

THE PIPA/KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS POLL

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Americans on the Crisis in Sudan

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**PROGRAM ON INTERNATIONAL
POLICY ATTITUDES (PIPA)**

A joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland



**Knowledge
NETWORKS**

A polling, social science, and market research firm based in Menlo Park, California

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The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) is a joint program of the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland and the Center on Policy Attitudes. PIPA undertakes research on American attitudes in both the public and in the policymaking community toward a variety of international and foreign policy issues. It seeks to disseminate its findings to members of government, the press, and the public as well as academia.

Knowledge Networks is a polling, social science, and market research firm based in Menlo Park, California. Knowledge Networks uses a large-scale nationwide research panel which is randomly selected from the national population of households having telephones and is subsequently provided internet access for the completion of surveys (and thus is not limited to those who already have internet access).

The Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM), at the University of Maryland's School for Public Affairs, pursues policy-oriented scholarship on major issues facing the United States in the global arena. Using its research, forums, and publications, CISSM links the University and the policy community to improve communication between scholars and practitioners.

The Center on Policy Attitudes (COPA) is an independent non-profit organization of social science researchers devoted to increasing understanding of public and elite attitudes shaping contemporary public policy. Using innovative research methods, COPA seeks not only to examine overt policy opinions or positions, but to reveal the underlying values, assumptions, and feelings that sustain opinions.

Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay, Evan Lewis, and Stephen Weber designed the questionnaires and wrote the analysis.

Knowledge Network's Stefan Subias adapted the questionnaires and managed the fielding of the polls.

Meredith Perry, Aleksandra Czajkowska, Roman Gershkovich and Batsuuri Haltar contributed to the production of the report.

The search of existing poll data was done with the aid of the Roper iPOLL database.

This study was made possible by grants from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Ford Foundation.

INTRODUCTION

The situation in the Darfur region of Sudan has reached crisis proportions. Due to a conflict between the Khartoum government and rebels in Darfur, government-backed Arab militias have driven over a million black African Darfuris from their homes. Tens of thousands of displaced persons have died, largely because humanitarian aid organizations have been denied access to them. The US government has estimated that if the situation does not change, deaths could reach 300,000. Many say that the situation threatens to become genocide or that it already has, which would call for international action consistent with the international convention on genocide.

The Sudanese government and the Darfuri rebels recently signed a ceasefire agreement that also sanctions the intervention of humanitarian aid organizations. The agreement, however, has largely broken down.

UN and US officials have increasingly called on the Sudanese government to take action to stop the militias. With international news dominated by the situation in Iraq, reporting on the situation in Darfur has been relatively sparse. Nonetheless pressure is growing for the UN to take stronger action.

To find out more about how the American public views the situation in Darfur, their level of awareness, and their readiness to support various types of action, PIPA conducted a nationwide poll of 892 Americans July 9-15 (margin of error +/- 3.3%).

The poll was fielded by Knowledge Networks using its nationwide panel, which is randomly selected from the entire adult population and subsequently provided with internet access. For more information about this methodology, go to www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp.

Funding for this research was provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Ford Foundation.

Key findings were:

1. UN Involvement in the Darfur Crisis

A majority thinks the UN should get more deeply involved in the crisis in Darfur with two-thirds saying the UN should pressure the Sudanese government by deciding that all UN members should put sanctions on Sudanese officials.....2

2. Responding to Possible Genocide in Darfur

Were the UN to determine that genocide is occurring in Darfur, a very large majority says that the UN, including the US, should act to stop the genocide, even if this requires *military force*. A majority is already inclined to believe that what is occurring in Darfur constitutes genocide; with only a quarter saying it is a humanitarian disaster growing out of a civil war. Among those better informed about Darfur, a very large majority believes genocide is occurring there. The readiness to intervene in the case of genocide is consistent with earlier polling in regard to intervention in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Africa in general.....3

3. Contributing to Peacekeeping Force to Enforce Ceasefire Agreement

Two out of three Americans support the idea of a UN peacekeeping force that would enforce the recent ceasefire agreement in Darfur that also allows full access to refugees by humanitarian organizations, provided that the parties were to accept such a force. A majority thinks the US should be willing to

contribute a quarter of the needed troops if European and African countries were willing to contribute the other three quarters5

