace the one operated entirely by the African Union.⁴² At the beginning of April 2007, Assistant Foreign Minister Zhai Jun went to Sudan and urged al-Bashir to be flexible on standing up UNAMID. Chinese pressure seems to have been instrumental in obtaining Sudan's agreement.⁴³ At about the same time, Natsios was telling the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the Chinese "have been largely supportive of our efforts to resolve the Darfur situation through peaceful means and have been publicly encouraging Khartoum" to allow AU and UN peacekeepers into Darfur.⁴⁴

China supported a UN resolution in late April 2007 that urged Khartoum to implement its commitment to support, protect, and facilitate all humanitarian operations in Darfur.⁴⁵ In May 2007, China appointed Liu Guijin, former ambassador to South Africa, as its Special Envoy to Sudan. (China subsequently expanded Liu's portfolio to include all of Africa.) By making this appointment, China acknowledged that it had become concerned over the harm to its image resulting from its relationship with Sudan in the context of Darfur. This appointment also focused China's Sudan policy on one senior official. When China held the presidency of the UN Security Council in July 2007, it passed UN Security Council resolution 1769 authorizing UNAMID

for Darfur. Although China worked behind the scenes to reduce the negative impact of the resolution on Sudan, it ultimately supported the landmark initiative.⁴⁶ China was among the first countries to contribute peacekeepers to UNAMID; it sent an advance party of military engineers at the end of 2007.⁴⁷ (As of August 2009, China had 324 troops and one police official assigned to UNAMID).⁴⁸ As Sudan delayed implementation of the new force, Zhai Jun met with Sudan's foreign minister in Addis Ababa in January 2008 when he stated that the world is running out of patience over what is happening in Darfur.⁴⁹

These more positive actions by China did not deter Darfur activists in the United States from continuing their attacks on China over its close ties with Sudan. The most important of them, the Save Darfur Coalition, did acknowledge the change in China's policy but added that "the current responsibility and potential role of China in ending the tragedy in Darfur is unique, undeniable and absolutely indispensable."⁵⁰ Another group, Dream for Darfur, led by actress Mia Farrow, stepped up pressure on China and called on corporate sponsors of the Olympic Games to push China to do more.⁵¹ Farrow had earlier dubbed them the "Genocide Olympics." Congress introduced three "sense of Congress" resolutions in August 2007 calling on President Bush to boycott the games. In February 2008, Steven Spielberg resigned as artistic director for the games and eight Nobel Peace Prize laureates wrote a letter to Hu Jintao demanding an end to China's trade with and aid to Khartoum.⁵²

In June 2008, Hu Jintao bluntly told Sudan's visiting Vice President, Ali Uthman Muhammad Taha that Sudan must cooperate in the swift deployment of the UN-AU force so that the residents of Darfur could reconstruct their homeland.⁵³ The following month, Ren Xiao, professor of international affairs at Fudan University, published a detailed defense of China's Darfur policy in *China Daily*. He argued that Chinese foreign policy is based on international norms and the heritage of traditional Chinese culture such as Confucian magnanimity. It reflects the humiliation of foreign invasions of China and new diplomatic practices since the formation of the People's Republic of China. While acknowledging the challenge of Darfur for Chinese diplomacy, he said China's primary goal is not achieving better human rights practices in the abstract but satisfying Darfur's basic needs for food, shelter, and security. He suggested China's approach for solving the Darfur crisis consists of diplomatic persuasion, providing practical help to the affected people, convincing the government of Sudan to accept the hybrid UN-AU peacekeeping force, and engaging in multilateral diplomacy.⁵⁴

As a result of Chinese diplomacy and a sharp drop in the number of deaths in Darfur, criticism of China has decreased significantly in the past year. Since China completed a successful Olympics, little has been heard from Hollywood on the issue and the Save Darfur Coalition seems to have lost much of its steam, especially on college

campuses. These developments did not prevent U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, Richard Williamson, who replaced Andrew Natsios, from blasting China as he stepped down early in 2009. Williamson strongly criticized China's special envoy to Sudan, adding that China cares little about Sudan but only wants to be on the winning side.⁵⁵

