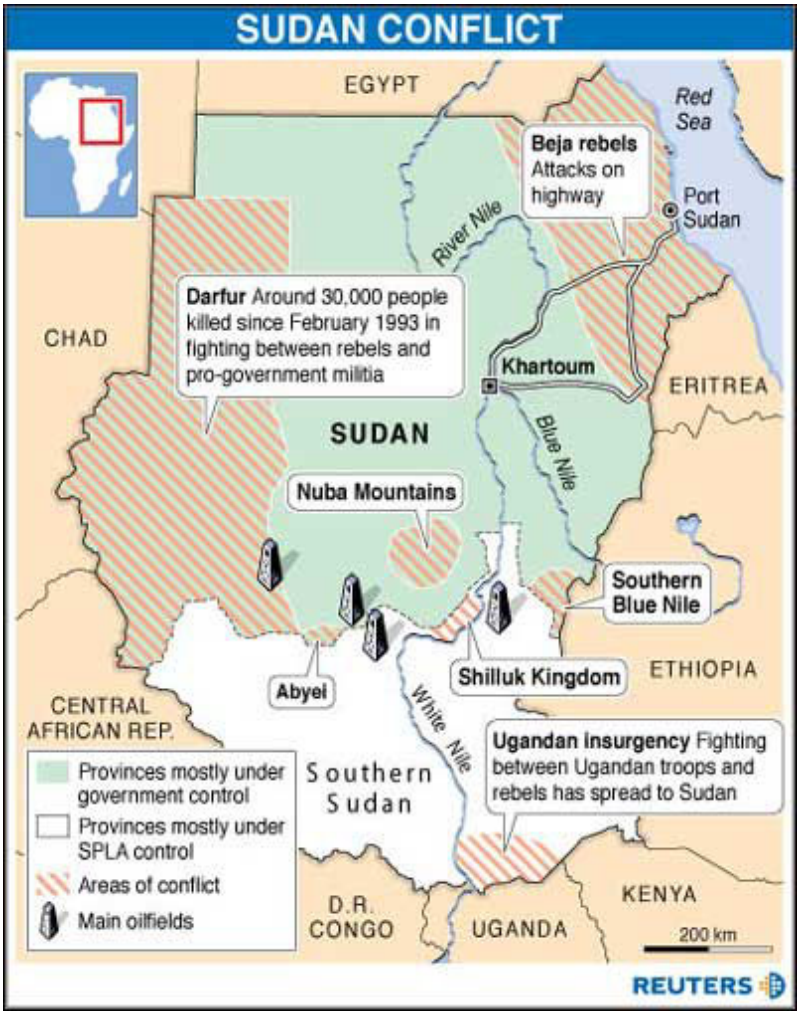
THE CRISIS IN DARFUR: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS ORIGINS AND STORYLINES



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Map of Sudan Conflict as of June 2004

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December 7, 2004

Alexandria, Virginia

Darfur conflict; Power struggle; Practical geopolitics; Humanitarian crisis; Genocide; Geostrategic significance.

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Abstract: The research for this paper evolved from information that can be found in Lexis Nexis Academic and in the public domain, including newspapers and other media on the situation in the Sudan's western region of Darfur. This paper argues that the Darfur crisis is an outcome of Khartoum elites' attempt to obtain absolute control of national wealth and power over the entire Sudan. Structural violence, in the form of pervasive discrimination, marginalization and inequality, created resentment and resistance that triggered overt violence. Secondly, it argues that the situation is described differently, therefore, is subscripted to different storylines which are open to the manipulation of practical geopolitics. There is a gap between naming and acting toward the situation. As the result, the strategic significance in resolving the crisis is undermined, and human security in Darfur remains dire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my special gratitude to Dr. Gerard Toal, Director of the Masters of Public and International Affairs Program, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University's National Capitol Region (NRC) for his great support and instructions as well as demanding requirements throughout the process of this degree. My special appreciation is due to Virginia Tech's adjunct professor Georgeta Pourchot for her in-depth instructions on writing; to adjunct professor Ira Reed and Dr. Alnoor Ebrahim for their valuable instruction. My greatest thanks to my fellow graduates at the NRC for their help, efforts and participation in discussions and arguments throughout my studies at Virginia Tech.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AU: African Union

CARE: Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe

JEM: Justice and Equality Movement

NPC: National Congress Party

NIF: National Islamic Front

NGO (s): Non-governmental Organization (s)

SLA: Sudan Liberation Army

SMB: Sudan's Muslim Brotherhood

SPLM/A: Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commission for Refugees

UNOCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

US: United States

INTRODUCTION

"Kill all the blacks", "Kill all the slaves" were the slogans reportedly heard in Janjaweed militias' campaigns against African populations in the Sudan's western region of Darfur. Since violence erupted in early 2003, the Sudanese government's indiscriminate aerial bombings, military attacks and raids by the government backed militias have claimed more than 70,000 lives and displaced millions internally and internationally. The situation is termed "the world's worst humanitarian crisis" or "genocide" by the United Nations and the United States respectively. Regardless of how the international community describes the situation, group murders, systemic rape, harassment, torching and looting villages in Darfur, which continue to claim more civilian lives and create insecurity in the region, requires more than international attention and humanitarian assistance. It demands decisive actions to halt violence and human suffering. "It's time to put the shame where it rightfully belongs: on the perpetrators and on those who allow these crimes to happen", claimed the UN Commissioner for Human Rights after a week-long tour in Darfur (Arbour, 2004). The Darfur crisis is an outcome of the Sudanese government structural and overt violence against its people.

There are, however, several descriptions of the situation within the international community. First, the startling number of deaths and displaced people constitute 'the world's worst humanitarian crisis'. Second, denouncing the tribal war rhetoric of the Sudanese government, Western media represented the conflict as a proxy war, under the direction of the government, conducted by an Arab militia, known as the Janjaweed, to eliminate rebellious black Africans. 'Genocide' against black Africans has been committed in Darfur, as designated by the US Congress in a resolution passed in July 2004. Due to the existence of different situation

descriptions, international responses toward the crisis are incoherent. Rather than building a coherent and comprehensive problem definition and problem closure based on international law, international actors develop different storylines only to serve their practical geopolitical interests.

This paper provides an analysis of the origins of the Darfur crisis. It argues that the crisis is not simply a 'humanitarian crisis' but an explosion of structural violence rooted in constant struggles for control of national wealth and power between Sudan's central government and its peripherals. Simmering government's structural violence that reached its tipping point produced rebellion and revolt. More dangerously, the government perceived rebellion and revolt as a threat to its authority and supremacy. As a result, genocidal campaigns were launched to eliminate that threat so the state can maintain its imperialist goal. The first part of the paper presents the structure and causality of the Darfur conflict as part of the national struggle for power in the Sudan. Secondly, the paper argues that the storylines of the Darfur situation are developed and manipulated to serve the practical geopolitical self-interest of international actors. Therefore, the two existing storylines have not led to international action to halt the on-going violence. Finally, the paper argues that political manipulation of the two contrasting storylines and lack of political will and interests not only prevent the international community from decisively intervening to protect civilians but also undermine the strategic significance in resolving the crisis; i.e. to halt human suffering, prevent genocide; foster international principles, and ensure the respect for and sanctity of international law. This point addresses the issue of enforcing international principles and norms that are established to protect civilians and require international intervention to stop and prevent on-going genocide to continue. These principles shed light on the strategic significance for the international community in resolving the Darfur crisis

ORIGINS OF THE DARFUR CRISIS

The origins of the conflict in Darfur are accounted for by numerous factors that include historical violence in the region, ethnic divisions, social, political and economic marginalization. They are similar to those of conflicts in southern and eastern Sudan which are rooted in the constant struggle over power-sharing that weak central governance, under-development and the lack of diverse political involvement structure produced. The Darfur crisis is an outcome of the struggle for power between Sudan's central government and peripherals. Simmering structural violence finally exploded into physical conflicts and genocidal campaigns when Khartoum imperialists' goal was threatened.