4. Awareness of the Issue

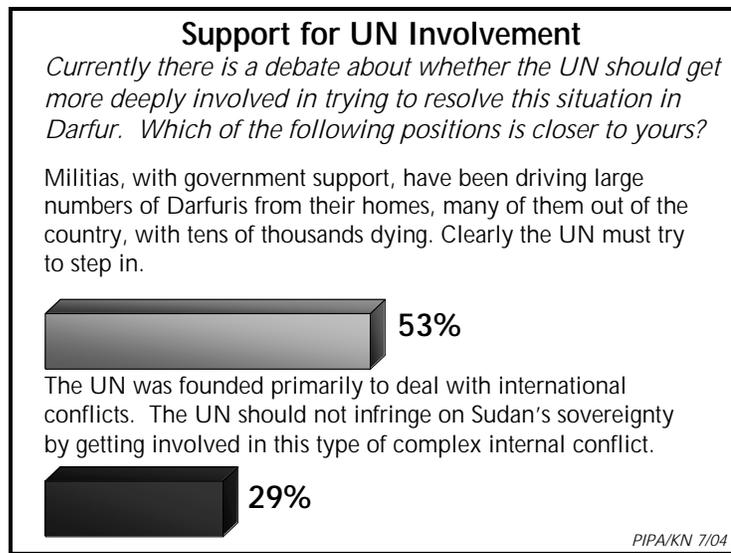
Support for involvement in Darfur is substantial even though awareness of the crisis in Darfur is quite low. Among those with greater awareness support for action is substantially higher, suggesting that, should the issue gain greater prominence in the news, support for action may grow6

FINDINGS

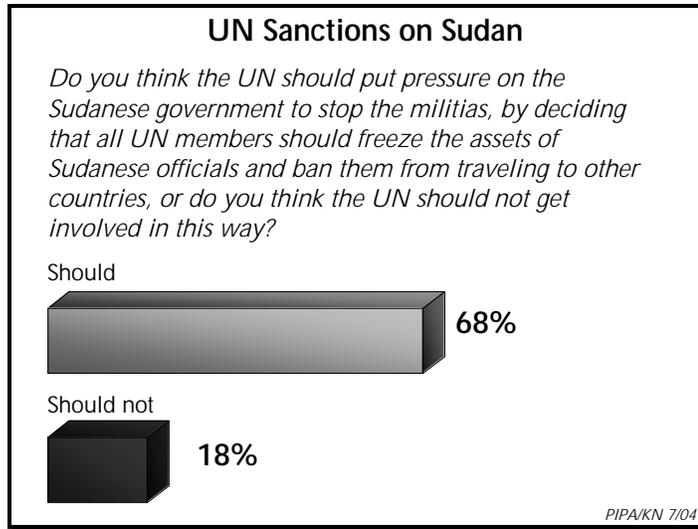
1. UN Involvement in the Darfur Crisis

A majority thinks the UN should get more deeply involved in the crisis in Darfur with two-thirds saying the UN should pressure the Sudanese government by deciding that all UN members should put sanctions on Sudanese officials.

A majority said that the UN should get involved in the conflict in Darfur. Presented two arguments on the issue, only 29% endorsed the one that said the UN should not “infringe on Sudan’s sovereignty by getting involved in this type of complex internal conflict” since “the UN was founded primarily to deal with international conflict.” Rather, 53% were more persuaded by the argument that the UN should step in to deal with the problem in light of government-backed militias “driving large numbers of Darfuris from their homes, many of them out of the country, with tens of thousands of people dying.” Eighteen percent did not answer. Republicans were a bit more supportive of UN action (61%) than Democrats (54%).



