

Dick Lugar

U.S. Senator for Indiana

Date: 05/12/2010 • <http://lugar.senate.gov>
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Opening Statement for Sudan Hearing

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Dick Lugar made the following statement at today's hearing.

I join Chairman Kerry in welcoming General Gration back to the Foreign Relations Committee.

The United States has long been invested in helping to stabilize war-torn Sudan. We have been engaged in this problem because it has national security implications and because we have a moral interest in working to prevent humanitarian disasters and genocide. Sudan has been fractured by economic and power-sharing disputes between ethnic groups, as well as relentless violence upon civilians. Conditions there brought a United States declaration of ongoing genocide and an International Criminal Court indictment of President al Bashir.

The death toll of the North-South conflict, and the graphic scorched earth strategy in Darfur also elicited remarkable grass roots activism in the United States. Along with like-minded nations, we have achieved some success in preventing military escalation and protecting millions of people at risk in Darfur and the South. But a peace agreement in Darfur is distant and is clouded by uncertainty surrounding the outcome of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement process. Failure of the peace agreement between North and South could have catastrophic consequences for all of Sudan.

In testimony earlier this year, Admiral Dennis Blair, the Director of National Intelligence, said that “a number of countries in Africa and Asia are at significant risk for a new outbreak of mass killing. Among these countries, a new mass killing or genocide is most likely to occur in southern Sudan.” Admiral Blair’s stark assessment was prompted by evidence that the parties are moving toward conflict rather than establishing the foundation for a sustainable peace.

Each side is arming itself with far more lethal equipment than was deployed during the North-South civil war. This weaponry is being purchased with the income from oil that has flowed to both sides since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed. These military expenditures have come at the expense of basic services and infrastructure for the people of Sudan. Rather than conclude agreements on wealth sharing or the demarcation of borders, as called for in the peace agreement, Khartoum and Juba appear to be consolidating their ability to contest oil-producing areas along the proposed border. Neighboring countries have begun to organize their military postures for potential instability on their borders with Sudan.

Most observers agree that South Sudan is poorly equipped to govern its territory and lacks capacity to provide for its inhabitants. International capacity building efforts, including training security forces and building a functioning capital city in Juba, are ongoing, but insufficient. Moreover, during the last twelve months, violence between ethnic groups in South Sudan has reportedly killed 3,000 people and displaced more than 400,000.

As international attention to the North-South conflict increases, Darfur risks being relegated to a lesser priority. This may suit the Khartoum regime and its proxies, as well as the myriad criminal elements

operating in the Darfur region. Consequently, international vigilance towards Darfur should be heightened.

Although the mortality rate across Darfur has dropped, some three million people remain displaced and at risk. Through U.S. efforts, several expelled aid agencies have been able to return to Darfur, but the safety net for Darfur's displaced millions remains tenuous. The United Nations hybrid peacekeeping mission with the African Union continues to lack adequate helicopter support to respond to threats to civilians across vast distances.

Given these complex circumstances, U.S. efforts related to Sudan must be fully resourced, and the Administration must be speaking with one voice. Last July, during General Gration's testimony before our Committee, he identified several staffing needs. I look forward to hearing from him today about whether these needs have been met and whether any additional resources are required for this problem. I also look forward to his assessments of the prospects for negotiations, as well as U.S. options in the event of escalating conflict.

I thank the Chairman for holding this hearing.

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