Structural Causes

The structural causes the Darfur conflict are rooted in two major elements: the legacy of colonialism in the Sudan and the formation of a post-colonial 'predatory' state.

The Legacy of Colonialism in the Sudan

The Sudan or 'Bilad al Sudan' (the land of the blacks) is the largest country in the African continent. Sudan's vast territory is rich in natural resources including oil, gold, and various minerals. Its territory is also dominated by the Nile and its tributaries, therefore, Sudan enjoys major resources for hydropower. In addition, the fertile soil along the Nile is the key hub for agricultural development that has made Sudan the 'bread basket' of the continent. Sudan's administrative central government was established and located in the northern region of Khartoum; but recruited labor (slaves) and exploited resources (mostly agricultural products such as cotton, grains, spices, and later oil revenues) hail from the southern and western regions. The

'metropole' economy created by the colonial structure left a heavy imprint on the modern Sudan state which inevitably became dependent on the exploitation of its regional resources - in both natural and human (labor) matters (Khalid, 1990: 39-62). Central government relies on regional economic resources to maintain its political and military power.

The government in Khartoum had never been freed from the impact of colonialist policy. Khartoum, the administrative and political capital, was built on exploitive and divisive culture dating back to the Turco-Egyptian and Anglo-Egyptian colonial periods in the 18th century. The 'divide and rule' strategies that the rulers have applied since then have brought about "the problems of the unequal distribution of wealth present in the modern Sudan [and] the irregular modern development throughout the country" (Khalid, 1990). The Egyptian penetration and assimilation of the Nubia region began as early as the Old Kingdom since2575-2134 BC. During the overlap of Mahdiyya (1881-98) and Turco-Egyptian (1885-1899) periods, Arab-Muslim dominion in the Sudan was intensively promoted. In contrast, the British colonial 'divide and rule' policy (1899-1956), which divided Sudan along both geographical and ethnical lines to enhance central imposition of political and social orders, created a Sudan that is deeply divided between Muslim-Arab and the African blacks, and between North and South. Africans were converted to Christianity and enjoyed government privileges. These elements created the divisive, exploitive and discriminatory practices that provided the potential for ethnic and political clashes in both colonial and the independent Sudan state.

Sudan's post-colonial politics are unstable because of constant conflict between rival groups either on political or identity ideology. Since independence in January 1956, Sudan has seen periods of civilian multi-party government (January 1956 to November 1958 and October 1964 to May 1969), a military dictatorship (November 1958 to October 1964), an army coup d'état

that transformed itself into a one-party system (May 1969 to April 1985) and a return to civilian multi-party government in 1985 which was 'cracking at the seams' after only two years (Khalid, 1990). These political skirmishes are a result of the resistance to the exploitive and discriminatory practices that Khartoum rulers exercise on groups 'other' than themselves. The current Salvation regime came to power in 1989 through a military coup that ousted the only elected government in Khartoum.

The central government's politics is a continuant of the struggle over control of the national territory and resources. The central government's dependency and exploitation of the peripheral resources is as old as Sudan's history, but became extreme during the 1980s when Shariá was declared "the law of the land". Divided between north-south since the dawn of independence, Sudan northern government has faced the scarcity of resources since "the bulk of the Sudan's resources needed for the nation's revitalization - oil, water, fertile soil and various minerals – are to be found mainly in the Southern Region" (Johnson, 2003: 46). The transference of southern wealth to northern rulers became an inflammatory issue because the south was dominated by Christian blacks.

> "[In 1983], oil discovered within the southern territory (although close to a northern province) tempted the government to redefine the relevant northern boundary expanding it southward. Shariá was declared the law of the land. This action legally limited the southern representation over their own territories and even the fruits of their homeland's wealth to only those willing to convert to the Islamic faith" (Spaulding, et al, 2000: xvi).

Khartoum imperialist actions violated the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972 that dictated autonomy for southern Sudanese states. War broke out anew when the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) was formed and led by Christian blacks in the south to resist Arab expansion and exploitation. The struggle over control of territory and resources

continued. Uprisings against the government spread throughout the country. Khartoum has also been at odds with the Nubians in the north, the Beja in the east, and now Darfur rebels in the west in the quest for control and exploitation of resources.

The Post-Colonial 'Predatory' State

The formation of the current authoritarian government is a critical landmark of the struggle for power inside the Sudan. This government is ruled by an Arab-led party that has the characteristics of a 'predatory' state. Like other African 'predatory' states that Castells (1998:96-105) described, the Sudanese state operates under "the politics of the belly" and "a process of individualization of ruling classes" that make the state "entirely patrimonialized by political elites for their own personal profits". The members of state "tend to be mercenaries, as their hold on positions of privilege and power is at the mercy of the capricious decisions of an ultimate leader" with bloody dictatorial rules, ideological stripes to be corrupt, rapacious, insufficient, and unstable. As a result, it produces exploitive and discriminatory practices for personalized accumulation of wealth and power, as well as political factions, clientelistic networks and alliances to exercise pillage and violent confrontation to attain power which often create overt clashes and instability.

The Khartoum government is politically dominated by Arab elites. The state is headed by President - Lt. Gen. Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, who created the ruling machine, known as the Ingaz (Salvation) regime. The regime includes an alliance of the military junta and the National Congress Party (NPC) - formerly known as the National Islamic Front (NIF) or the Sudan's Muslim Brotherhood (SMB). The NCP's "Group of Ten", including General Bashir and nine Muslim leaders 'reincarnated' from the NIF, is the 'patronage' of the state of Sudan who try

to attain the absolute 'personal appropriation of state' by establishing an Arab 'clientelistic network'. Arab sheiks are placed at local government offices in charge of taxation and the 'recruitment' of local manpower and resources. Despite the large agricultural production and huge oil revenues, peripheral Sudan suffers abject poverty as a 'substantial discount' is claimed by the government, at all levels, when these revenues are processed.

Constant struggle inside the Sudan is product of Khartoum's imperialism and its "politics of the belly". First, Khartoum constantly rages war to maintain and expand central control over Sudan peripherals and to exploit resources and amass wealth for the central government. Because Khartoum is heavily dependent on outside resources to run its governing machine, absolute control over the country is critical to achieve its exploitation strategy. The vampire junta not only manipulates its Arab network to recruit resources but also use Arab militias throughout the country as a proxy to destabilize the status and development of its oppositions. Creating its own war-torn conditions, the state also "relied on kindness and intentions of outside powers" (Hoagland, 2004) to 'milk' foreign assistance and investment. For decades, international aid to the war-torn country has been subjected to government's 'execution'. When its war efforts failed in the south, Khartoum's power was weakened by the loss of much of its economic resources. In the throes of death, the patrons of the state revealed their face. They ordered the looting and destruction of the livelihoods of the population.

