

NORTHERN UGANDA:

HIDDEN WAR, MASSIVE SUFFERING ANOTHER WHITE PEOPLE'S WAR FOR OIL

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On May 18, 2007, ABC news broke a hidden story about horrors in Uganda, and then they censored and deleted reader's comments. ABC has deleted an unknown number of comments by people horrified by the atrocities who only want to bring the truth to light and help stop the horrible suffering. Some forty comments were deleted on the night of May 20 alone. What are ABC's real motives? From Darfur to Congo to Ethiopia to Somalia to Kenya—who or what is ripping apart this region of Africa?

On May 18, 2007, ABC News “The Blotter” posted a story titled “Secret Photos Reveal New African Horrors.” The short ABC web clip describes in unusual candor—for ABC—the hidden war and horrors in Northern Uganda. The title suggests that it is a “new” conflict, and yet another “African” conflict. Is ABC sincere in their reporting? Or is this just another propaganda campaign narrowly controlled to serve private profits?

“Documentary filmmakers in Uganda were subjected to intimidation and coercion and were the victims of break-ins while attempting to film what a former U.N. official calls “Uganda’s secret genocide” in the northern part of that country,” the ABC Blotter report begins. “The filmmakers say these threats came from Ugandan officials and secret intelligence organizations there.”

The story goes on to describe how an American film crew was reportedly robbed of footage and equipment as the photographers documented the suffering of millions of people, and the role of the Ugandan People’s Defense Forces (UPDF) and Ugandan government officials in perpetrating massive atrocities, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The ABC report calls it “Uganda’s Secret Genocide,” a remarkable revelation in a world attuned only to the crisis in Darfur, Sudan, a place not so far away from Northern Uganda, and one involving some of the same combatants.

“The Ugandan government says it created refugee camps,” ABC reported, “for displaced people who were victims of a violent, ongoing civil conflict with a rebel group from the north called the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).”

Like Somalia and eastern Congo, the wars in Darfur and Northern Uganda are prosecuted for the same reasons: petroleum, gold, land—and other natural resources. There is money to be made, indeed, and the Uganda government is depopulating the land to make it easier. But this has been going on for years. Out of sight, out of mind. But absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Spotlight War, Hidden War

While the war in Darfur is always described as a *genocide* by Arabs against black Africans—and never a “war” by competing factions—the war in Northern Uganda is almost never described at all. This is also true of the multiple fangs of conflict in Ethiopia, where the U.S. backed government of Meles Zenawi is committing genocide against indigenous people, the Anuak minority and others—but it’s completely out of the Western news. The AID for ARMS scandal in Ethiopia has seen hundreds of millions of dollars of weaponry purchased—and used—by AID dollars. This is a country of starvation, drought, and famine—and now the largest standing military in Africa, serving the interests of the Pentagon. The United Nations, UNICEF, everyone is silent.

The Darfur story receives massive press, but the Northern Uganda story has been in complete media whiteout. Like the millions of people at risk today in Somalia, where hundreds of thousands of refugees are on the move today due to a U.S. backed insurgency there, the war in Northern Uganda is off the agenda. The Darfur story has been running for about five years—an outrage where nothing happens to stop it—while the Uganda conflict has been running for more than fifteen years.

What’s the hidden agenda? Whose hidden agenda is it?

In the mid-1980’s today’s President of Uganda Yoweri Museveni seized power in a bloody conflict. Fighting alongside Museveni were Tutsi soldiers who would later go on to overthrow the government of Rwanda, in a low-intensity conflict that began in October 1990, and culminated in the spectacle of the Rwanda genocide of 1994. Powerful corporate, intelligence and defense interests from the United States backed both insurgencies.

Museveni also sent his bloodthirsty troops into Congo. Millions of innocent people died under Ugandan occupation, while Museveni and his gang plundered Congo’s natural resources, raped women and whipped up killing fields scattered with skeletons.

But Museveni is someone’s “Golden Boy,” just like Uganda was always Britain’s “Pearl of Africa.”