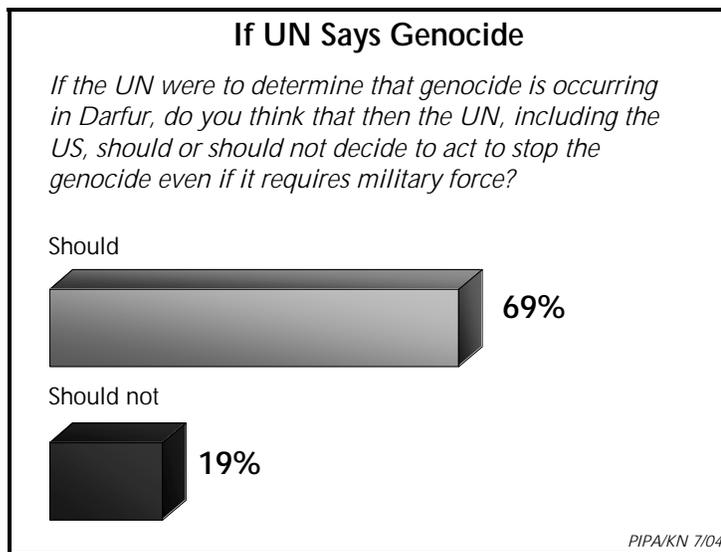
Sixty-eight percent said “the UN should put pressure on the Sudanese government to stop the militias, by deciding that all UN members should freeze the assets of Sudanese officials and ban them from traveling to other countries” while 18% said “the UN should not get involved in this way.”



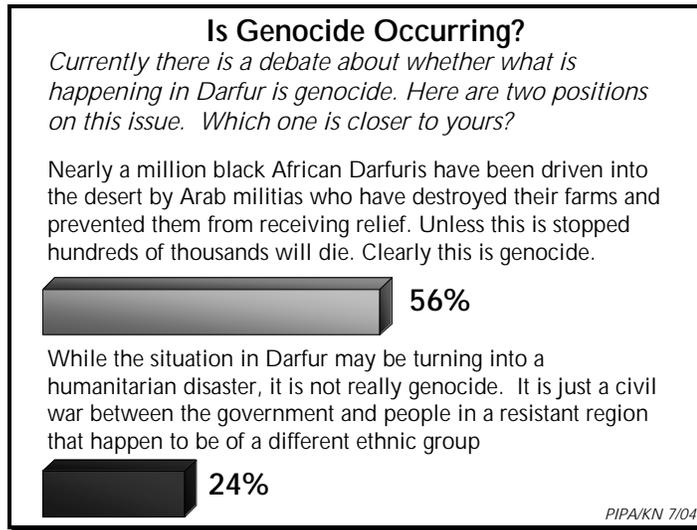
2. Responding to Possible Genocide in Darfur

Were the UN to determine that genocide is occurring in Darfur, a very large majority says that the UN, including the US, should act to stop the genocide, even if this requires military force. A majority is already inclined to believe that what is occurring in Darfur constitutes genocide, with only a quarter saying it is a humanitarian disaster growing out of a civil war. Among those better informed about Darfur, a very large majority believes genocide is occurring there. The readiness to intervene in the case of genocide is consistent with earlier polling in regard to intervention in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Africa in general.

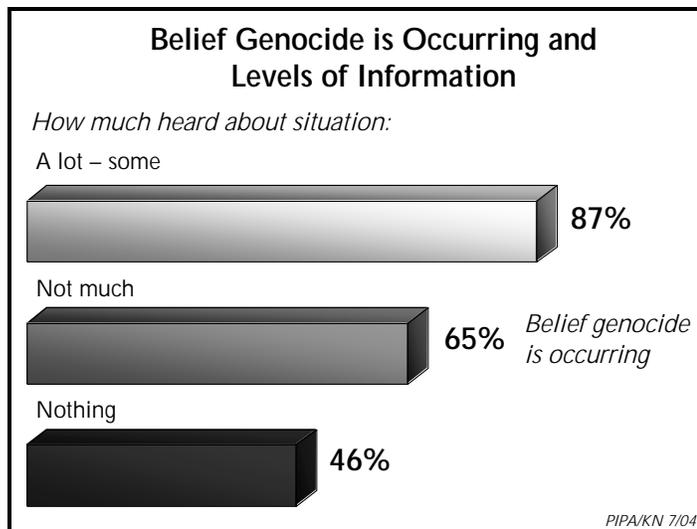
A large majority (69%) said “If the UN were to determine that genocide is occurring” in the Darfur region of Sudan then the UN, including the US, should “act to stop the genocide even if it requires military force.” Only 19% were opposed and 12% did not give an answer. Republicans were slightly more supportive of such action (74%) than Democrats (69%).