Second, the continuation of war and conflict is a basis for the elites to exploit national resources and accumulate personal wealth. The government of Sudan continues to benefit from the manipulation of 'war-torn' conditions. The manipulation of population displacement, slavery and the exploitation of oil are all inextricably linked in the war effort that produce the opportunity for the government to maintain

> "a war economy of which both the government and the guerillas involves, in different degrees, the capture of labor, as much as the capture of territory… [And] in a reinforcing cycle, the economic strategy for the development of the country has produced the war as much as it has been a product of war [for decades]." (Johnson, 2003: 143-4).

Under such calculations, a tradition of creating 'peaceful accommodations' but violating agreements is maintained. The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement has become a 'paper' agreement. The decade long north-south civil war in the Sudan resulted in a peace agreement of April 2004 but was only signed by Khartoum under intensive international pressure. No positive steps have been taken to provide for security under this agreement. On one hand, the national elites engage in war to exercise their power to extract goods, cash or labor resources for personal accumulation of wealth and preservation of power. As arms trade largely benefits Khartoum rulers, Khartoum reportedly conducted clandestine activities and used Arab militias to destabilize the south and even its neighboring countries for the sake of war. The cease-fire with Darfur rebels is broken "roughly once a day" since April 2004 (Wax, 2004). Disputes over territorial control and violations of peace agreements and cease-fires continue as the 'feed' for war - which serves the interests of those who run and benefit from the war. On the other hand, war also provides an environment in which Arab clientelistic network practice pillage with impunity. An Arab sheik, a 'born criminal', who reportedly ordered multiples raids and murders of African villagers, 'roams' free in Darfur. Topping a list of seven Janjaweed commanders, all accused of war crimes, issued by US Department of State, but "rather than go hiding, he assumed a very public presence in Khartoum and made himself available to Western journalists, even invites or inviting them along on trips to his tribal hometown in North Darfur which usually involved transport aboard Sudanese government aircraft" (Anderson, 2004). Musa Hilal, who commanded multiple militia campaigns in Darfur, is an example of a government proxy criminal exercising pillage with impunity for the benefits of Arab elites at the cost of civilian lives.

Finally, government dictatory rules were used to help the government to retain 'legitimacy' and power over the country. When its exploitive policy created violent resistance and insecurity, Khartoum assumed a 'state of impunity' under Shariá – Islamic law -that legally favored Muslim Arabs which allowed them to dominate the state and affect brutal punishment against any challengers to state's authority. Black Africans are considered as 'slaves'. Although Arabs and Africans have intermingled and their religions do not play a primary role in the Darfur conflict, the Arab-led government uses the Arab-ethnocentric policy – which dictates superiority and supremacy of the Arab race in Sudan - and manipulates Islamist ideology to deepen the ethnic division. Under this policy and ideology, Arab leadership is considered "untouchable".

In order to preserve Arab supremacy and maximize the 'milking' of regional resources, the Arab clientelistic network promotes divisions along ethnic lines in Sudanese society to carry out the Khartoum 'divide and rule' strategy. It has become an appendage to assist Khartoum predatory rulers in strengthening its grip on the region. Darfur violence was triggered by a rebellious movement but was precipitated and is exacerbated by the predatory state's policy to expand and exert absolute power over the peripherals. That policy paved the way for the Arab militias to begin the genocidal campaign against African opposition in Sudan in general and in Darfur in this particular case.

Proximate Causes

Discrimination along ethnic lines, marginalization of the African tribes from the central government power, and uneven distribution of national wealth has a long history and has produced overt violence in the Sudan – the protracted north-south civil war is an example. Pervasive resistance has been a constant threat to Khartoum authority over the country.

Therefore, "whether in the interest of security, access to resources, ideology, race or religion and sometimes all of the above - Sudan's government is willing to destroy the lives and livelihoods of millions of its own citizens to maintain its grip on power" (Lefkow, 2004). The failure of the Sudan government to synchronize their exertion of power over Darfur resulted in a bloody conflict.

Darfur's Power-Relationship with Khartoum

About the size of France or Texas, Darfur is 'a place of superlatives'. More than a desert area, in fact, Darfur is astride one of Africa's great migration and camel caravan routes, and has always been one of the continent's richest melting pots. It is not a remote arid area of western Sudan but is the heartland of North Africa that is geopolitically and economically important to Khartoum. First, Darfur's agricultural products and considerable oil revenues account for a large amount of Sudan's domestic income. Its manpower contributes a large proportion of both Sudan's labor and 40 percent of Sudanese military forces. Owning hundreds miles of western Sudan borderline, Darfur occupies major regional trade-routes including a regional path for arms-trade that keeps arms-flows running smoothly within the tumultuous western Africa region. Although there are no publicized statistics, the Sudanese government has benefited largely from arms trade with Chadian factions during the internationalized Chadian civil war in the 1980s. The Sudan government then allied itself with the US (taking advantage of the Cold War alignments), and benefited greatly from the large amount of arms transferred to Chad via Darfur (Johnson, 2003).

Second, Darfur is demographically important and is a major battleground of Khartoum's "Arabization" strategy. Darfur had always been independent, enjoying autonomy from the central Sudan government, until the Sudan's complete independence in 1956. It was then

completely incorporated by force into the Egyptian Sudan and subsequently 'Arabized'. Although its name means the homeland (dar) of the Fur, Darfur has never been an ethnically homogenous area. There are three major ethnic groups that have occupied Darfur since the time of Darfur sultanate in the 1650s. The "blacks", including the non-Arab sedentary farmers such as the Fur, Massalit and other millet cultivating tribes, inhabit mainly central Darfur, the Zaghawa camel nomads - dominate northern Darfur. The Baqqara - Arabic-speaking cattle nomads - settle in southern Darfur. Most of Darfurian educated elites are descended mainly from the Fur and dominate Darfur politics and society thanks to British favoritism. In contrast, the 'Islamization' of Sudan after independence in 1956 and imposition of the Shariá code favored the Arab-speaking population and created a Muslim majority within Darfur's political elites. Although Africans and Arabs were deeply divided during and after the British occupation, Darfurian identity has not historically been clearly asserted in the region. In the competition for land and resources, intermingling and intermarriage have made Darfurian identity interchangeable between the Fur farmers and the Arab nomads. Identity clashes, however, were promoted and fueled by Khartoum's 'Islamization' during their fight over natural resources in the 1980s deadly drought. When the Salvation regime came to power in 1989, it attempted to obtain greater control of the western Sudan using the same "divide-and-rule" strategy that it did in the south using authoritative and exploitive means to contain the region's resources. Darfur's multiethnic background makes it a major target of the Sudanese politicians' "Arabization" campaign to exert central control over its people and resource-rich territory.

The perceived threat from Darfur

Darfur's strategic position to Khartoum turned into a deadly factor when Khartoum feared that they would lose their power over the region to Darfurian rebels. Khartoum's exploitation and

discrimination created resistance. Violence in Darfur erupted as the disenfranchised population rose up. African rebels justify their action as a counter-marginalization movement; "they claim to take up arms to fight against the legacy of decades of discrimination for more political power and a share of Sudan's $1 million-per-day oil revenue" (Wax, 2004). Darfur rebels' attack on government military installation was an attack on Arab leadership. The revolt is a threat to Khartoum's authority. Having already been challenged and threatened by the uprising populations throughout the country, Khartoum used proxy Arab militias not only to retaliate but to eliminate an increasing threat it perceived from Darfur. The government backed-militia is reportedly carrying out deliberate attacks on Darfur civilians, with the order not only to put down a rebellion but also to "kill all the slaves". Decades of government structural violence reached the tipping point when Darfurian rebels – fighting in the name of the people of Darfur – feared their people were excluded in the national power-sharing agreement signed only between Khartoum and the SPLA. For fear of complete disenfranchisement, the rebels began their own revolution. In retaliation, with its weak military power and poor diplomatic capacity, the government sponsored and equipped militia genocidal campaigns to secure its authority over Darfur.