In March 2009, China's deputy permanent representative to the UN urged the Security Council to hold "a comprehensive discussion on the issue of Darfur to develop an integrated strategy."⁵⁶ At about the same time, Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping told a visiting Sudanese envoy in Beijing that parties involved in the Darfur conflict should fully respect the voices of the African Union, Arab League, and African and Arab countries.⁵⁷ Aligning its Darfur policy with the views of most African and Arab countries has been a consistent theme of Chinese policy. The current U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, Scott Gration, visited Beijing in May 2009 when the two countries agreed to work together to promote an early solution to the Darfur issue. Gration subsequently stated that China and the United States have similar goals in and the two countries have agreed to integrate their humanitarian activities. Gration also spoke highly of China's Special Envoy to Sudan, Liu Guijin.⁵⁸ During a visit to Khartoum in June 2009, Liu Guijin announced another \$3 million grant for humanitarian activities in Darfur. Moreover, he continued to N'Djamena where he met President Deby, expressed strong support for the Chadian government, and condemned a recent attempt by anti-government forces, which in the past received support from Sudan, to overthrow the regime.⁵⁹

SUDAN, CHINA AND THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

The decision by the UN Security Council in March 2005 to refer the situation in Darfur to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) complicated China's relations with Sudan and the West. China abstained on the resolution and explained at the time that it preferred justice take place in Sudanese courts. Neither Sudan nor China is party to the Rome Statute, which established the ICC. The ICC prosecutor subsequently determined that two northern Sudanese, including Sudan's Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs Ahmad Muhammad Harun, were responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur between 2003 and 2004. ICC judges issued international arrest warrants against the two in April 2007. In September 2007, China's ambassador to Sudan appeared with Harun in Khartoum as China sent humanitarian assistance to Darfur.⁶⁰ In December 2007, Human Rights First charged, "China has no intention of holding Sudan to account for evading its legal obligation to cooperate with the ICC. And in fact, China will enable Khartoum's continued evasion."⁶¹


China's position on the ICC issue has evolved. While China blocked efforts at the UN Security Council in December 2007 to issue a presidential statement urging Sudan to cooperate with the ICC, it endorsed a similar statement in June 2008.⁶² The following month, however, China worked hard at the United Nations to defer action on new ICC indictments against Sudanese officials, including al-Bashir. China expressed "grave concern and misgivings" over the decision by the ICC to seek an arrest warrant for al-Bashir on charges of genocide in Darfur. One Chinese specialist on Africa concluded that this action presented China with many quandaries and would have negative consequences.⁶³ Together with Russia, China supported the AU request to invoke Article 16 of the Rome Statutes to suspend any indictment of Sudan's head of state. During a visit to Khartoum, Liu Guijin said the ICC decision could affect negatively the ongoing efforts to achieve peace in Darfur.⁶⁴ In January 2009, Liu Guijin reiterated China's desire to postpone the indictment of al-Bashir. He warned that the arrest warrant would have dire consequences on the peace process, adding that the African Union, Arab League, Non-Aligned Movement, and Organization of The Islamic Conference have all called on the Security Council to invoke Article 16. This continues to be China's policy on the ICC arrest warrant for Bashir.⁶⁵

CONCLUSION

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After initially failing to appreciate the potential negative implications of the Darfur crisis, China eventually balanced successfully its interests in Sudan against the criticism that it received, mainly from the West and especially the United States, for its support of a government that contributed to the atrocities in Darfur. China's intense desire to hold successful Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 was a huge incentive to focus on the Darfur issue and manage the challenge so that it would detract minimally or not at all from the success of the games. Even with the conclusion of the games, China has continued to pay significant attention to continuing negative fallout from its relations with Sudan concerning the conflict in Darfur.

China minimized the damage to its overall image by closely aligning its position on key Darfur decisions with those of the African Union and a vast majority of African and Arab countries. It made well-publicized humanitarian donations to Darfur and was the only permanent member of the Security Council to contribute peacekeepers to UNAMID except for three personnel now serving from France and the United Kingdom. (Sudan would not have accepted significant numbers of forces from western countries.) Although China's policy never satisfied the human rights organizations, it preserved its economic and political interests in Sudan and eventually won grudging acceptance from the United States government for its more recent policy in Darfur.

At the same time, al-Bashir would have been unable to pursue the strategy that he did without the backing of China. Perhaps the most important implication of China's policy in Darfur—both for China and Africa—is the possible precedent it has set for future interference in internal political affairs. 

NOTES

1. Interview with Mirghani Mohamed Salih, Sudan's ambassador to China in *Beijing Review* 50, no. 33 (16 August 2007): 14. China typically ascribes lack of development as the root cause of conflict. This also permits Chinese policy makers to avoid placing blame on the government, in this case Sudan.

