

Do Americans Care about Darfur?

An International Crisis Group/Zogby International Opinion Survey

I. INTRODUCTION

For too long, the international approach to the crisis in the western Sudanese region of Darfur has been defined by tough rhetoric followed by half-measures and inaction. This general lack of resolve has ensured that widespread attacks against civilians have been conducted with relative immunity in Darfur, and the grinding humanitarian situation has continued to take a heavy toll by any calculation. Major international players have justified their failure to resolve the situation by citing an array of bureaucratic, diplomatic and political hurdles that stand in the way of a more robust response to the situation on the ground.

In that light, the International Crisis Group was particularly keen to more fully explore the attitudes of the American public about the situation in Darfur and what steps it felt were warranted in response. Crisis Group commissioned the respected Zogby International polling firm to conduct a public opinion survey in the United States during May 2005. This briefing is the result of that joint effort. From 9-16 May 2005, 1,000 representative Americans were surveyed on the Darfur questions included in this briefing, as part of a larger 35-question Zogby International Survey.

While the results of the poll are detailed below, several aspects of the findings are most striking. Above all, the breadth of American support -- across party and religious lines -- for a much tougher response to the current situation is striking. Some 84% of respondents said the U.S. should not tolerate an extremist government committing such attacks, and should use its military assets, short of inserting U.S. combat troops on the ground to protect civilians, to help bring them to a halt. There would appear to be much greater public backing for America to play a leadership role in stemming this catastrophe than has been the conventional wisdom in Washington. This includes 81% who supported tough sanctions on Sudanese leaders who control the militias, 80% who backed establishing a no-fly zone over Darfur, and 91% who said the U.S. should cooperate with the

International Criminal Court to help bring to justice those accused of crimes against humanity.

Understandably, there was decidedly less support for putting U.S. combat troops on the ground, but the fact that almost 40 percent of respondents favoured this option at a time when the war in Iraq continues to rage and when no U.S. officials have advocated such an option, suggests a widespread belief among the American public that the United States has a fundamental responsibility to directly help protect civilian populations. Given such findings, it is hoped that the United States government will begin to embrace more concerted and direct efforts to end the tragedy in Darfur. Crisis Group will continue to publish frequent analyses of the situation on the ground and policy options.¹

II. ZOGBY SURVEY SUMMARY

To survey Americans on the situation in western Sudan is to confirm two basic realities: little concrete information on Africa reaches these shores, yet Americans are ever inclined, at least in principle, to reach out to those in urgent need of assistance. Many Americans have only a loose grasp on the details of the Janjaweed massacres of Sudanese civilians, but a large majority think the U.S. should contribute to international efforts to stop them.

Almost two-thirds of likely voters (64%) say they are aware of the situation in Darfur, but almost half say they are only slightly aware (46%), leaving just 18% to say they are very aware. More than one-third (36%) are not aware of the situation in Darfur, including one in seven (14%) who admit they are not at all aware. These numbers are important in considering respondents' views on U.S. involvement.

¹ For Crisis Group's most recent policy briefing see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°24, *A New Sudan Action Plan*, 26 April 2005. This and other reports on Darfur and Sudan as a whole, together with much other material, may be found at www.crisisgroup.org.

When presented with a summary of the problem, respondents say -- by an enormous margin of more than four to one -- that the international community should respond to the Sudanese crisis (70%). This support cuts across party lines and religious denominations. One in six (17%) feel the matter is an internal Sudanese affair, and 13% are not sure. In a subsequent question on international intervention (rather than mere response), an even larger majority (79%) say the international community has a responsibility to take action to stop the Janjaweed attacks, while just 15% disagree. The slight discrepancy in these numbers, with more respondents supporting outright intervention in the latter question, suggests that Americans begin to feel more strongly about action in Darfur as they warm to the subject.

Even more respondents (80%) agree that the Janjaweed attacks on civilian populations in Darfur, supported by the Sudanese government, can accurately be called "genocide" or "crimes against humanity." One in ten disagree, and one in ten are not sure. When asked about appropriate responses, 84% say the U.S. should not tolerate an extremist government committing genocide or crimes against humanity and should use its military assets, short of putting U.S. troops on the ground, to help stop the tragedy in Darfur. Just 8% disagree, saying the U.S. should not worry about genocide or crimes against humanity in places like Africa. Correspondingly, more than 80% of respondents agree that it is unacceptable for any government to engage in wholesale attacks on its own civilians, while a notable 10% disagree.