Darfurian rebels and population (as resources for the rebels) are a danger to Khartoum's attempt to exert power over the region. When the rebels attacked the regime's authority, they became the preeminent threat. Concerned that Darfur rebellion would cause the failure of the Arabization program, Khartoum began a 'top down' war with the calculation that eliminating that threat would secure 'Arabization' and control of Darfur as well as the expansion, power exertion and accumulation of wealth. On one hand, the politics of "us" and "them" is the driving force of policy toward Darfur. Black Africans – as slaves - have been considered the 'others' who have been marginalized from Khartoum politics. In Identity/Difference, Connolly argued that "[t]he

threat is posed not merely by actions the other might take to injure or defeat the true identity but by the very visibility of its mode of being as other" (Connolly, 1991: 66). In other words, as Campbell relates, "[t]he mere existence of an alternative mode of being, the presence of which exemplifies that different identities are possible and thus denaturalizes the claim of a particular identity to be the true identity, is sometimes enough to produce the understanding of a threat" (Campbell, 1998: 3). The existence of the 'other' Africans, who dominate the territory, has always been a challenge to Arab identity and supremacy in the Sudan. But more than a quiet existence or perceived threat, the African rebels' action was a clear and preeminent threat to Khartoum. On the other hand, Khartoum did not seem to have a better alternative when encountering the immediate rebel challenge. In his study of "Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century", Valentino (2004) suggests that a 'final solution' is best understood when the phenomenon is studied from a strategic perspective. "The strategic perspective suggests that mass killing is most accurately viewed as an instrumental policy – a brutal strategy designed to accomplish leaders' most important ideological or political objectives and counter what they see as their most dangerous threats." (Valentino, 2004:3). The African rebels' action challenged Arab-leadership, its authority and identity. Given its decreasing authority and influence over the peripherals, self-preservation has become Khartoum's first strategic priority. As a result, when the threats to its authority and power arose, ethnic cleansing and genocidal warfare became the 'instrumental policy'. In addition, Valentino (2004) also attested "a 'final solution' is chosen when leaders believe that their victims pose a threat that can be countered only by removing them from society or by permanently destroying their ability to organize politically and militarily." (Valentino, 2004:5). As the African population became the threatening 'others', permanently eliminate that threat was not only strategic goal but also an immediate and final solution for Khartoum to preserve its power.

The Darfur rebels became the preeminent threat for several reasons under the Khartoum "politics of fear" calculation. First, a strong grip on Darfur is crucial for the Khartoum regime's power relationship with its other peripheral regions. The government fears that tribalism and regionalism in Darfur could become a roadblock to the "Arabization" program that is in process throughout the country. "Arabization" is Khartoum's remedy for secessionism and separatism given the current situation with the south. The regime has long been at war with its rivals to exert control over the "Three Areas" of Abyei, the Nubian Mountains and the Southern Blue Nile. The recent internationally mediated peace agreement in the Sudan already cost Khartoum's control in the southern Sudan. A government of Southern Sudan under the leadership of the SPLA is being established. When the two Darfur rebel groups, Sudan's Liberation Army (SLA) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), called for more Darfur representation in the central government, more investment and a larger share of national resources, they confirmed Khartoum's failure to contain its peripherals. Losing a strong grip over Darfur would cause the loss of Khartoum's influence and legitimacy over the country– which would result in the demise of government elites' economic and political absolutism.

Second, ceding Darfur to the rebels could be the end of the Arab-leadership and Khartoum's legitimacy over the country. As the International Crisis Groups (ICG) reports, "such an event would send a clear signal to the Beja in the east, the Nubians in the North, and other disenfranchised communities on the periphery that armed revolt is the only mechanism available in Sudan for securing rights and freedom" (ICG, 2004). Losing control of one region may cost the government another one. For fear of a "domino effect", Khartoum had to maintain an 'upper hand' in Darfur region. Third, the alleged Chadian links and support to SLA and JEM, and their incorporation with the SPLA, would exceed Khartoum's military capability to handle the situation politically and militarily. Without the resources to maintain a strong national military

and with 40 percent of its armed forces recruited from Darfur tribes, Khartoum feared that it is incapable of handling by itself and chose to recruit and support the murderous militias to eliminate both the rebels and its supporters and resources.

It is not only economic resources which Darfur contributes to the national wealth that is crucial to Khartoum but maintaining political power over Darfur helps illustrate the regime's authority over Sudan. If the government lost control in Darfur, other regions will follow Darfur's lead, and Khartoum would not have enough resources to maintain military superiority, economic security and political power. Dependent on resources and incapable of handling the perceived threats with its own political and military power, the predatory state used a proxy militia to carry out a 'final solution' on its people.

<Figure 1>

THE DARFUR CRISIS' STORYLINES

State sponsored structural violence in the form of inequality, discrimination and marginalization created resentment and resistance. As the fight between African rebels and government-backed Arab militias continued, Darfur first appeared, in the Sudanese government's rhetoric, as a tribal war. Months later, the death toll reached tens of thousands with hundreds of thousands victimized and displaced. Thousands continue to die as a consequence of the fighting, diseases and starvation. The situation appeared to the United Nations, international aid agencies, and western states' narrative as "the world's worst humanitarian crisis". Documenting atrocities in Darfur, the US Congress passed a resolution in July 2004 to term the situation 'genocide'. Various descriptions have not created a solid policy that helps end the people suffering, violence and insecurity in Darfur.

The Manipulation of Narratives

Crisis begets crisis. Different narratives muddy policy discourse surrounding Darfur. In his discourse analysis, Hajer (1995:62) suggested that "storylines are narratives on social reality through which elements from many different domains are combined and that provide actors with a set a symbolic references that suggest a common understanding." Furthermore, ÓTuathail (2002:612) asserts "storylines are sense-making organizational devices' that tie the different elements of a policy challenge together into a reasonably coherent and convincing narrative." However, the development of a storyline largely depends on a summary of cognitive information and situational understanding. Often, such development leaves out or undermines thorough empirical findings and structural causality of the situation because in practical geopolitics, "[s]ituation descriptions [only] refer to how foreign policy actors classify the drama under consideration and construct scenarios and analogies to render it meaningful." (ÓTuathail, 2002: 612). A situation description used for policy development is a drama that rather serves the interests of policy-makers than an objective judgment or analytical understanding of the situation.