2. The author served as the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy in Khartoum during the period 1983–1986.

3. Gérard Prunier, *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005): 54–58. Peter K. Bechtold, "Darfur, the ICC and American Politics," *Middle East Policy*, 16, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 153. For background on the ethnic situation in Darfur, see International Crisis Group, "Darfur's New Security Reality," *Africa Report* 134 (26 November 2007): 2–6; Julie Flint and Alex de Waal, *Darfur: A New History of a Long War* (London: Zed Books, 2008): 1–15; Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009): 90–108 and 147–170; and R.S. O'Fahey, *State and Society in Darfur* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1980): 1–13 and 72–80.

4. Prunier, 88–90.

5. Darfur means place of the Fur people who for centuries lived primarily in the mountains of Jebel Marra. They were independent under the Fur sultanate from the fifteenth century until 1916. The Zaghawa constitute less than 10 percent of the population of Darfur and are found primarily in Chad.

6. Flint and de Waal, 116–149. Prunier, 91–110. For background on the Janjaweed and other militias operating in Darfur, see Julie Flint, "Beyond 'Janjaweed': Understanding the Militias of Darfur," *Small Arms Survey* (Geneva: 2009), www.smallarmssurvey.org/fn-pdf/SWP-17-Beyond-Janjaweed.pdf.

7. For an explanation of the 1948 convention, see www.preventgenocide.org/genocide/officialtext.htm.

8. "Powell Calls Sudan Killings Genocide," *CNN* www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/africa/09/09/sudan.powell/ (9 September 2004). Also see Flint and de Waal, 186–191. Whether one agrees with the designation of genocide occurring in Darfur during 2003–2004, when the vast majority of killings took place, more recent evidence suggests that it is inaccurate to refer to genocide taking place in Darfur today. Andrew Natsios, U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan from 2006–2007 stated in 2008 that 96 percent of all deaths in Darfur occurred during the atrocities of 2003 and 2004. See "Beyond Darfur: Sudan's Slide toward Civil War," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (May/June 2008): 92. UNAMID reported there were 1,552 violent deaths in Darfur during 2008. Of this total, 496 were civilians, 416 combatants and 640 killed in inter-tribal fighting. See Alex de Wall's blog at www.ssrc.org/blogs/darfur/2009/02/26/data-for-deaths-in-darfur/. Nevertheless, the debate continues to rage in Washington. A former senior U.S. official involved with Darfur stated at a private briefing in Washington on 25 February 2009 that the situation today constitutes "low intensity conflict" but not genocide. When pressed why he continues to refer to it publicly as genocide, his response was that what you call it is not important; there is no need to change how the United States refers to it! President Obama's special envoy to Sudan, J. Scott Gration, stated on 17 June 2009, "What we see is the remnants of genocide." See "Sudan's 'Coordinated' Genocide in Darfur is Over, U.S. Envoy Says," *Washington Post* (18 June 2009). Two days later, the Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, Philip Crowley, clarified, "We continue to characterize the circumstances in Darfur as genocide." See "US State Dept. Still Characterizes Darfur Situation as Genocide," *Sudan Tribune* (19 June 2009).

9. Mamdani: 42–44. In July 2008, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno-Ocampo, filed ten charges against President al-Bashir, including three counts of genocide. The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber did not uphold the counts of genocide, which were not included in the indictment of al-Bashir.

10. International Crisis Group: 17–20. For troop contributors to UNAMID, see www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/2009/july09_4.pdf.

11. Daniel Large, “From Non-interference to Constructive Engagement? China’s Evolving Relations with Sudan,” in *China Returns to Africa: A Rising Power and a Continent Embrace*, ed. Chris Alden, Daniel Large, and Ricardo Soares de Oliveira (London: Hurst and Company, 2008): 276–280. Ali Abdalla Ali, *The Sudanese-Chinese Relations: Before and after Oil* (Khartoum: Sudan Currency Printing Press, 2006): 52–59. For a recent analysis of Sudan-China relations, see Daniel Large, “China’s Sudan Engagement: Changing Northern and Southern Political Trajectories in Peace and War,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 199 (September 2009): 610–626.

12. Meeting on 9 July 2007 in Khartoum between the author and Ali Yousif Ahmed, Sudan’s ambassador to China during 1994.

13. Large, “From Non-intervention to Constructive Engagement?” 280–283. Large, “China and the Contradictions of ‘Non-interference’ in Sudan,” *Review of African Political Economy*, 35, no. 115 (March 2008): 96–97. Human Rights First, “Investing in Tragedy: China’s Money, Arms and Politics in Sudan” (March 2008): 5–7. See at www.humanrightsfirst.info/pdf/080311-cah-investing-in-tragedy-report.pdf.