When asked about specific measures the U.S. might take, an overwhelming 91% of respondents say the U.S. should cooperate with the International Criminal Court -- to which, of course, the U.S. does not belong -- to help bring to justice those accused of crimes against humanity. Strong majorities also support tough sanctions on Sudanese leaders who control the militias (81%), a no-fly zone over Darfur (80%), and NATO logistical and troop support for an expanded African peacekeeping force (76%). Support falls quickly away at the prospect of U.S. military action; just 38% of likely voters think the U.S. should send troops under its own flag.

A plurality of respondents (45%) think U.S. universities and pension funds should divest their holdings in the Chinese state oil company operating in Sudan, to condemn its indirect contribution to arming the militias. Nearly as many respondents disagree, however (39%), perhaps put off by the prospect of a complicated international situation like that of South Africa in the 1980s.

It is worth noting that African-Americans are among the U.S. sub-groups least aware of the situation in Darfur, and least likely to feel that the international community has a responsibility to intervene. One out of five African-

Americans (20%) say they are not at all aware of what is happening in Darfur, compared to just 14% of all likely voters. While large majorities in most sub-groups agree that the international community has a responsibility to take action in the conflict, short of sending U.S. troops (83% of college graduates, 80% of all whites), the number dips to 72% among African-Americans and Hispanics. The percentage of African-Americans who agree that the attacks in Darfur can be called "genocide" or "crimes against humanity" is 68%, whereas 80% of all respondents are comfortable with these terms. On the other hand, African-Americans are more likely to support the deployment of U.S. troops in Darfur (50%) than are whites (37%) or Hispanics (36%); and a sizable two-thirds (67%) of African-Americans think the U.S. pays too little attention to Africa, compared to 53% of all likely voters.

III. NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

1. How would you describe your knowledge of the situation in Darfur in western Sudan?²

Very aware	18%		
Slightly aware	46	Aware	64%
Not very aware	22		
Not at all aware	14	Not aware	36
Not sure	1		

Almost two-thirds of likely voters (64%) are aware of the situation in Darfur, with far more people slightly aware (46%) than very aware (18%). Just over one in three (36%) are not aware of the situation in Darfur, including one in seven (14%) who are not at all aware.

A majority within every sub-group is aware of the situation. Among the most likely to be aware are Democrats (69%), 50- to 64-year-olds (73%), college graduates (67%), and people with annual household incomes of \$35,000-\$49,999 (69%).

Respondents with the least education (48% of those with less than a high-school diploma) and least income (41% of those with household incomes below \$15,000) are among the most likely to say they are not aware of the situation in Darfur. Just over two in five young adults (18 to 29), Southerners, and African-Americans are also not aware.

² Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100.

2. I am going to read you a brief description of the situation in Darfur. Two years ago, fighting broke out in the western Sudanese region of Darfur. To help put down this rebellion, the Sudanese government employed "Janjaweed" militias to attack civilians it considered disloyal. The fighting has led to massive displacement of civilians, indiscriminate killings, looting and mass rape, leaving more than 200,000 dead and more than 2 million people driven from their homes. Should the international community respond to this situation, or should it simply be treated as a matter of Sudan's internal affairs?

International community should respond	70%
An internal matter for Sudan	17
Not sure	13

By a margin of more than four to one, Americans say the international community should respond to this situation in Darfur (70%). One in six (17%) feel this is an internal matter for Sudan, and 13% are not sure.

A majority in every sub-group -- and two-thirds in most sub-groups -- say the international community should respond to the situation. Jews (88%) are the most likely to feel this way, as are three-fourths to four-fifths of Hispanics, 18- to 29-year-olds, married adults, college graduates, residents of the East and West regions, men, and people with household incomes of \$75,000 or more. There was little difference between Republicans (69%), Democrats (72%) and Independents (69%) on this issue.

Those most likely to call Darfur an internal Sudanese affair are also among the least likely to claim knowledge of the situation. These include adults with less than a high-school diploma (32% say the conflict is internal), people with household incomes below \$15,000 (25%), and African-Americans (22%). One-fourth of single adults, more women (20%) than men (14%), and more Independent voters (21%) than Democrats (16%) or Republicans (15%) agree that the fighting in Darfur is an internal Sudanese affair.