Firstly, a storyline is developed along specific elements of the situation. The use of situation descriptions that contain that specific element is open to political manipulation. Hajer (1995: 62) suggests that "the point of a storyline approach is that by uttering a specific element one effectively re-invokes the storyline as a whole". For example, during the Bosnian war in the 1990s, because the US had 'no dog in the fight', the description of 'ethnic cleansing' or 'genocide' was avoided in US foreign policy narratives. To avoid the 'moral commitment' reflected in the Genocide Convention, most of the western states turned a 'blind eye' to the

genocide description of the 1994 Rwanda carnage, but termed it a "problem from hell" (Power, 2002). The narrative was developed on specific elements that only depict a 'humanitarian nightmare' or 'tribal warfare'. In the same fashion, but for different political interests, both President Bush and Democratic Presidential candidate Senator John Kerry agreed in their first 2004 presidential debate that genocide was being committed in Darfur. However, according to Boucher (BBC,2004), "the US is [only] making a statement affected by the current election campaign in the US and utilizing the humanitarian tragedies in the world for purposes related to the internal American policies." It uses the description of genocide to satisfy the public desire for American global leadership and to avoid public pressure on the government's actions. When asked about the possibility of sending American troops to Sudan, both candidates took their time to layout their political agendas and agreed that the US "shouldn't be committing troops". In fact, President Bush focused on his administration's 'humanitarian deeds' in Darfur and hoped that "the African Union moves rapidly to help save lives" and said "fortunately the rainy season will be ending shortly, which will make it easier to get aid there and help the long-suffering people there" (Bush, Kerry, 2004). The facts that the US used certain specifics to term the situation genocide but refused to act based on genocide principles illustrate that the description of genocide was only adopted to serve "American election interests".

Secondly, the development of a storyline is also open to political advocacy, therefore, how a narrative is adopted by an actor depends on how that actor sees the situation fitting their approach. While a situation description is the backbone to establish a storyline which "allows different actors to expand their own understanding and discursive competence of the phenomenon beyond their own discourse of expertise or experience" (Hajer 1995:63); how an actor adopts a description depends on how that actor can use that narrative to fit their approach in the 'jigsaw'. For instance, the humanitarian crisis narrative renders a humanitarian aid approach

appropriate. Either ignoring the genocidal characteristics of the situation or having a lack of resources or interest to react to such situation, numbers of NGOs, the UN and western governments consider the Darfur situation a 'humanitarian crisis'. The use of humanitarian language is adopted to justify humanitarian response to Darfur. The United Nations used phrases like "humanitarian catastrophe", "crisis", "urgent emergencies" to only "reaffirm commitment to the sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and independence of Sudan" and "express its determination to halt a humanitarian catastrophe", in the Security Council resolution passed in July [2004]. That language, according to General Dallaire (Commander of the UN forces in Rwanda in 1994),"[does not address] a concrete step [to stop genocide] but plagiarized the resolutions on Rwanda 10 years earlier that the UN was emasculated by the self-interested maneuverings of the five permanent members of the Security Council, fails to intervene" to prevent genocidal crisis (Dallaire, 2004). Humanitarian language dominates the policy discourse that renders humanitarian aid an appropriate approach to the situation when actors do not have the will or interest to respond to the situation otherwise.

Thirdly, a storyline also creates a 'discursive coalition' in which "different actors involved find ways to communicate at an inter-discursive level and how many separate elements of knowledge are related to come to form authoritative narratives [on a situation]" (Hajer, 1995:63). Therefore, the use of a situation description is vulnerable and open to political manipulation. Using a certain storyline to call for 'strategic alliances' in the response to its outcome is obvious. The maneuvering of the Sudanese government's storyline on Darfur is an example. In order to avoid international pressure or possible intervention, Khartoum justifies the Darfur crisis as ethnic warfare between Arab militias and African rebels. As a sovereign state, the conflict is Khartoum's internal affair and requires no international intervention; it refuses to bow to the call for international sanctions on its oil industry. As a result, Russia and China, major purchasers of

Sudan oil, who accepted this narrative, became part of this 'discourse coalition', voted against the UN resolution to sanction Sudan's oil exports. While the US uses the 'genocide' narrative to advocate for sanctions on Sudan's oil, the 'strategic coalition' adhering to the 'ethnic warfare' storyline may veto that narrative.

Darfur's Two Storylines

The situation in Darfur is subscribed to at least two storylines which have not led to any adequate action to stop the on-going violence.

The World's Worst Humanitarian Crisis

Seventy thousand people have been killed, more than 1.5 million displaced. International aid agencies estimated that thousands more will die by the end of the year. The Darfur situation is making aid organizations and humanitarian agencies struggle to get relief and supplies to the 'neediest' people on earth. The headlines and intensive media coverage in the west on another 'African humanitarian catastrophe' rushed government agencies, international institutions and aid relief organizations to send humanitarian aid. Websites of international and nongovernmental organizations such as UNHCR, UNOCHA, CARE, etc., carry footage of their efforts in Darfur and have links to solicit help for Darfur. The narrative of 'the world's worst humanitarian crisis' was established and became the justification for increasing humanitarian relief to Darfur.

As the specifics of a humanitarian crisis dominate the discourse around the situation, Darfur became the navel of international aid and the center of international sympathy. The narrative is certainly not only subscribed to by humanitarian organizations and non-governmental actors, but by a number of western states and international institutions, almost, as a matter of course.

Documentation of violence, hunger and disease outbreaks dominate the description of the situation. Once the storyline is established, its specifics in turn are used to create 'common sense' and define the problem which provides a framework to render its problem disclosure appropriate or even 'authoritative'. The common sense is the essential political devices that allow the overcoming of fragmentation and the achievement of discursive closure. It provides both cognitive information and justifications to develop a policy or create response that is acceptable and considered appropriate by their constituents

However, these specifics are only the symptoms of the Darfur conflict, i.e. needy people, spreading starvation, and disease outbreaks. Therefore, the narrative is a merely a symptomatic prescription that only narrate a treatment of the symptomatic consequences of the crisis. As a result, both the language and actions of the international response have been directly associated with one script of humanitarian principles. The UN 1556 (2004)resolution even used a number of linguistic lines to avoid or even 'discredit' other understanding of the crisis, such as "need of urgent humanitarian assistance" and the need "to halt a humanitarian catastrophe". Guidance from the UN and missions for the forces deployed by the African Union were to "monitor", to "help defuse the crisis", and to "help end the conflict in Darfur". But the force sent to Darfur has no power to intervene (Wax, 2004). Humanitarian and relief organizations have quickly become overwhelmed with the increasing number of the dead, the starvation and spread of disease. Unlike a natural disaster that has an ending, violence in Darfur continues and causes tremendous humanitarian impacts. Its consequences outpace ongoing humanitarian actions.

The Genocide Storyline

Compared with the facts, images, ideas, and concepts of the Darfur humanitarian crisis storyline, the specifics of the genocide storyline is concerned with the root causes of the crisis. Upon further investigation of the 'humanitarian catastrophe' causality, the situation appears differently. Reporters and journalists from Western press describe the situation as genocide against African blacks committed by Sudan government-backed Janjaweed militias. Based on empirical evidence obtained through visits and analyses of its information, a narrative addressing the systematic and structural reasoning of the crisis was created. Not only concerned with the facts and images, this narrative also relies on the study of the causality and reasoning of the crisis that requires answers to questions such as why there were victims? Who are the perpetrators or victims? etc. The facts that people were dead, attacked or displaced suggest there is a conflict at its root. The increasing number of deaths, group killings, systematic rapes, and destroyed livelihoods indicates an ongoing violence at a structural scale. Like the humanitarian crisis storyline, the storyline of genocide also develops a discourse inquiring appropriate responses to the situation. Before the US Congress passed a resolution to designate the situation genocide, major US newspapers carried 'Genocide' headlines. Columnists and intellectuals provided in-depth analysis and reports on the crisis that called for the US to take action to stop the killing. Statements in publications, such as, "Looking at Darfur, Seeing Rwanda" (Dallaire, 2004) provide a "scenario" and "analogy" of the situation which is not a humanitarian crisis or tribal war but genocide. The storyline of genocide in Darfur is established and is gradually forming "authoritative narratives" with increasing supporters. The UN Human Rights Commissioner, Louis Arbour, filed reports and called for action to stop the perpetrators in September 2004. In November 2004, UN Special Envoy in Sudan, Jan Pronk stated that there are strong indications that war crimes and crimes against humanity have occurred in Darfur on a large and systematic

scale. The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crime of Genocide of 1948 and a number of international principles provide support to a discursive coalition surrounding this narrative that requires international intervention to halt this type of violence. The empirical findings and study of Darfur conflict causality enlarges its coalition to increase pressure on international action to stop the crime. More decisive phrases such as "do everything possible", "recommendation for action" and "to take appropriate action" are found in the UN Security Council resolution of November 19, 2004. The storyline of genocide continues to develop with an increasing number of supporters.

