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Ending the Cold War is a Good Place to Start

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Ending the Cold War is a Good Place to Start

Abstract

Recently, I told my daughter that the U.S. media had hyped the Chinese toy recall. “Just more rehashing of Cold War rhetoric,” I said. My two-year old daughter rebuked me: “Come on, Mom! You read politics into everything!” Then, after a moment or two of silence, she said, “Oh yes, I see what you mean. The Chinese toys with toxic paints could have been made in sweatshops owned by U.S. multinationals” (proud mom—politically aware daughter).

Keywords

China, Sudan, Darfur, United States, Politics, Misinformation, Media

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Ending the Cold War is a Good Place to Start

by Judith Blau

Recently, I told my daughter that the U.S. media had hyped the Chinese toy recall. “Just more rehashing of Cold War rhetoric,” I said. My two-year old daughter rebuked me: “Come on, Mom! You read politics into **everything!**” Then, after a moment or two of silence, she said, “Oh yes, I see what you mean. The Chinese toys with toxic paints could have been made in sweatshops owned by U.S. multinationals” (proud mom—politically aware daughter).

The reason I am so quick to discount many accounts in the U.S. media about China (and Russia, Cuba, Venezuela, “Old Europe,” Iran, etc.) is that I feel that many American commentators and journalists too easily fall for the official U.S. party line, unaware of how complicit the U.S. is in the darkest and most grievous affairs around the world. The easy path is to blame other countries, as Danna Harman blames China for inaction on behalf of Darfuri civilians in her *Christian Science Monitor* article—the focus of this month’s Roundtable.

The U.S. is up to no good. The evidence is overwhelming that U.S. officials drastically exaggerate the obstructionist role that China is playing in the Sudanese genocide to divert attention from the obstructionist role that the U.S. is playing. Independent media outlets document why it is not in the interests of the U.S. to get tough with Omar al-Bashir, President of Sudan. [All Africa News Service](#), [Africa Action](#), [Africa Resource Center](#), [Sudan Net](#) and [Africa Speaks](#) all provide comprehensive coverage of the Sudanese barbarism and the complicities of foreign governments in Sudanese affairs—including China and the United States. Although the U.S. has gone through some motions in the U.N. Security Council to pass a resolution that would deploy a large peacekeeping force in Sudan, [inside observers](#) say that the U.S.’s commercial and military interests are dominant and the U.S. is just dragging its feet, while attempting to maintain public appearances.

From the mid-1980s until September 11, 2001, [the CIA relied on the Sudanese](#), chiefly Maj. Gen. Salah Abdallah Gosh, for intelligence about Osama bin Laden. Gosh supplied the CIA office in Khartoum with information, and occasionally was flown to Washington D.C. to report on bin Laden’s activities before bin Laden left for Afghanistan in 1996. After that, Gosh and others in the Sudanese government continued to supply the CIA with information on Arab Islamists traveling through African countries to the Middle East. In June 2003, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick acknowledged in Congressional testimony that the Bush Administration was still maintaining an intelligence-sharing partnership with the government of Sudan. What Zoellick did not disclose, but what African news sources report (also in [The Los Angeles Times](#)), is that the Sudanese government recruits and trains U.S. spies for deployment in both Iraq and Somalia. In a 2007 interview with an *LA Times* reporter, Sudan’s ambassador to the U.S., John Ukec Lueth Ukec, said that tougher sanctions would affect his country’s willingness to cooperate with the U.S. on matters of intelligence. Nat Hentoff published an article in [Truth Out](#) with the title, “CIA’s Close Relationship with Sudan’s Government Enables Genocide there to Continue,” referring to the U.S.-Sudan partnership on espionage and intelligence.

However, intelligence is not the only thing that the U.S. puts ahead of the lives of Darfuri civilians. Rich oil deposits and abundant water resources are something that the U.S. dearly covets—Chevron discovered major oil deposits in southern Sudan in 1979-80, estimating that Sudan had more oil than Iran and Saudi Arabia put together. Water is now viewed as a valuable commodity and the blue Nile and the White Nile meet in Sudan. America's rival, China, now controls 40 percent of the Sudanese oil sector, with Pakistan, Malaysia, Russia and France controlling the rest. Although [Fidelity recently divested](#) from Sudan, other American investors remain, and Sudan continues to court more American and other foreign investors, still perfectly legal and actively encouraged by the [World Bank](#). New laws also make it easier for companies to [invest indirectly](#) in Sudan through second and third parties, which Chevron now appears to be doing through Indonesia.

Toward a Better World?

Those of us who have attended any of the [World Social Forums](#) (WSF) know that the current geopolitical system that makes the Sudanese genocide possible cannot last. The people of the world will not put up with it, and the planet cannot sustain it. This seems like a remarkably naïve statement, except for the fact that the WSF is so incredibly multi-stranded, and is as much a part of local communities as it is embedded in interconnected, international networks. The brilliance of the Forum is that other than human rights and a commitment to deep forms of democracy, there is no substantive agenda except to make a “possible better world, an alternative world, a world for the people.”

WSF participants include international NGOs such as [Via Campesina](#), [Food First](#), [ATTAC](#), [ActionAid](#), [Social Watch](#), [Focus on the Global South](#), [Africa Forum on Small Arms](#), and many, many others. They increase exponentially because of local-national-regional-global networks facilitated by the Internet.

But how can a peoples' movement possibly deal with the immense power of the United States and China to dismantle dictatorial power in Sudan? Can it shatter the hold of economic elites of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO? Can it bring down the brutal, military dictatorship in Myanmar? Can it eradicate hunger and suffering in Haiti, Zambia, North Korea and everywhere else? I do not believe for a second that it is impossible. By emphasizing human rights principles of equality and self-determination, people's movements can influence the type of change global superpowers fear.

Judith Blau has published three books on human rights with Alberto Moncada: [Human Rights: Beyond the Liberal Vision](#) (2005); [Justice in the United States: Human Rights & the US Constitution](#) (2006); and, [Freedoms and Solidarities: In Pursuit of Human Rights](#) (2007). She is Director of the Social and Economic Justice (interdisciplinary) Undergraduate Minor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Blau and Moncada are now working on a volume on human rights that will be published by Paradigm. Outside of her academic work, Blau also serves as President of [Sociologists without Borders](#).