3. President Bush, Senator John Kerry, Senate Majority leader Bill Frist, and other leaders, have used the term "genocide" to describe the continued attacks on civilian populations in Darfur by militias supported by the government of Sudan. Others have described the attacks as crimes against humanity. Do you share either or both of these assessments?

Yes	80%
No	10
Not sure	10

Four in five respondents (80%) share either or both of these assessments. Only one in ten (10%) do not share either, and one in ten are not sure.

Two-thirds or more respondents in each sub-group share these opinions, including at least 85% of 30- to 49-year-olds, Jews, college graduates, and people with household incomes of \$75,000 or more. Three-fourths of Born-Agains and 82% of Catholics shared this assessment. Slightly more Republicans (82%) than Democrats (79%) were in agreement that the attacks constituted either genocide or crimes against humanity.

The percentage who disagree with both assessments rises to one-fifth among African-Americans, 18- to 29-year-olds, and adults with less than a high-school diploma. Another 15-16% of Southerners, single adults, high-school graduates, and people with household incomes of \$25,000-\$34,999 do not share either assessment.

4. Do you agree or disagree that the international community has a responsibility -- short of sending US troops -- to take action to stop these attacks from taking place in Darfur?

Agree	79%
Disagree	15
Not sure	6

Four-fifths of respondents (79%) agree the international community has a responsibility to take action to stop the Janjaweed attacks. One in seven (15%) disagree, and 6% are not sure.

At least three-fifths of respondents in every sub-group agree, including an overwhelming 94% of Jews and 83-86% of 18- to 29-year-olds, college graduates, married adults, parents of children under 17, and people with household incomes of \$75,000 or more.

In several sub-groups, however, between one-fourth and one-fifth of respondents disagree. These include Democrats, seniors 65 and older, Hispanics, African-Americans, single adults and those who are divorced/widowed/separated, high-school graduates and those with less education, and people with household incomes below \$25,000 and between \$35,000-\$49,999.

5-8. For each of the following statements, please tell me if you agree or disagree.

Table 1.

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
It is simply unacceptable for any government to engage in wholesale attacks on its own civilians.	86	10	4
Cutting off food deliveries to refugees is an acceptable military strategy.	13	82	5
Sudan should be allowed to use whatever measures it wants to deal with internal security, even if it means thousands of civilian deaths.	9	84	7
It is acceptable for Sudan to use undisciplined militias against civilian populations.	7	88	5

An overwhelming majority of respondents (86%) agree that it is unacceptable for any government to engage in wholesale attacks on its own civilians. This response holds for at least 80% of almost every sub-group. Similarly vast majorities (82-88%) also disagree with the other three statements: that cutting off food deliveries to refugees is an acceptable military strategy; that Sudan should be allowed to use whatever measures it wants to deal with internal security, even if it means thousands of civilian deaths; and that it is acceptable for Sudan to use undisciplined militias against civilian populations.

Likewise, at least four-fifths of respondents in almost every sub-group disagree with each of the other three statements.

9-13. I am going to read to you a number of steps that the U.S. could take to help stop the killings in Darfur. Please tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each.

Table 2.

	Support*	Oppose*	Not sure
Cooperate with the International Criminal Court to help bring to justice those accused of crimes against humanity.	91	6	4
Impose tough sanctions on those Sudanese leaders responsible for controlling the militias.	81	12	7
Establish a "no fly" zone over Darfur to prevent aerial attacks on civilians and destroy those planes engaged in attacks on civilians.	80	13	8
Offer NATO logistical and troop support for an expanded African peacekeeping force.	76	18	6
Insert U.S. soldiers on the ground.	38	55	7

(*"Support" and "oppose" combine "strongly" and "somewhat.")

Almost all respondents (91%) support cooperation with the International Criminal Court to help bring to justice those accused of crimes against humanity, including 97% of Jews, 91% of Catholics and 89% of Protestants. Large majorities also support imposing tough sanctions on those Sudanese leaders responsible for controlling the militias (81%); establishing a no-fly zone over Darfur (80%); and lending logistical and troop support to NATO for an expanded African peacekeeping force. Support wanes, however, at the prospect of deploying U.S. soldiers on the ground in Darfur (38%), with a majority (55%) voicing opposition.