INTEREST CALCULATION

The use of the genocide storyline, however, only serves practical interests of international political actors. It has not resulted in a policy that attests the rule of law provided by the Genocide Convention. In his annual address to the United Nations on September 21, 2004, President Bush praised members of the Security Council for their 'timely and necessary action' and remarked that "[t]he Unites States played a key role in efforts to broker a cease-fire [to the Sudan North-South civil war], and providing humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese people. Rwanda and Nigeria have deployed forces in Sudan to help improve security so aid can be delivered. The Security Council adopted a resolution that supports an expanded African Union force to help prevent further bloodshed and urges the government of Sudan to stop flights by military aircraft in Darfur" (Bush, 2004 – emphasis are mine). Terming it genocide, but laying the responsibility solely on the AU and merely treating it as a humanitarian crisis, the Bush administration does not consider the crisis as a problem of 'ours' but views it as one beyond the realm of 'our' responsibility. Samantha Power – author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Problem from Hell* argued: "Bush Administration officials seem to feel that, having used the 'G' word,

they have done their part. But the sin of past presidents is not that they failed to use the word but that then, as now, they failed to stop the crime." (Power, 2004). The US position toward the situation depicts a gap between naming and acting in practical geopolitics.

"Fudging" the Crisis: The Gap between Naming and Acting

Policy-makers pick specific descriptions to develop a storyline that serves their certain political purposes, and when under pressure, use that narrative to justify their actions. If one storyline is inadequate to justify their action, two or more can be 'fudged' together to create a 'performative script' that renders their problem closure appropriate. In his analysis of Practical Geopolitics, ÓTuathail (2002) suggests that "a 'performative script' [which dictates a 'problem closure'] may not actually provide any kind of resolution of the problem but may operate as a form of postponement in the hope that [the problem] goes away and retreats from the media and public consciousness". The script is created only to 'accommodate' certain political concerns, needs or interests. "Fudging" storylines together helps create a policy to avoid certain specific responsibility that one narrative may be unable to serve such interests. It also helps promote political mobilization and secure legitimacy. For example, the growing genocide storyline increases the pressure on the US (who termed the situation as such) and the international community to act and stop the crime in Darfur. Statements such as the Washington Post's "Not finding the will to act is genocidal indifference" (O'Brien, 2004) are often found in major publications. However, due to either lack of interest or political will, the US is hoping that their support and aid to the African Union will ease the crisis and decrease international pressure on a commitment to intervene by 'leaning' toward the humanitarian crisis narrative and increasing its humanitarian assistance to what it termed 'genocide'. Although actions other than humanitarian

assistance have been taken by the international community, there has been no policy to treat Darfur situation under the principles of 1948 Genocide Convention. In early October 2004, the UN Secretary General finally appointed a five-member commission to conduct an investigation in Darfur in order to obtain a 'formal determination' whether genocide was committed and is ongoing. The African Union, with consent of the Sudanese government, has committed troops to 'monitor' the situation. The disparity between naming and acting leave violence in Darfur untreated. "Fudging the crisis" undermines the moral commitment of the "Never Again" principle and the strategic significance of preventing genocide and crime against humanity.

<Figure 2 >

The Geostrategic Significance

The vitality of storylines in conflict resolution is how cognitive information - or empirical findings – is being used to explain and redress the causality construction or structural causes rather than symptomatic issues in a situation description. In his analysis of "Grammar of Geopolitics", ÓTuathail (2002: 608-17) emphasizes the categorization and particularization in the process of defining a problem precisely and comprehensively through storyline attribution which includes the questions of location specification -where, situation description -what, attribution/imputation of causality -why, protagonist typicification – who, and interest enunciation -so what. However, in practical geopolitics, the question so what is primarily concerned with interest calculation. According to ÓTuathail (2002), when considering a new foreign policy crisis, politicians and officials inevitably engage in rough and ready calculations of the geostrategic significance of the crisis as it impacts their state. "What is at stake for 'us'?" The calculations of the geostrategic significance of the crisis suggest what policy or action political actors may take toward the crisis or crisis protagonists. The politics of storylines

illustrates that it is not a situation description that 'scripts' a policy but political will and interests that do. The question so what is primarily concerned with 'stakeholders' interests. But the 'so what' question can also address strategic significance in conflict resolution. In discourse analysis, Hajer (1995: 64-5) asserts a problem closure is contested in a 'given domain' though which actors are positioned, and specific ideas of 'blame', 'responsibility, 'urgency' and 'responsible behavior' are attributed. For 'so what' to contest the closure to the genocidal crime in Darfur, it is important to consider the 'responsibility' and 'urgency' to prevent genocide under international law and security. The strategic significance of resolving the Darfur crisis in the international domain is to maintain and foster the respect for international rule of law, articulate international norms in protection of humanity, and ensure the sanctity of such law. That requires the development of a policy which responds to in pursuant to the rules of law and principles narrated by moral and social orders of the international community rather than specifications and justifications that may serve only certain political interests.

<Table 1>

Whether the Darfur crisis is an internal sovereign state issue and if it should be dealt with by the state or as an international affair under the moral responsibility of "Never Again" depends on how international community narrates the situation. Table 1, using the attribution of storyline of Grammar of Geopolitics (ÓTuathail: 2002), provides the two dramas of Darfur storylines of which attributes appear in international policy discourse toward Darfur. However, the practical use of storylines not only confuses international responses toward the Darfur genocide but also makes no specific description of the situation attributable. Even though the US saw the situation as genocide and blamed the Sudanese government, it has turned away from the "moral responsibility" set forth by the 1948 Genocide Convention. Therefore, the description of

genocide is seen fatalistically as part of the 'state of nature' in the world rather than crime against humanity. The existing storylines are 'fudged' to render humanitarian action appropriate to the situation. The question so what to end genocide Darfur has been obscured and 'mystified' by the storylines revolving around the situation. A resolution of the crisis became a minor issue rather than a strategic interest to the international community.

Resolving the Darfur crisis has geostrategic significances in the domain of international affairs. First, stopping the genocide crisis will enhance the role of global leadership in resolving international crises. Western democratic governments and global institutions have failed to intervene or prevent genocide committed in the 20th century. The 'stain' of Western governments and the international community's inaction in Rwanda and ineffective intervention in Kosovo could be removed by stopping the Sudanese government from continuing genocidal crime. Inaction toward Darfur will greatly demean the role of global leadership of the international community including international institutions, leading Western governments, and other actors. The Darfur crisis is not merely a humanitarian crisis but is a result of genocidal warfare committed by a 'predatory state', the consequences of which will affect regional states and global security.

