



U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

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*****Remarks as Prepared for Delivery*****
United States Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Opening Statement in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Hearing on Darfur – Darfur: A ‘Plan B’ to Stop Genocide?
April 11, 2007

It’s been over four years now since the crisis in Darfur erupted—four years since the genocide began. It’s been three years and nine months since Congress formally recognized this as genocide: the resolutions in both the Senate and the House passed unanimously. Not a single Member denied the horror that was underway.

It’s been three years and seven months since the Administration added its own recognition. On September 9, 2004—in testimony before this committee—then-Secretary of State Colin Powell said clearly that the killing in Darfur was genocide. Shortly thereafter, so did President Bush.

So now — all these years later — the question still remains: What are we going to do about it?

What are we going to do to stop the slaughter; to return the survivors to their homes; to bring those responsible for the murder, the rape and terror to justice; and to build a lasting peace.

What *are* we going to do about Darfur?

That’s the question I have asked Ambassador Natsios. He is the administration’s point person for Darfur and like his predecessor, Deputy Secretary Zoellick, I have no doubt his dedication or determination to do the right thing.

In December, Ambassador Natsios told a group of Senators that Khartoum had until the end of the month to agree to the deployment of UN peacekeepers.

That deadline has long since passed — with no agreement by Khartoum to accept the peacekeepers and no reaction from the United States or the international community to its refusal.

Today, this Committee expects to hear from Ambassador Natsios a concrete plan of action. I hope that he will flesh out the administration's "Plan B" and tell us how and when the administration will act on that plan.

What *should* we do about Darfur? That's the question I have asked our outside witnesses, because there are almost certainly steps the administration is not planning to take that this Committee should consider.

I have my own strongly held views on what we should do. Most important, we need a comprehensive approach to what is a complex problem. We have to work all six sides of what John Prendergast, one of the leading experts on Darfur, rightly calls a "policy Rubik's cube."

That will require the kind of resources, coordination and sustained engagement at the highest levels that in my view we have not yet seen from this administration or from our partners around the world.

Let me quickly suggest some of the pieces of that comprehensive approach.

First, pressuring Khartoum is necessary but not sufficient – we need to work on the major rebel groups, too.

Three years ago, after visiting a refugee camp on the Chad-Darfur border, I met with leaders of two of the major rebels groups.

I urged them to come up with a common program. I offered to host them in Congress if they did. And I warned them that if they did not, Khartoum would use their divisions as an excuse to do nothing.

We need a major, sustained diplomatic initiative to bring the rebels together.

Second, peacekeepers are essential but they are not enough – we need a peace process.

If we end the violence but fail to achieve a sustainable political settlement in Darfur, the violence will return.

That puts a premium on a single peace process, supported by the international community, including the African Union and the United Nations, and managed by an oversight group of concerned countries.

Third, unilateral sanctions may be necessary but won't suffice – we need coordinated action from many other countries.

The United States has had significant sanctions on Khartoum since the 1990s. We are almost sanctioned out. For pressure to be meaningful, it must be multilateral.

The Chinese, the Arab world, the Europeans, the African Union—everyone should be joining together in the campaign. Without American leadership, nothing will get done.

Fourth, limiting our focus to Darfur is too narrow – we have to include the neighbors, especially Chad and the Central African Republic.

I saw first hand the spill over effect of the Darfur crisis on Chad – and it has gotten much worse over the past three years.

The crisis is putting incredible strain on the neighbors. At the same time, they have tremendous influence with some of the key players.

Our Darfur diplomacy and initiatives must include the neighbors.

Finally, and most urgently, convincing Khartoum to accept a meaningful peacekeeping force should be our goal – but if it refuses, imposing such a force must become our mission.

I wish that the African Union had the mandate, the manpower and the materiel to do the job. It does not.

We must set a hard deadline now on Khartoum to accept the hybrid AU-U.N. force.

And we must start planning to impose that force if Khartoum refuses and to take other concrete steps that can start saving lives, now.

I have long advocated a NATO-led No Fly Zone to stop the air support Khartoum provides to the Janjaweed.

Recently, Khartoum has stepped up the slaughter from the skies. It is within our power to clip their wings. Yes, a No Fly Zone could make it more difficult for humanitarian groups to operate – so we should do everything possible to design it with their concerns in mind.

I hope that we come out of this hearing with a clear plan of action.

For too long, all of us have expressed our outrage at the destruction of Darfur without doing anything meaningful to stop it.

It is long past time to act.

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