14. Author’s meeting with Omer Mohamed Abel Salam, Director General of International Financial Cooperation, Ministry of Finance and National Economy, in Khartoum on 12 July 2007.

15. Human Rights First, 8–10. For an overview of China’s economic engagement with Sudan, see Sharath Srinivasan, “A Marriage Less Convenient: China, Sudan and Darfur,” in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon? Africa and China*, ed. Kweku Ampiah and Sanusha Naidu (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008): 58–65.

16. International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook 2008* (Washington: IMF, 2008): 467.

17. See, for example, the comments by China’s ambassador to the UN, Wang Guangya, in “Explanatory Remarks by Ambassador Wang Guangya at UN Security Council on Resolution 1672” (25 April 2006). See at www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceun/eng/xw/t248836.htm. Jonathan Holslag, “China’s Diplomatic Manoeuvring on the Question of Darfur,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 17, no. 54 (February 2008): 75.

18. Pieter D. Wezeman, “Arms Flows to the Conflict in Chad,” *SIPRI Background Paper* (August 2009): 8. China’s role in Chad also became entangled in Taiwan-Chad politics. Chad recognized Taiwan in 1997, but switched to Beijing in August 2006. In 2003, Chad permitted Taiwan’s state-owned oil company to explore for oil in three fields. When Sudan-based Chadian rebels attacked Chad in 2006, Chad’s president decided to end possible Chinese support for the rebels by recognizing Beijing. Surprisingly, Taiwan’s oil company continued to operate in Chad in partnership with incoming Chinese firms. See Chris Alden, *China in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 2007): 33–34.

19. Derek Mitchell and Carola McGiffert, “Expanding the ‘Strategic Periphery,’” in *China and the Developing World: Beijing’s Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Joshua Eisenman, Eric Heginbotham and Derek Mitchell (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2007): 14.

20. In the 1960s, China did covertly support revolutionary opposition groups against independent African governments in a number of countries, including Cameroon, Niger, Burundi and the Congo. It did not, however, acknowledge this support.

21. Allen Carlson, “More Than Just Saying No: China’s Evolving Approach to Sovereignty and Intervention since Tiananmen,” in eds. Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross, *New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006): 217. For an excellent discussion of China’s view of sovereignty, see Bates Gill, *Rising Star: China’s New Security Diplomacy* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 2007): 104–136.

22. Yitzhak Shichor, “China’s Darfur Policy,” *China Brief* 7, issue 7 (5 April 2007): 7.

23. “Chinese President Puts Forward Four-point Principle on Solving Darfur Issue,” *Xinhua* (3 February 2007). For additional background, see David R. Black and Paul D. Williams, “Darfur’s Challenge to International Society,” *Behind the Headlines* 65, no. 6 (December 2008): 10–11 and the comments by the Chinese participants in “Perspectives on Africa Today: A Swedish-Chinese-African Dialogue” by Klas Marklund and Karin Odqvist, Institute for Security and Development Policy, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (14–15 February 2008): 15–17.

24. For an analysis of the human rights implications of China's arms sales to Sudan, see Stephanie L. Kotecki, "The Human Rights Costs of China's Arms Sales to Sudan—A Violation of International Law on Two Fronts," *Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal*, 17, no. 1 (January 2008): 209–235.

25. Human Rights First: 11–15. The sale of military equipment to Sudan by China has been well documented by a variety of sources. See Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment for Sudan (11 February 2009); Ian Taylor, *China's New Role in Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2009): 120–123; William D. Hartung, "Deadly Traffic: China's Arms Trade with the Sudan," Arms and Security Initiative Policy Brief, New American Foundation (August 2008): 1–4; Pieter D. Wezeman, "Case Study: Darfur, Sudan, 2004–2006," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2007): 1–10; and Amnesty International, "People's Republic of China Sustaining Conflict and Human Rights Abuses: The Flow of Arms Accelerates" (2006). See at www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/030/2006/en/dom-ASA170302006en.html.

26. Human Rights First, 13–14. Amnesty International. Wezeman, "Case Study:" 5–6. Wezeman, "Arms Flow to the Conflict in Chad:" 6.