Second, stopping genocidal crime in Darfur prevents impunity practices and future breaches of emerging international law and principles. The Darfur crisis is not a result of a natural disaster or tribal war, but an outcome of state power struggle and predatory policies that leaves long-term social and moral impacts. The enmity that Khartoum government's 'divide and rule' and "Arabization" strategies produced enmity and skirmishes, as the International Crisis Group (ICG) reports:

> "The government's policy of using the Arab Janjaweed against the civilian populations of Darfur's African tribes, with displaced Fur, Zaghawa and Massalit increasingly adopting the anti-Arab attitudes that the government deliberately fostered by manipulating the ethnic dimensions of the conflict. [And the root causes of Darfur's crisis] lie in the lack if meaningful participation in both local and central government; feelings of political, social and economic marginalization, and underdevelopment that mirror sentiments based on structural inequalities that are felt throughout the country." (ICG, 2004).

"Ancient hatred" and religion-based ideology are powerful elements that are usually mobilized to fuel conflict. Displaced African tribes have reportedly refused to live along side their Arab neighbors in Darfur any longer. In addition, as former US Ambassador Petterson to Sudan attested, "any government based on religious fundamentalism and intent on propagating its religious beliefs will by its nature be tyrannical, intolerant of dissent, and prepared to use any means, including violence against its own people, to maintain itself in power." (Petterson, 1999: 3). The Sudan government took action against its people under a presumption of sovereign impunity in order to eliminate, once and for all, the population that it perceived as a threat to its authority. It did not only fail to protect its citizens but actually committed genocidal crimes by ordering mass killings and destruction of civilian livelihoods. Permitting the Khartoum regime to operate with impunity not only emasculates the sanctity of international law but may also become a precursor for future dealings with other states that encounter problems similar to those of Khartoum.

Third, as the principles contained in the internationally articulating Responsibility to Protect suggests, a sovereign state's impunity provided by the traditional, narrow perception of security

leaves out the most elementary and legitimate concerns of ordinary people regarding security in their daily lives. It argues that "if a state cannot or will not protect its people from [killing and other grave] harm, then coercive intervention for human protection purposes, including ultimately military intervention, by others in the international community may be warranted in extreme cases" (ICISS, 2001). This is the core principle for the international community to use to protect people in danger if a sovereign state fails to protect its own people from mortal harm, slaughter, ethnic cleansing and/or starvation. The Responsibility to Protect doctrine implies the need for the larger international community to exercise that responsibility if sovereign states are unwilling or unable to do so themselves. The principles which guide the use of force in intervening in sovereign state affairs for human protection purposes is also supported by a wide variety of legal sources - including sources that exist independently of any duties, responsibilities or authority that may be derived from Chapter VII of the UN Charter. These legal foundations include fundamental natural law principles; the human rights provisions of the UN Charter; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights together with the Genocide Convention; the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols on international humanitarian law; the statute of the International Criminal Court; and a number of other international human rights and human protection agreements and covenants. Articles 41-43, Chapter VII of the UN Charter provide authority for the international community to intervene (including by force) to prevent grave breaches of law and resolve disputes that threaten international peace and security. The development and respect for international law and human security provisions depends on the international community's interest in exercising its responsibility to protect civilians through resolving crises such as the one in Darfur.

Last but not least, articulating international norms for prevention of grave breaches of international law and crimes against humanity also requires the prosecution of genocidal

perpetrators. "The Duty to Prosecute" attested by Stefanie Grant of York University in volume 4, Refugees and Human Rights, indicates that international law places clear duties on states to prosecute crimes under international law on genocide and war crimes as well as very serious human rights violations. She suggested that the 1949 Geneva Conventions oblige states parties to penalize and prosecute "grave breaches" of their provisions under state's domestic laws.

> "This duty extends to Common Articles 3 of the 1949 Convention which aims to protect civilians in situations of internal conflicts as well as in time of international war. Article 3 set out a series of principles relating to internal conflicts that are, in essence, an affirmation of human right principles. The Geneva Conventions further obliges governments: to search for persons "alleged to have committed", or "to have ordered to be committed" grave breaches, and bring them "regardless of nationality" before their own courts. Grave breaches as defined in Articles 147 include willful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, and unlawful deportation or confinement. International humanitarian law applies throughout the duration of a conflict and throughout the territory of the states of parties of the conflict." (Bayefsky, 2000: 162-3).

The analysis of the origins of the Darfur crisis illuminates the face of the genocidal perpetrators. The Duty to Prosecute doctrine solicits that it is crucial and necessary to confront and prosecute such perpetrators, regardless of whom they are, to ensure the sanctity of international law and to prevent future crime against humanity. Lessons learned from Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo crises provide stark examples that confirm genocidal crimes were not halted until the perpetrators were confronted or removed from power. Should the international community be committed to fostering and ensuring international law as well as providing human security, the 'predatory' state in Khartoum - who reportedly authorize, support and commit this crime of genocide – needs to be confronted, replaced and prosecuted.

CONCLUSION

The Darfur crisis originates in the failure of state elites in balancing their power struggle. They used sovereign impunity to justify genocidal campaigns against citizens that challenged their power. Economic disparity, discriminatory environment, marginalization and inequality have always been the cause of disputes between the 'elitist' power structure and those groups wanting equality in Sudan. The exploitation of Sudan's peripheral regions has impoverished the population while wealth and power accumulated in the hands of a selected few in Khartoum. The religious-fundamentalist regime also links the State to religion to deliberately practice discrimination and favoritism to separate African groups from national power and wealth sharing. Its structural violence, in the form of discrimination and marginalization, reached the 'tipping point' and produced physical conflict with the disenfranchised population. Khartoum's failure to balance its power struggle resulted in a bloody crisis.

The practical use of narratives surrounding the crisis has undermined both the causal understanding of the conflict and the geostrategic significance in resolving the crisis. Narratives of the situation are developed for practical geopolitical purposes. Therefore, there is a gap between how international actors describe the situation and how they act toward it. Due to the lack of political will and interest in resolving a crisis that has been designated genocide, international actors have not taken actions to stop human suffering. But "[c]alling it genocide is half the answer" (O'Brien, 2004), there are a number of international rules and principles that demand international action to stop the genocide. As the scale of the crisis reflects, "moral condemnation, trade penalties and military efforts by African countries are simply not going to be enough to stop the killing – not nearly enough" (Dallaire, 2004). Recognizing the geostrategic significance in resolving this crisis is a crucial step in the international community's

attempt to stop genocide and foster international law and security. However, as its narratives are manipulated by the practices of practical geopolitics, human security in Darfur remains dire.

Figure 1: Characteristics of Darfur Conflict with Origins and Structure Similar to Conflicts in the Sudan.