At the same time, Americans are already inclined to believe that genocide is occurring there. When presented with two arguments, only 24% endorsed the view that what is occurring in Darfur “is just a civil war between the government and people in a resistant region that happen to be of a different ethnic group.” Instead, 56% believe what is occurring in Darfur, where “a million black African Darfuris have been driven into the desert by Arab militias who have destroyed their farms and prevented them from receiving relief,” is genocide. Twenty percent did not know answer. Here too Republicans were more convinced (64%) than Democrats (56%).



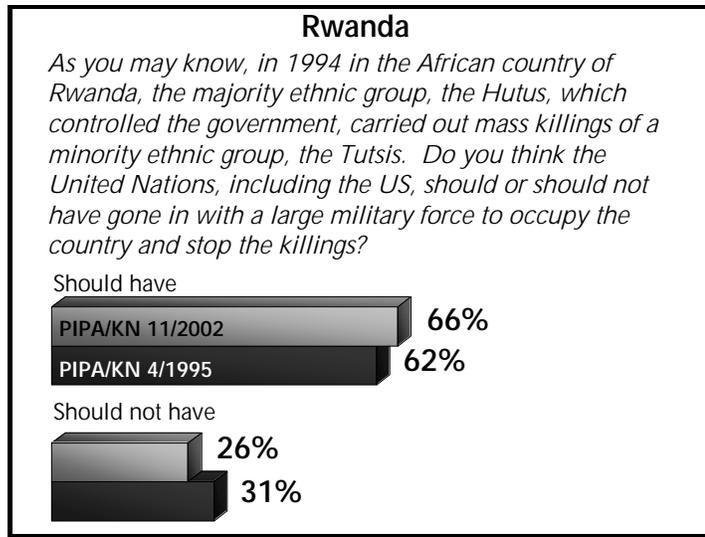
Among those with greater awareness of the situation in Darfur a larger percentage said that they thought it was genocide. Among the small percentage that said they had heard some or a lot about it 87% endorsed the view that genocide is occurring there. Among those who said they did not know very much 65% said it was, while those who knew nothing (and were presumably just responding to the description in the poll) 46% said it was genocide.



The readiness to take action to prevent genocide in Sudan is consistent with earlier polling in regard to the potential for genocide in Africa. In June 1999 Pew found 58% saying that “the U.S. and other Western

powers have a moral obligation to use military force in Africa, if necessary, to prevent one group of people from committing genocide against another.” When PIPA/KN re-asked this question in January 2003, 55% reconfirmed this view. Only 30% said that the US did not have such an obligation while 15% did not answer.

A majority has also felt that the UN and the US should have intervened to prevent the genocide in Rwanda. In an April 1995 PIPA poll, shortly after the genocide occurred, 62% said the “the United Nations, including the US, should... have gone in with a large military force to occupy the country and stop the killings.” When PIPA/KN re-asked the question in November 2002 66% said they should have.



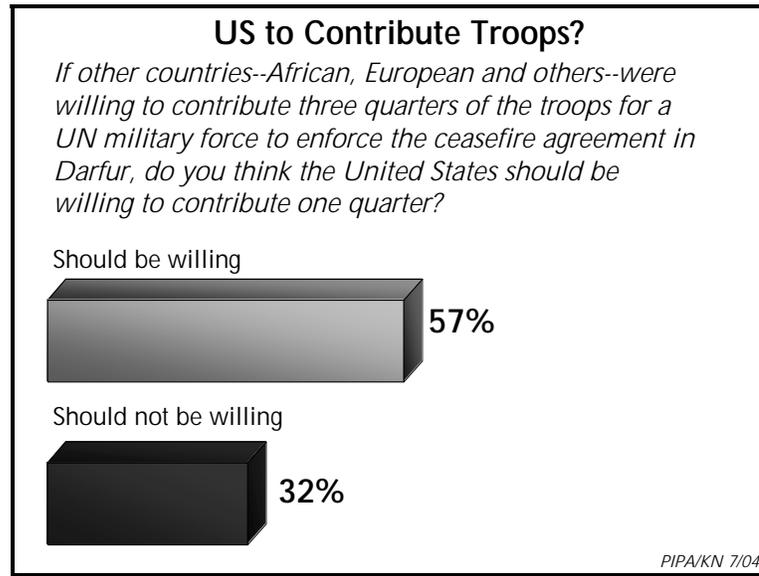
In the past, the American public has also favored taking action if the UN determines that genocide is occurring. When asked the same question in PIPA polls in 1994 about Bosnia and Rwanda, in both cases 80% said that if the UN determines that genocide is occurring there the UN, including the US, should act to stop the genocide by military force if necessary. Support may be a bit lower now because US troops are presently stretched in the operation in Iraq, or it may be that awareness of the situation in Darfur is lower than it was for Bosnia and Rwanda.