27. Johan Brosché, "Darfur – Dimensions and Dilemmas of a Complex Situation," Uppsala University paper (2008): 96. See www.pcr.uv.se/publications/UCDP_pub/Darfur_080317.pdf. Yang Guang, Director of the Institute for West Asian and African Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, commented on 28 November 2007, "You can see weapons made in China in many places of the world, and it is very hard to say how they get these weapons...if you find a weapon made in China, it doesn't mean that China supports this kind of war." Interview with the Council on Foreign Relations. See at www.cfr.org/publication/14870/guang.html. While there is no evidence that China has authorized the use of its military equipment in Darfur, there is also no indication that it has tried hard to prevent its use there.

28. "China Denies Report of Arms Sales to Sudan," *Xinhua* (14 March 2008).

29. David H. Shinn, "Chinese Involvement in African Conflict Zones," *China Brief*, issue 7 (2 April 2009): 9.

30. "China Pledges to Work with Sudan to Expand Co-op in All Fields," *Xinhua*, 15 July 2009. The Government of Tibet in Exile, "While China Wins Vote at the UN African Countries Snub Beijing," www.tibet.com/Humanrights/unhrc99-1.html. (29 April 1999). See at "Sudan Reportedly Backs China's Handling of Tibet Protests," *Akhir Labzah* (Khartoum), 17 March 2008.

31. Human Rights First, 18. For a summary of the key resolutions through April 2007 and China's vote, see Jonathan Holslag, "China's Diplomatic Victory in Darfur," *BICSS Background Paper* (1 August 2007): 9.

32. "Factbox: China's Unrelenting Support to Sudan on Darfur," *Sudan Tribune* (19 February 2008).

33. "Factbox" *Sudan Tribune*. "China Opposes Economic Sanctions on Sudan over Darfur Crisis," *Xinhua* (17 March 2005).

34. For a summary of this evolution until 2007, see Daniel Large, "China and the Changing Context of Development in Sudan," *Development* vol. 50, no. 3 (2007): 60.

35. Chris Buckley, "China's Hu Says Understands Sudan's Darfur Concerns," *Reuters* (2 November 2006).

36. Opheera McDoom, "China's Hu Tells Sudan It Must Solve Darfur Issue," *Reuters* (2 February 2007).

37. "China Told Sudan to Adopt UN's Darfur Plan – Envoy," *Sudan Tribune* (7 February 2007). Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Andrew Small, "China's New Dictatorship Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 1 (January/February 2008): 46–47. Alex de Waal, "Making Sense of Darfur: China and Sudan: Defining the Turning Point" (22 February 2008). See <http://blogs.src.org/darfur/2008/02/22/china-and-sudan-defining-the-turning-point/>. For a summary of China's diplomatic actions, see Sarah Raine, *China's African Challenges* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2009): 184–187; Srinivasan: 69–73; and Large, "From Non-interference to Constructive Engagement?": 288–291.

38. Marcus Power and Giles Mohan, "The Geopolitics of China's Engagement with African Development," unpublished paper, The Open University (9 July 2008): 17–19. Yitzhak Shichor concluded that "China is walking a tightrope on its policy toward Sudan." While it is aware of the repercussions of the ongoing atrocities, it is equally supportive of Sudan's sovereign right to settle internal affairs or agree to international intervention. See "China's Darfur Policy," 7. Daniel Large wrote that China's policy in Darfur

has “brought into question” the principle of non-interference. See “Sudan’s Foreign Relations with Asia,” Institute for Security Studies paper 158 (February 2008): 14 and 16.

39. “Chinese President Puts Forward Four-point Principle on Solving Darfur Issue,” *People’s Daily* (3 February 2007). *Qishi* website in Chinese as translated and published in “Darfur Crisis Seen from China, Report,” *Sudan Tribune* (4 June 2007). This report also contains an historical review of China’s position on the Darfur crisis.

40. “President Hu Invites Sudan’s Salva Kiir to Visit China,” *Sudan Tribune* (3 February 2007). Daniel Large offers an excellent summary of China’s relations with southern Sudan in “China’s Sudan Engagement: Changing Northern and Southern Political Trajectories in Peace and War,” 620–624.

41. Sue Fleming, “U.S. Envoy to Sudan Critical of China,” *Reuters* (8 February 2007).

42. Wasil Ali, “China Uses Economic Leverage to Pressure Sudan on Darfur – US,” *Sudan Tribune* (6 March 2007). U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Jim Swan, praised the Chinese role in a speech on 3 May 2007 to the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

43. Daniel Large, “China and the Contradictions of ‘Non-interference’ in Sudan:” 100. In addition, see the testimony by J. Stephen Morrison, Director, Africa Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, before the Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy, Trade, and Technology of the House Committee on Financial Services, 20 March 2007.