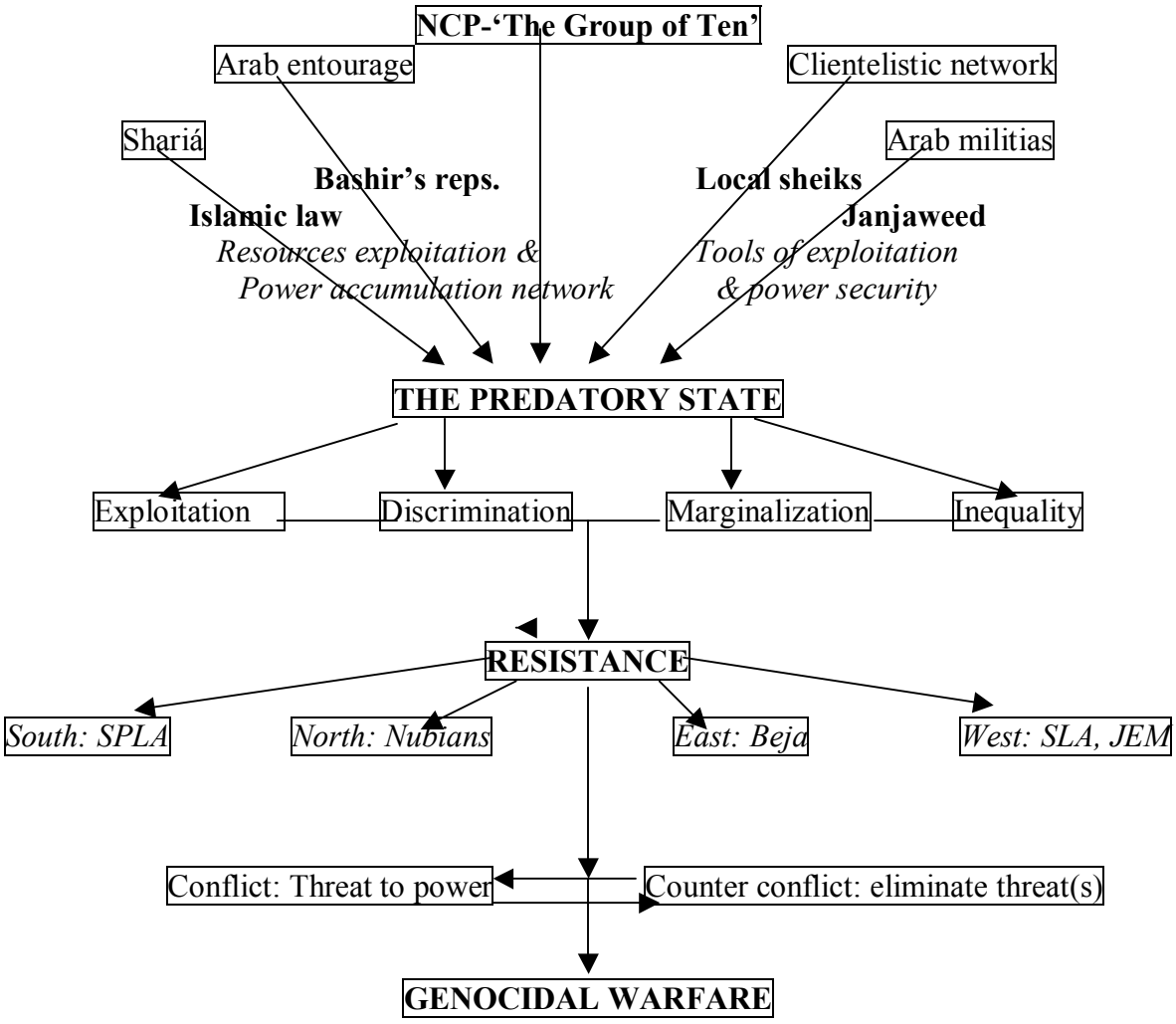

Figure 2: ‘Fudging’ Together Two Storylines to ‘Script ’Response’ to Darfur Crisis

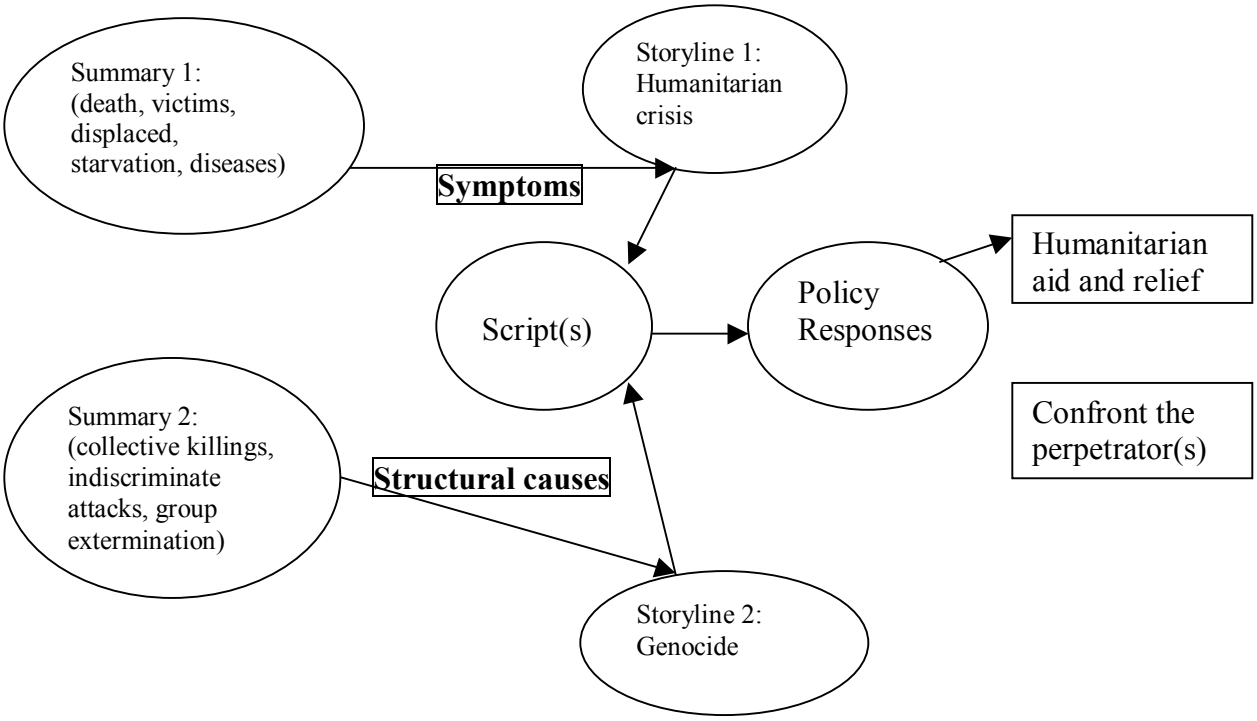

Table 1: Attribution of the Darfur Crisis Storylines

Storylines Attribute	An African tribal warfare	An African predatory state
Where? Location Specifications	Darfur, remote western region of Sudan	Sudan, largest country in central African
What? Situation Descriptions	Complex African rebels and Arab militias conflict; Ethnic strife between African tribes and Arab Baqqara militias	Khartoum regime discrimination against peripheral regions and African population; clear marginalization of African population from central politics, economic and social advancement
Who? Protagonist Typifications	African rebels and Arab militias – Janjaweed	Khartoum regime against African oppositions
Why? Attributions & Imputations of Casualty	Ancient hatred, ethnic conflict, 'bottom up' rebellion	Authoritarian elite's greed and self-preservation for economic resources and political power; 'top down' warfare: genocidal warfare
So what? Interest Calculation	A sovereign state issue: should be dealt by state	Breaches of international law and principles: need prevention

APPENDIX

<Map 1>

Map of Sudan

Source: US Central Intelligence Agency at

http://www.reliefweb.int/w/map.nsf/wByCLatest/B83F3D7E7333052585256A1D006BFA87?Opendocument

<Map 2>

Sudan's political and administrative boundaries

Source: University of Texas Map Center at

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/darfur_villages_0802_2004.jpg

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