President Yoweri Museveni has controlled Uganda for more than 20 years in a one-party dictatorship friendly to powerful corporate interests predominantly from the United States, Britain and Israel.

But years ago, up in the north of Uganda, the Museveni government herded the minority Acholi people into forced settlements—they called then “refugee” camps—under the claim that the government was providing protection from rebel forces supposedly hostile to the Museveni government. They became death camps, and they are death camps still.

For years Museveni's low-intensity war against the Acholi people has waged on, completely out of sight, while the army of Joseph Kony—the evil Christian forces of the Lord's resistance Army—was the only party ever accused of anything. The LRA is purported to be a rebel army opposed to the Museveni regime, but this is a convenient ruse that serves the dictates of a permanent warfare economy.

The Lord's Resistance Army

A perfect example of the skewed Western racist reportage is the Vanity Fair feature article of January 2006. Here we have popular writer Christopher Hitchens—the once left wing (sic) Nation magazine writer who went right wing after September 11—telling us a tall tale as if the only culprits—and even the only combatants—were the fanatical Lord's Resistance Army. The Hitchen's story, "Childhood's End," appeared in the posh Conde Nast publication Vanity Fair, which almost never runs anything on Africa by anyone other than Hitchens. (The Vanity Fair editors once returned a query letter to this author stating that Hitchens was their expert on Africa.)

"For 19 years, Joseph Kony has been enslaving, torturing, raping, and murdering Ugandan children," Hitchens began, "many of whom have become soldiers for his 'Lord's Resistance Army,' going on to torture, rape, and kill other children. The author exposes the vicious insanity—and cynical politics—behind one of Africa's greatest nightmares."

But the very same enslaving, torturing, raping, and murdering have been policy—from the highest officials—by UPDF soldiers against innocent people in Congo, Sudan and Uganda.

"These children are not running toward Jordan and the Lord," Hitchens also wrote, putting an African tribal face on the conflict, "they are running for their lives from the 'Lord's Resistance Army' (L.R.A.). This grotesque, zombie-like militia, which has abducted, enslaved, and brainwashed more than 20,000 children, is a kind of Christian Khmer Rouge and has for the past 19 years set a standard of cruelty and ruthlessness that—even in a region with a living memory of Idi Amin—has the power to strike the most vivid terror right into the heart and the other viscera."

"My Acholi friends look to the days of Idi Amin as 'the good old days,' wrote human rights activist Lucy Larom of the Campaign to End Genocide in Uganda (CEGUN). Several of Larom's posts to the ABC Blotter site were also removed or sanitized. "Things were better then. At least in my understanding individuals were targeted, not a whole population. Or maybe because death was quick, relatively speaking. Not the prolonged year by year kind of suffering that has caused a whole new concept and reality to creep into the Acholi consciousness: suicide, one of the leading causes of death in the camps among women."

Why does Joseph Kony get so much attention? Because he's a terrorist? Because he's a fanatical Christian? Maybe. Mostly because he is reported to be an ally of the Islamic government—read Islamic fundamentalist terrorists—running the genocide show in Sudan.

Currents of Holy War

“Joseph Kony and four other leaders of the L.R.A. were named in the first arrest warrants ever issued by the new International Criminal Court (I.C.C.),” wrote Christopher Hitchens, in the one paragraph in the entire Vanity Fair feature that has any ring of truth about it. “If that sounds like progress to you, then consider this. The whereabouts of Kony are already known: he openly uses a satellite phone from a base across the Ugandan border in southern Sudan.”

Kony also has direct ties to people in Washington. In 2006, while working in northeastern Congo in 2006, I spoke with a special intelligence investigator sent in by the United Nations Secretary General and tasked with finding and negotiating with Joseph Kony. When Washington got wind of it, they intervened, and blocked the negotiations, and the investigator was called off.

“Like the United States, Sudan is not a signatory to the treaty that set up the I.C.C.,” Christopher Hitchens went on to explain. “And it has sponsored the L.R.A. because the Ugandan government—which *is* an I.C.C. signatory—has helped the people of southern Sudan fight against the theocracy in Khartoum, the same theocracy that has been sponsoring the genocide against Muslim black Africans in Darfur.”

