

June 2, 2006: Sudan: USCIRF Chair Cromartie to speak on CSIS panel

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Contact:

Anne Johnson, Communications Director, (202) 523-3240, ext. 27 WASHINGTON - U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) Chair Michael Cromartie will speak on a panel discussion at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) titled Consolidating Peace in Sudan on Monday, June 5, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. He will join Ibrahim Gambari, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Jendayi Frazer, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, as well as Francis Deng of Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and John Prendergast of the International Crisis Group. The session will discuss implementation of the North-South Comprehensive Peace Agreement, implications of the recently signed Darfur Agreement, and the way forward in ensuring security, humanitarian access, and consolidation of the peace. The Commission visited Sudan in January 2006 to assess the state of religious freedom and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended a two-decades-long civil war between the North and South. The Commission found that there have been significant delays and shortcomings in the CPA's implementation, raising questions regarding the sincerity of the commitment of the National Congress Party in the Government of National Unity. Moreover, the religious freedom and other human rights protections agreed to in the CPA and enshrined in Sudan's Interim National Constitution have yet to result in significant changes in practice in government-controlled areas of the North. In March, the Commission was joined by Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA), and Congressman Donald M. Payne (D-NJ) at a press conference on Capitol Hill for the release of the Commission's Policy Focus on Sudan, which includes recommendations for U.S. policy as a result of the findings from the Commission's visit. At that press conference, Congressman Frank Wolf and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi called for a special envoy to be appointed to coordinate U.S. efforts on achieving implementation of the CPA and ending atrocities in Darfur. The Commission supports this proposal, as do 119 members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans. The Commission believes that the difficult task of keeping Sudan on track toward a comprehensive and permanent peace requires the full attention of an envoy-one with national prominence and wholehearted Administration support. Sudan is a strategic nation where U.S. influence has already made a difference and should continue to do so. Toward that end, in his presentation at CSIS on June 5, USCIRF Chair Cromartie will call attention to the Commission's recommendations for U.S. policy

Michael Cromartie, Chair

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