44. Jim Fisher-Thompson, “Top U.S. Diplomat Cites Chinese Cooperation on Darfur,” State Department press account (11 April 2007). For its part, China has had concerns about U.S. policy towards Sudan, wondering, for example, if the United States preferred a division of northern and southern Sudan and even the removal of al-Bashir from office. In a meeting with the author in Beijing on 12 January 2007, an official of the U.S. embassy commented that he believed Natsios had been successful during a recent visit to Beijing in dispelling both of these concerns. Natsios reportedly told the Chinese that the U.S. prefers continued unity of Sudan.

45. Holslag: 9.

46. “Factbox,” *Sudan Tribune*.

47. Daniel Large, “Sudan’s Foreign Relations with Asia:” 15.

48. www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/2009/july09_4.pdf.

49. “China Issues a Warning to Sudan over Darfur Crisis,” *Sudan Tribune* (30 January 2008). Ambassador Liu Guijin set forth China’s position on Darfur in a speech titled “Darfur and Sino-African Relations” at London’s Chatham House on 22 February 2008. See www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/11105_220208guijin.pdf.

50. Save Darfur Coalition, “China in Sudan: Having it Both Ways,” *Briefing Paper* (18 October 2007): 5.

51. Alex Villarreal, “Rights Group Criticizes China for Failure to Act on Darfur,” *Voice of America* (28 November 2007).

52. Victor D. Cha, “Beijing’s Olympic-Sized Catch-22,” *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 2008): 109. For additional information on the role of these advocacy groups, see Bechtold: 161–163, Srinivasan: 71–75 and Mamdani: 51–56.

53. Edward Cody, “China Steps Up Pressure on Sudan over Darfur,” *Washington Post* (13 June 2008).

54. “China’s Darfur Policy in Tune with Law, Morality,” *China Daily* (25 July 2008).

55. “U.S. Official Blasts China Special Envoy to Sudan,” *Sudan Tribune* (18 January 2009).

56. “China Appeals for Comprehensive Solution to Darfur Issue,” *Xinhua* (20 March 2009).

57. “China Urges Cautious Action on Darfur Issue,” *Xinhua* (27 March 2009).

58. “China, U.S. Pledge to Work on Darfur Issue,” *Xinhua* (26 May 2009). Transcript of State Department press conference on 17 June 2009. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 30 July 2009, Scott Gration commented that “the Chinese are working with us” and coordinating humanitarian assistance. The similar U.S. and China goals in Sudan referred to by Gration probably refer to a common desire to avoid warfare in Sudan, achieve political stability, and end the humanitarian crisis. In announcing the Obama administration’s new policy concerning Sudan on 19 October 2009, Gration noted that both the United States and China seek stability and security in the region. While there might

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be tactical and strategic differences, he said “we have the same goals.” Gration added, “We’re working very closely together and the Chinese have been very helpful in providing influence and pressures not only to work the Darfur issue with the proxy war, but also working in the South.” See State Department press release “Remarks on the Sudan Strategy” dated 19 October 2009.

59. “China Pledges to End Sudan-Chad Conflict,” *Sudan Tribune* (2 June 2009). “Chad’s President Meets with Chinese Government’s Special Representative on African Affairs Liu Guijin” (5 June 2009). See www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zwjg/zwbdt/t566723.htm.

60. Human Rights First: 19–20.

61. Human Rights First press release dated 17 December 2007.

62. “U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan Expresses Frustration with UN Secretariat,” *Sudan Tribune* (18 June 2008).

63. Chris Buckley, “China has ‘grave concerns’ over ICC Sudan Decision,” *Reuters* (15 July 2008).

64. “China against ‘Irresponsible’ ICC Move to Arrest Sudan’s Bashir,” *Sudan Tribune* (31 August 2008).

65. “China Urges African UNSC Members to Request ICC Deferral for Bashir,” *Sudan Tribune*, 7 January 2009. Steven Candia and Lydia Namubiru, “China Opposes Kony Arrest,” *The New Vision*, 5 August 2009. China’s close relationship with Sudan almost certainly resulted in frank discussions about the Sudanese government reaction to an ICC indictment of President al-Bashir. China may well have had advance warning that al-Bashir would react badly to the indictment, thus jeopardizing any real progress on the Darfur peace process.