In every sub-group, more than two-thirds of respondents *strongly* support cooperating with the International Criminal Court to help bring to justice those accused of crimes against humanity. Furthermore, nearly half or more of respondents in every sub-group *strongly* support imposing tough sanctions on those Sudanese leaders responsible for controlling the militias, and establishing a no-fly zone over Darfur. There is also strong support in most sub-groups -- at least 70% -- for offering NATO logistical and troop support for an expanded African peacekeeping force.

A majority in most sub-groups oppose deploying U.S. soldiers on the ground in Darfur, particularly senior citizens (68%), Jews (65%), and Independent voters (60%). Support for deploying U.S. troops is higher among men (43%) than women (33%); higher among Democrats (40%) and Republicans (39%) than Independents (33%); and higher among African-Americans (50%) than whites (37%) and Hispanics (36%). Younger adults are also more likely to be in support of troop involvement (48% of 18- to 29-year-olds). Notably, this backing declines as age increases. Adults with the least education (65%) and income (48%) are also among the more likely to be in favour of deploying U.S. troops.

14. China is a large investor in Sudanese oilfields, and the government of Sudan is heavily dependent on oil revenue to purchase arms. China has been unwilling to support UN action to deal with Darfur because of its oil investments. Knowing this, do you think U.S. universities and pension funds should divest their holdings in the Chinese state oil company operating in Sudan?

Yes	45%
No	39
Not sure	16

A plurality of respondents (45%) think U.S. universities and pension funds should divest their holdings in the Chinese state oil company operating in Sudan. Nearly as many disagree, however (39%), and one in six (16%) are not sure.

Pluralities of Democrats (47%) and Republicans (46%) favour divestment, while Independents are slightly more likely to say no (43%). Pluralities of both men (49%) and women (42%) say yes to divestment, as do pluralities in each religious sub-group except Jews, of whom a *majority* say yes.

By region, residents of the East, South and West are more likely to say yes, while Central/Great Lakes residents are evenly divided. Adult 18- to 29-year-olds are more likely to say no, while 30- to 54-year-olds are more likely to favour divestment. Seniors 65 and older are very closely divided.

People with household incomes below \$35,000 are more likely to say no; at least half of those with incomes of \$35,000 or more say yes. Finally, whites are more likely to say yes (46%) than no (37%), while slight pluralities of Hispanics and African-Americans (45% each) say no.

15. Should or shouldn't the U.S. confront China and Russia in the UN Security Council when those two countries try to block meaningful action on Darfur?

Should	76%
Shouldn't	13
Not sure	11

By a margin of almost six to one, respondents say the U.S. should confront China and Russia in the UN Security Council when those two countries try to block meaningful action on Darfur. One in eight (13%) say the U.S. should not do this, and 11% are not sure.

At least three-fifths of respondents in every sub-group agree that the U.S. should confront China and Russia in the Security Council. Most likely to hold this view are men (82%), 18- to 29-year-olds (83%), and people with household incomes of \$75,000 or more (86%).

Just over one-fifth of Hispanics, high-school graduates and people with household incomes below \$15,000 say the U.S. should not confront China and Russia on this issue.

16. Do you agree or disagree that the United States pays enough attention to Africa?

Agree	33%
Disagree	53
Not sure	14

More than half of respondents (53%) do not feel the U.S. pays enough attention to Africa. A substantial one in three, however (33%), agree that the U.S. does pay enough attention to Africa. One in seven (14%) are not sure.

A majority or plurality in almost every sub-group disagrees that the U.S. pays enough attention to Africa. These include two-thirds of African-Americans and roughly three-fifths of Hispanics, Democrats, Jews, single adults, college graduates, residents of the West, and people with household incomes of \$15,000-\$24,999.

The most likely to agree that Africa gets sufficient U.S. attention are adults with less than a high-school diploma (55%), high-school graduates (43%), and people with household incomes below \$15,000 (47%). Approximately two-fifths of Republicans, 18- to 29-year-olds, senior citizens, residents of the Central/Great Lakes region, and people with household incomes of \$25,000-\$34,999 also agree.

17. *The Sudanese government earlier gave Osama bin Laden shelter in that country before he fled to Afghanistan. Does that fact make you more likely or less likely to support military action against Sudan to resolve the situation in Darfur?*

- More likely 43%
- Less likely 33
- Not sure 25

A plurality of respondents (43%) say that knowing Sudan has sheltered Osama bin Laden makes them more likely to support military action against Sudan to resolve the situation in Darfur. Notably, however, one in three (33%) say this makes them *less* likely to support military action, and one in four (25%) are not sure.