And so this is a remarkable admission by Christopher Hitchens: the Ugandan government has helped the people of southern Sudan fight against Khartoum. Of course, the Hitchen’s comment is a gross understatement. Uganda’s clandestine support for the people of South Sudan—the Sudan People’s Liberation Army—and the UPDF/SPLA alliance with the Pentagon and private military companies is something that is equally unreported and hidden, especially by the purveyors of the genocide line on Darfur. The UPDF and SPLA, with their foreign backers, have perpetrated massacres and war crimes using the human population as shields.

(See: keith harmon snow, Oil in Darfur? Covert Ops in Somalia? The New, Old, Humanitarian Warfare in Africa, <www.allthingspass.com/journalism.php?catid=24>.

Christopher Hitchens never gets into the reasons for the conflict, and instead of telling the truth about the natural resources that might be up for grab, or the depth of foreign intervention, or the involvement of companies like Bechtel, for example—whose subsidiary Nexant is part of the consortium of corporations building a massive oil pipeline across Uganda and Kenya—instead we find Hitchens spewing the standard litany of racist excuses for Africa’s hopeless plight. This could not possibly have anything to do with white people, according to Hitchens, and the posh luxury wasteland of Vanity Fair, instead it must be that the problems in Uganda are the “decades of war and famine and tyranny and Ebola and West Nile fever and AIDS.”

Christopher Hitchens is a peripheral player in the propaganda campaign to shield the Museveni regime however. In fact, as Hitchens notes in the Vanity Fair text, he traveled in Northern Uganda to do his Lord’s Resistance Army story with the assistance of John Prendergast of the International Crises Group. It’s likely that the Ugandan government provided security for the Hitchens/Prendergast mission. The International Crises group is a flak organization pursuing an aggressive U.S. foreign policy, premised on predatory capitalism and neoliberal economics, behind a face of “humanitarian” concern. On the ICG board, for example, are some of the world’s leading military strategists. ICG directors include former Supreme Allied Commander General Wesley Clark; former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski; and Thomas Pickering, formerly

special assistant to Henry Kissinger, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs in the Clinton White House, and now a Boeing Corporation executive.

Prendergast has achieved some recent notoriety by authoring a book about the Darfur crises with Don Cheadle, the Hollywood actor who starred in Hotel Rwanda. But John Prendergast's role in manipulating world consciousness around war and genocide must be situated not in the "humanitarian" front that the ICG gives him, but in his role as National Security Council during the Clinton Administration. In 1997 he met frequently with other intelligence officials to organize the fall of the rogue Islamic state of Sudan. One event came under the euphemistic title: "Religion, Nationalism and Peace in Sudan" (www.usip.org/religionpeace/rehr/sudanconf/panel6.html). Speakers included John Prendergast and Roger Winter. Prendergast's discussions—published in unclassified documents—make it clear that economic and military pressure was being applied from all directions. This is what we are seeing now: the culmination of a multi-pronged strategy to dismember Sudan. Prendergast's ties to the classified arena are unknown to us. And who is Roger Winter? He helped the Rwanda Patriotic Front overthrow the government of Rwanda, beginning as early as 1988, backed by the U.S. and U.K., using bases and logistical support, and with military advisers and troops, from Museveni and the Uganda People's Defense Forces. Roger Winter is today running USAID programs in Sudan. Pentagon documents that discuss the U.S. military's Africa Command, AFRICOM, indicate that USAID likely has some role as intelligence offshoot of the Pentagon.

