

AFRICAN FREEDOM COALITION

Dear Senator,

27 November, 2017

We write regarding Congress's constitutionally mandated oversight duties concerning the US intelligence community.

For the past 62 years the Khartoum regime in Sudan has been conducting a systematic and racially-based genocide, designed to eliminate its black African citizens. The death toll caused by that campaign is more than four million. Today in Darfur, Sudan, over 2.7 million people still live in squalor in IDP camps, suffering from starvation, malnutrition and disease, enduring a cruel blockade of humanitarian aid by Khartoum. Another 300,000 are refugees, suffering similarly. They are all under the rule of the Khartoum militia that subjects them constantly to racist genocide.

The Khartoum regime's human rights abuses are not limited to the domestic realm: in 1993, Sudan was placed on the U.S. List of State sponsors of Terrorism in response to its support of Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and other such terrorist groups. In 1997, the United States imposed sanctions on Sudan for those actions. In 2009 and 2010, the United Nations referred the actions of Sudan's president Al Bashir to the International Criminal Court (ICC), which imposed arrest warrants against him for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Over the past two months, the following events have taken place, with grave consequences in US security:

- On October 9, 2017, the Trump Administration lifted US sanctions against Sudan, absent their allowing humanitarian aid or diminishing violence. The reason most cited was the ostensible cooperation of the Khartoum regime with the US on counterterrorism.
- On November 16, the US Deputy Secretary of State, John J. Sullivan, visited Khartoum as a follow-up to the lifting of sanctions, seeking fulfillment of Sudan's promised conditions, including improvements in human rights, religious freedom, and Sudan's commitment to the international sanctions on North Korea. Sullivan intimated that such compliances might also persuade the US to remove Sudan from its List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.
- On November 20, Sudan enjoyed military benefits of the sanction-lifting, receiving its first shipment of SU-35 advanced jet fighters from Russia.
- On November 24, Bashir, flouting his arrest warrant by the ICC, flew to Moscow, publicly excoriated the US as an aggressive force and embraced Russia, asking Putin to protect Sudan from the US. Bashir also spoke about future trade and military cooperation with Russia, including sharing of naval bases in the Red Sea. He also criticized US "interference in Iran." With this turnabout, Khartoum moved away from the Saudi-led gulf Countries, our allies, and towards the Russia-Iran axis, which is adversarial to the US.

This unfortunate series of events was not the result of an open review by Congress. In fact, Congress was never consulted on these decisions. The closest Congress came to being involved was when a select few Congressional staffers from the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees participated in a junket to Khartoum this past summer. Their overseas sojourn, however, cannot serve as a substitute for active oversight by the committees which they serve.

It appears that the lifting of sanctions was orchestrated by members of the US intelligence community (IC), who were acting on their own agenda: to reward Sudan for providing the West with anti terrorist intelligence. This is clearly inappropriate as the parochial priorities of the IC do not include the moral American values to act against discrimination, evil and abuse. Without Congressional input, the administration lifted sanctions only to have President Bashir, in Moscow six weeks later, describe the United States as the enemy of Sudan and the Arab world, and openly embrace our adversaries.

Indeed, the net effect of this series of events has proved to be a **threat** to our national security. Now, Congress must exercise its oversight obligation and make the strong and moral decisions that reflect all of our national values. Congress is the forum where information from unbiased sources can be heard and properly evaluated.

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