In almost every sub-group, a plurality or majority say that knowing about Osama bin Laden makes them more likely to support military action against Sudan. This includes at least half of adults with less than a high-school diploma (57%), 18- to 29-year-olds (56%), single adults, men, and people with household incomes of \$15,000-\$24,999 and \$35,000-\$49,999.

Those who say that knowing about Osama bin Laden makes them *less* likely to support military action against Sudan include a plurality of African-Americans (40%), senior citizens (39%), Democrats (36%) and women (36%), each of whom are divided on this question.

Three in ten women and senior citizens are undecided.

18. *I am going to read to you two statements. Please tell me which statement comes closer to your own point of view -- A or B?*

Table 3.

	%
A: The U.S. should not tolerate an extremist government committing genocide or crimes against humanity and should use its military assets, short of putting U.S. troops on the ground, to help stop the humanitarian tragedy in Darfur.	84
B: The U.S. should not worry about genocide or crimes against humanity in places like Africa and should not antagonize powerful nations like China that support the government of Sudan and its current policies.	8
Not sure.	8

Respondents overwhelmingly say that the U.S. should not tolerate an extremist government committing genocide or crimes against humanity, and should use its military assets -- short of putting U.S. troops on the ground -- to help stop the humanitarian tragedy in Darfur (84%). This includes 83% of Republicans, 85% of Democrats, and more than four-fifths (83%) of Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Born-Agains, and Muslims. Only 8% say the U.S. should not worry about genocide or crimes against humanity in places like Africa, and should not antagonize powerful nations like China that support the government of Sudan and its current policies.

At least three-fourths of respondents in almost every sub-group agree with Statement A, including roughly nine in ten Hispanics, 18- to 49-year-olds, and people with household incomes of \$50,000-\$74,999.

Statement B is the choice of 13-14% of senior citizens, high-school graduates, and people with household incomes below \$25,000.

IV. METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Survey Methodology, Zogby America, 9 May 2005 through 16 May 2005

Zogby America is a national telephone survey of likely voters conducted by Zogby International. The target sample is 1,000 interviews with approximately 35 questions asked. Samples are randomly drawn from telephone CDs of national listed sample. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. As many as six calls are made to reach a sampled phone number. Cooperation rates are calculated using one of the methodologies approved by the American Association for Public Opinion Research,³ and are comparable to other professional public-opinion surveys conducted using similar sampling strategies.⁴ Weighting by region, party, age, race, religion and gender is used to adjust for non-response. The margin of error is +/- 3.2 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Zogby International's sampling and weighting procedures also have been validated through its political polling: more than 95% of the firm's polls have come within 1% of actual election-day outcomes.

Sample Characteristics	Fqncy	Valid Percent*
Sample size	1,000	100
East	229	23
South	260	26
Central/Great Lakes	310	31
West	200	20
Very likely to vote	943	94
Somewhat likely to vote	57	6
Democrat	369	37
Republican	370	37
Independent	260	26
18-29	168	17
30-49	424	43
50-64	236	24

³ See COOP4 in *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates of Surveys* (American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2000), p. 38.

⁴ Jane M. Sheppard and Shelly Haas, *Cooperation Tracking Study: April 2003 Update* (Cincinnati: Council for Marketing & Opinion Research, 2003).

65+	158	16
18-24	85	9
25-34	149	15
35-54	433	44
55-69	211	22
70+	107	11
Did not answer age	15	--
Less than high school	48	5
High school graduate	169	17
Some college	315	32
College graduate+	464	47
Did not answer education	4	--
White	758	77
Hispanic	79	8
African-American	108	11
Asian/Pacific	20	2
Other/mixed	20	2
Did not answer race	16	--
Roman Catholic	268	27
Protestant	497	50
Jewish	30	3
Muslim	7	1
Other (religion)	192	19
Did not answer religion	6	--
Born-Again	276	56
Not Born-Again	221	45
Parent of child under 17	334	34
Not parent of child under 17	663	67
Married	559	56
Single, never married	227	23
Divorced/widowed/separated	188	19
Civil union/domestic partnership	19	2
Less than \$15,000	86	10
\$15,000-\$24,999	82	9
\$25,000-\$34,999	116	13
\$35,000-\$49,999	155	18
\$50,000-\$74,999	179	21
\$75,000 or more	252	29
Did not answer income	129	--
Male	480	48
Female	520	52



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