According to the investigations of the United Nations and the humanitarian law work of lawyer Karen Parker, the war in Uganda involves massive rapes, killing, tortures, and extrajudicial executions as a policy by the Ugandan military. Some 1.3 million people have been displaced in the Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts of northern Uganda. There are over 73 camps with from 1000 to 50,000 people in them, all forcibly displaced by UPDF soldiers, with over 350,000 people out of some 400,000 people displaced from the Gulu district alone. Forced displacements occurred after UPDF bombed, and burned Acholiland villages, and beat, killed, raped and threatened people into moving. Some of the displacements occurred prior to 1993, but the most recent round of forced displacements began in 1996 and peaked in the 2002-2005 time frame. The United Nations and World Food Program in 2006 classified Northern Uganda as a severe humanitarian emergency due to the disease and death occurring in the camps. The Ugandan government claims to provide security for the camps but the camps are raided at will by the Lord's Resistance Army and, instead of security in any case, UPDF forces pursue terrorism against the people of the camps. (Karen Parker, Forced Displacement in Northern Uganda, United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, <http://www.webcom.com/hrin/parker/sub01wsu.html>).

Below is the map of petroleum concessions controlled by Tullow Oil, whose subsidiaries include Hardman Resources and whose partners include Heritage Oil and Gas. The map is from a Tullow Oil company document. Please see additional maps of regional oil concessions provided through links below.



The ABC's of War in Uganda

And so we have this new ABC expose, which takes quite a different line. Now we find ABC revealing the true story, with a little obvious hesitation, and a lot of deception of its own, but reporting, nonetheless, that more than 1500 indigenous Acholi people are dying every week. ABC even cites a recent report about Northern Uganda by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), claiming that “approximately 1.2 million internally displaced persons—

IDPs—reside in overcrowded camps where mortality rates remain above emergency levels, largely as a result of inadequate water availability, poor sanitary conditions, and the spread of diseases.”

“It’s a huge conspiracy of silence about the genocide which has been committed in northern Uganda,” ABC quotes Olara A. Otunnu, the former U.N. undersecretary-general and special representative for children and armed conflict, to say.

But if ABC is interested in exposing the truth, why have they censored so many of the comments from readers of the story? Hundreds of comments were deleted on the night of May 20, and hundreds more were deleted or blocked before and since.

Perhaps the answer can be found in the comments made by those whose posts were deleted. Here are some, the comments of this writer, which were copied by another ABC reader (before ABC found and deleted them) and sent back to their source.

The posts were made with a sense of hope, and trust, that ABC was concerned about the people of Uganda, and interested in doing the right thing.

First post to ABC Blotter:

Posted by: keith harmon snow | May 20, 2007 11:50:49 PM

My deepest respect to the people who have taken it upon themselves to expose this nasty little secret kept by Uganda and its military allies, the United States, Britain and Israel.

First of all, it is about oil. It is also about gold, and if I look into it I assure you I will find other resources up for grabs. The oil concessions stretch along the border with Congo from the North Kivu Province, under Lake Albert—the Semliki basin—and up into northern Uganda.

The companies involved in exploiting the oil include HARDMAN and HERITAGE OIL & GAS. The Heritage connection is a guy named Tony Buckingham, who also is notable for his mercenary companies like SANDLINE INTERNATIONAL, and another nasty firm—BRANCH ENERGY. The oil concessions stretch from near the Rwanda border to the Red Sea—right smack through Darfur. You can see the oil maps on my web site. You can also search on HERITAGE—Uganda.

The U.S. is very close with Uganda, and ships in military equipment—paid for with AID and DEVELOPMENT funds—through Entebbe, an airbase [Uganda] refurbished by the U.S. Weapons and logistics and training go for the secret U.S. war in Sudan—DARFUR—and in Congo and, now, in Somalia. There are at least 2000 UPDF—UGANDA PEOPLES DEFENSE FORCES—in Somalia today prosecuting the war [there] with U.S. backing.

Anyone who claims that U.S. troops if they got involved would end up dead—what a bunch of nonsense. First of all, the Lords Resistance Army is not the main problem here it is the UPDF—as with their criminal operations looting Congo and backing the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army and now other factions in the war for Darfur. These are not in any sense “tribal” conflicts. Someone in

the U.S. has deep ties to Joseph Kony and the LRA, and if they wanted this guy dead he would be dead long ago.

There are LRA agents in Washington connected at the highest levels. As long as Museveni—perhaps the worlds leading terrorist and war criminal today—right up there with his pal Paul Kagame from Rwanda—has these so-called ‘rebel’ so-called ‘enemies’ on its borders, like the ADF [Alliance of Democratic Forces] and LRA—then the Uganda government can continue to scream bloody murder “we need help” and continue to get AID, which is turned into weapons in what may be the world’s largest AID for ARMS scandal *after* the AID for ARMS scandal in Ethiopia.

This is an open policy of depopulation, the elimination of large numbers of human beings, as policy, to make way for resource extraction to benefit multinational corporations. It is an active policy intended to perpetuate despair, disease and death, and it is not reported because:

[1] The campaign of the day is DARFUR—a campaign meant to propagandize the U.S. and U.K. public into believing that we need to “stop genocide” and help those poor Africans;

[2] There are people in power who have knowingly made decisions to allow these people to be rounded up, herded into death camps, and allowed to die, or be killed;

[3] The U.S. is too close to Uganda militarily and economically.

Like DARFUR, this is all about resources, and it is a competition today between Republican and Democratic factions from the U.S., allied with their various internecine partners—multinationals, governments, intelligence agencies, so-called “humanitarian” organizations.

Israel is all over it.

It is all about money. Most important, to anyone reading this, there are easy answers, and there actions that can be taken, and it is clear that the world “community” does not wish to take any actions.

This is unconscionable. Any American who sees this and continues to live their life as they have—business as usual—is complicit in genocide. Of course, we are all complicit in genocide, and this is one of the most recent and ongoing examples [to be brought to light].

Somalia, Ethiopia, Congo, Sudan, Zimbabwe....

Please read about the criminal activities and relationships of the Uganda government in the journalism section of my web site.

Again, my highest respects to the people who are telling this story, and who are helping them to do it.

Blessings,

keith harmon snow

DELETED overnight by ABC web moderators.

Second post to ABC Blotter:

Posted by: keith harmon snow | May 21, 2007 12:15:09 AM

Additional clarification:

See the Heritage report, PAGE 13:

<http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/discover/dix71380.htm>

~ BLOCK 1 stretches well into northern Uganda near ARU, and is controlled by Heritage;

~ BLOCK 5 stretches further north and occupies a huge swath of the northwestern corner of Uganda to Gulu and is currently not yet claimed;

And that is partly why there is so much conflict here.

And these are only showing the concessions revealed through the Heritage/Turrow/Hardman documents. The northern regions of Uganda from Central to eastern Uganda include gold mining areas where the defense attaché of the British High Commission (Kampala) has inspected the gold samples personally, with South African mining experts (I have a photo showing this), and Branch Energy officials. Branch Energy is another Tony Buckingham mercenary mining firm with big interests in Uganda.

What other concessions or exploration is ongoing in Northern Uganda has not yet been exposed, although exploration is certainly underway.

For further background articles see:

<http://www.allthingspass.com/journalism.php?catid=24>

Two important oil concessions maps can be found here:

<http://www.allthingspass.com/uploads/pdf-163DARFUR%20OIL%20MAPS.pdf>

If you click on the above oil concessions link—the oil map is from the petroleum industry itself and was published 1996. Note the MASSIVE concessions in the Darfur region of Sudan and in the Lake Turkana regions of Kenya. Most likely there are other vast concessions stretching across northern Uganda that connect these to the concessions in the northwest. It may also be that there are newly discovered uranium and/or natural gas finds in this vast region.

The oil companies and Uganda government have ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTIONS of sharing the oil wealth with the people whose land the oil (gold, uranium, etc.) is under.

keith harmon snow

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See the ABC News Blotter story of May 18, 2007:

“Secret Photos Reveal New African Horrors”

http://blogs.abcnews.com/theblotter/2007/05/secret_photos_r.html

Send a message to ABC that their reportage and censorship violate freedom of speech, the journalism code of ethics, and the international covenants for the protection of human rights.

To educate your self and help your self understand the racism and deception of Conde Nast Group, Vanity Fair and its premier Africa reporter, Hitchens, see the standard claptrap on Northern Uganda in the Vanity Fair story:

“Childhood’s End”

<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2006/01/hitchens200601>