

Proxy war against Sudan

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The United States seems to have singled out Sudan as a vulnerable nation in a vulnerable region. It wants to use Sudan as an example to all so-called 'rogue' states that refuse to accept 'leadership' of the US and Europe.

The official version of Washington's Sudan policy was unveiled in American newspapers during later part of 1996. In November 1996, The Washington Post published a story that the US government had approved military assistance to three African countries who were collaborating with one another to overthrow the Islamic regime in Sudan. The article, contributed by David B. Okaway and quoting inside sources, revealed that almost \$ 20 million in terms of military equipment had been scheduled for shipment to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda to work with the West in a joint offensive to topple the Khartoum government.

The report added that it was perhaps the first example in the post cold war era of Washington giving military support to African countries avowedly intent on the overthrow of another

western government agencies, professional groups and the media had carefully placed the West on the side of 'human rights' in the campaign against Sudan.

Towards that end, tales about a "race war" and the 'oppression' of women were set afloat. When these failed to impress the public, propaganda operatives found their 'magic bullet' in allegations of slavery. Again and again, stories about a trade on human captives were funnelled to the media by organisations connected with the "aid industry" and interested parties. As such, once one report was discredited, a dozen more would spring up in its place. In 1996 alone, most major news sources in the US, both print and broadcast, aired some kind of "expose" based on misinformation about the "slave trade."

There is a certain irony about the choice of Sudan as a target. The charge has never been that Sudan posed any military threat to anyone. Rather, those who predicted Sudan's revolution spilling over into Egypt based their assumption on the popularity of the regime. In other words, Sudan posed a 'threat to the US only in the ideological sense, which made military involvement especially risky. It further risked diverting attention from secret operations against other 'prob-

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er African government.

It was further revealed that the CIA and the National Security Council had been the driving forces behind the tougher line. By all calculations, most of the aid would, in the final analysis, end up in the hands of John Garang's CIA supported Sudan People's Liberation Army. Viewed in this context, it was another proxy war that would consist of a drawn-out, manpower — intensive battle, like those that had cost a million Angolan lives during 1970-80s.

Another official of the Clinton administration is quoted as saying that the US policy was to isolate, pressurise and contain Sudan and to intimidate it to modify its behaviour. This stance adds to the suspicion that the action had as much to do with Sudan, as with the desire to send a message beyond Sudanese borders.

Writing in 'Impact International' (3/97), Elizabeth Liagin reveals that this time the United States has launched this punitive war against Sudan with a difference. The wars in Angola and Vietnam had become a sore spot for American diplomatic relations. So, interested parties to the present operation, such as

lem' regimes such as North Korea, China, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria or Cuba.

This scenario would make activities on the psychological front all the more imperative. Indeed, propaganda demonising the Sudanese government was as important as military supplies.

In actual fact, it is the 'containment' of Islam that is at the heart of American policy. Way back on January 1, 1993, a right wing commentator Charles Krauthammer, wrote in The Washington Post that Islam had become the 'New World Order' — a counterpart to the old "Soviet menace." And Iran, "the centre of the World's com-interm", and "Sudan's radical Islam regime, were serving as training ground and base for Islamic terrorists trying to overthrow Egypt's pro-western regime to the north."

Krauthammer's conclusion was ominously pronounced. "As with Soviet Communism, this new messianic creed must be contained.

The new threat is as evil as the Old Evil Empire's." That is perhaps the true description of the new military agenda of the US and Europe.