

Behind the UN Security Council Resolution: Chinese, Russian and Indian Oil interests in the Sudan

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Editor's note

Washington wants to impose an oil embargo on The Sudan which would prevent it from selling its oil.

This initiative, which is being peddled in the United Nations Security Council is directed against the the Chinese, Indian and Russian oil interests in The Sudan. It is being put forth , on behalf of the Anglo-American oil conglomerates, whose objective is to establish a monopoly control over African oil and oil pipelines.

UN resolution 1556 is a first step in justifying a “humanitarian intervention” and the sending in of international monitors. It was adopted with several abstentions. In all likelihood China would impose a veto, in relation to a resolution which threatens its oil interests in the Sudan.

[For full text of Resolution 1556](#)

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Below is a review article by Russian oil analyst Mikhail Zygar, first published in Russian in July.

The United States submitted its draft resolution to the UN Security Council on July 27. The original text was quite harsh: Washington threatened Khartoum with sanctions (mainly an arms embargo) if the government failed to resolve the crisis in the country's western province of Darfur in the immediate future.

The humanitarian crisis in Darfur began some 18 months ago, in early 2003, when a rebellion against Sudan's Arab government began in the province, which is populated — unlike the rest of the country — with African tribes. Local residents accused the government of discriminating against them and attempting to Arabize Darfur. The forces sent to suppress the rebellion included both Sudanese Army regulars and militants from a progovernment armed movement called Janjaweed. These forces unleashed a campaign of ethnic cleansing in which about 30,000 people have been killed over the past 17 months.

The UN and the US have spent practically an entire year negotiating with the Sudanese authorities, calling on them to halt the atrocities and disarm the Janjaweed. Humanitarian organizations have claimed throughout that the militants are backed by the government. Finally, the US Congress declared last week that it intended to put an end to the crisis and

blamed the Sudanese government directly for waging what it termed genocide in Darfur.

Secretary of State Colin Powell immediately took the issue to the UN, but it has since emerged that Washington's determination is by no means shared by all of the UN Security Council's members. Whereas the US was willing to impose sanctions against Khartoum, and Great Britain and Australia even raised the possibility of armed intervention, Russia, China and Pakistan staunchly opposed any action against Sudan. "We suggest allowing the Sudanese government a brief but sufficient interval in which to make good on its commitments," said Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yury Fedotov.

The Sudanese crisis has reminded many observers of the Iraqi situation of two years ago, when the US pressed hard for a UN resolution giving a green light to military action against Baghdad. . . .

The current situation in Sudan has one other thing in common with the Iraqi situation of two years ago — the oil factor. Sudan possesses considerable oil wealth; its known reserves are estimated at 2 billion barrels. . . .

Sudan's oil industry is currently divided between the country's own state oil company and China's CNPC, the French company Total, Malaysia's Petronas, and ONGC of India. These foreign companies possess the largest concessions, with the Southern Darfur fields being developed by the Chinese. Russia, too, has significant interests in Sudan. Only yesterday the Stroitransgaz [Gas Transport Construction] company announced plans to build a 366-kilometer section of the Melut Basin pipeline in Sudan. Russia also regards Sudan as a potential arms market. Only last week, the MIG aircraft corporation completed delivery of 12 MIG-29 fighters to Sudan [see the preceding article]. Naturally, Moscow and Beijing have come to the defense of Khartoum, asserting that it would be premature to intervene in the humanitarian disaster in Darfur.

Throughout the past several days, the US has been engaged in intensive consultations to secure passage of its resolution by the UN Security Council. US Embassy officials told Kommersant yesterday that US Assistant Secretary of State Elizabeth Jones had held talks on this subject with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak in Moscow. . . .

The upshot is that a temporary compromise on sanctions against Sudan was reached yesterday — the US agreed to delete the word "sanctions" from the text of the resolution and replace it with the fuzzier term "measures." The final version of the resolution, which will be passed unanimously today, calls on the Sudanese government to disarm the militants on its own. It has a month to comply. After that, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is to report to the Security Council on the situation in Darfur. On the basis of his report, the Council will then decide whether to take "measures" against Sudan.

The toothless resolution is clearly only the beginning of the rest of the Sudanese crisis. . . .

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