3. Contributing to Peacekeeping Force to Enforce Ceasefire Agreement

Two out of three Americans support the idea of a UN peacekeeping force that would enforce the recent ceasefire agreement in Darfur that also allows full access to refugees by humanitarian organizations, provided that the parties were to accept such a force. A majority thinks the US should be willing to contribute a quarter of the needed troops if European and African countries were willing to contribute the other three quarters.

A majority of Americans also appear ready to support a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur and to support contributing US troops to that force. Respondents were told that there was a recent ceasefire agreement between the Darfur rebels and the Sudan government is also supposed to allow relief organizations full access to the people who have been driven from their homes, but that this agreement has largely broken down. They were then told that “some UN officials have proposed sending in a UN military force to enforce this agreement” and asked “if the government and the rebel forces were to accept this, do you think it would or would not be a good idea for the UN to send in such a military force to enforce the agreement?” A robust 65% said they thought it would be a good idea. Republicans were more supportive (75%) than Democrats (65%).

Respondents were then asked about US troop participation. Asked, “If other countries--African, European and others--were willing to contribute three quarters of the troops for a UN military force to enforce the ceasefire agreement in Darfur, do you think the United States should be willing to contribute one quarter?” Fifty-seven percent said the US should be willing, 32% said it should not be, and 11% did not answer. Though Republicans were more supportive of the operation itself, they were less supportive of contributing US troops (54%) than were Democrats (64%).



4. Awareness of the Issue

Support for involvement in Darfur is substantial even though awareness of the crisis in Darfur is quite low. Among those with greater awareness support for action is substantially higher, suggesting that, should the issue gain greater prominence in the news, support for action may grow.

Support for involvement in Darfur is substantial even though awareness of the crisis in Darfur is quite low. Asked how much they have heard about the situation “in a province of Sudan called Darfur” where “there is a conflict between the local black African Darfuris and the central government, dominated by Arabs” only 14% said some or a lot, 28% said not very much and 56% said nothing at all. This low level of awareness was reflected in substantial percentages not answering some questions.

Among those with greater awareness support for action was substantially higher. On the question of whether the UN should intervene, support was 77% among those who knew some or a lot, 63% among those who knew not very much, and 44% among those who knew nothing. On whether the UN, including the US, should act with military force if necessary in the event that the UN determines genocide is occurring, 88% answered affirmatively among those with the highest level of information, dropping to 79% and 62% at lower levels. On whether the UN should send in a force to enforce the ceasefire agreement support went from 83% to 73% to 59%. On the question of whether the US should contribute troops to such an operation awareness had the mildest, but still significant, effect going from 65% to 64% to 54%.

These findings suggest that should the Darfur issue gain greater prominence in the news, support for action may grow.

METHODOLOGY

The poll was fielded by Knowledge Networks, a polling, social science, and market research firm in Menlo Park, California, with a randomly selected sample of its large-scale nationwide research panel. This panel is itself randomly selected from the national population of households having telephones and subsequently provided internet access for the completion of surveys (and thus is not limited to those who already have internet access). The distribution of the sample in the web-enabled panel closely tracks the distribution of United States Census counts for the US population on age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, geographical region, employment status, income, education, etc.

The panel is recruited using stratified random-digit-dial (RDD) telephone sampling. RDD provides a non-zero probability of selection for every US household having a telephone. Households that agree to participate in the panel are provided with free Web access and an Internet appliance, which uses a telephone line to connect to the Internet and uses the television as a monitor. In return, panel members participate in surveys three to four times a month. Survey responses are confidential, with identifying information never revealed without respondent approval. When a survey is fielded to a panel member, he or she receives an e-mail indicating that the survey is available for completion. Surveys are self-administered.

For more information about the methodology, please go to:
www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp.