

Promoting Religious Freedom During the Campaign Against Terrorism": Hon. Susan E. Rice Prepared Testimony

"Africa and the War on Global Terrorism" November 27, 2001 Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to testify today before your Commission. Since September 11, I cannot count the number of people who have said to me: "What a shame that Africa will now get fewer resources and zero attention in Washington." I certainly acknowledge the conventional wisdom underlying this sentiment. Moreover, I concede that, if past is prologue, this will likely be the case. Yet, no outcome would be more shortsighted and indeed more dangerous -- if we are not merely to fight but, ultimately, to win the global war on terror. We should not and we cannot condemn Africa to the far reaches of our global campaign. We should not and we cannot see Africa as separate from our comprehensive and long-term war against terror. Africa: The Soft Under-Belly What has Africa got to do with al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, terrorist finance networks, even weapons of mass destruction? Unfortunately, everything. Africa is the world's soft under-belly for global terrorism. As became painfully obvious even to casual observers after the bombings of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, terrorism directed against the United States is alive and well in Africa. Al-Qaeda and other terrorist cells are active throughout East, Southern and West Africa, not to mention in North Africa. These organizations hide throughout Africa. They plan, finance, train for and execute terrorist operations in many parts of Africa, not just Sudan and Somalia. They seek uranium, chemical weapons components and the knowledge of renegade nuclear, chemical and biological weapons experts from Libya to South Africa. Terrorist organizations take advantage of Africa's porous borders, weak law enforcement and security services and nascent judicial institutions to move men, weapons and money around the globe. They take advantage of poor, disillusioned populations, often with religious or ethnic grievances, to recruit for their jihad against the civilized world. Terrorist networks are exploiting Africa thoroughly and rapidly. In the process, they directly threaten our national security. The Appropriate American Response: Two Missing Links What are we doing about it? Not nearly enough. President Bush has, in my opinion, defined well the global nature of the threat we face and the necessity of a comprehensive, long-term response. He has rightly coupled the imperative of robust military action with energetic efforts to build an effective global coalition, to improve our intelligence collection, to seize the terrorists' assets, to defend the homeland, and to use the full weight of law enforcement in the U.S. and around the world to disrupt, apprehend and prosecute terrorists and their organizations. But two critical pieces are missing from our comprehensive strategy. Both are defensive. One is shorter term. The other is long term. First and most immediately, we must help those countries in Africa and elsewhere that have the will to cooperate with us in the war on terror but lack the means. It's not sufficient to say simply to the world: "you are either with us or against us." Or "we want action". There are plenty of countries that cannot act to defend their own citizens from terror, much less America's citizens. Recall that Kenya and Tanzania lost over two hundred of their own dead and suffered more than 5,000 casualties. Recall too the difficulty the United States is having in defending our homeland from external and, perhaps, internal threats. And then, imagine how hard it must be for impoverished countries, with fragile or non-existent democratic institutions, deficient infrastructure, widespread corruption and great social distress to take the steps they must to protect their citizens and be effective partners for the U.S. in the war on terror. I was pleased to hear President Bush say in his speech to the UN General Assembly that we would help such countries. But we do not seem yet to have in place a strategy to do so. And we certainly have not set aside the resources to implement such a strategy. In the wake of the East Africa Embassy bombings, the Clinton Administration finalized the first ever continent-wide strategy to combat crime, terrorism and narcotics flows in Africa. We made available for the first time funds to establish the International Law Enforcement Academy for Southern Africa (ILEA). Africa received for the first time an annual share of the State Department's global anti-crime, counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism budgets. It was a start, but a modest start. And in the global battle we now face against terrorism, these resources are woefully inadequate. It is imperative that we invest tens of millions of dollars annually in helping build counter-crime and counter-terrorism capacity in a large number of African countries. We must help them take the necessary steps to control their borders, improve intelligence collection, strengthen law enforcement and security services and build effective, transparent judicial institutions. We need to invest not only in big countries, like Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Africa, but over time throughout the continent, since the threat is continental in scope. From Cote D'Ivoire and Mauritania to Mozambique, from Zambia to Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia, we must put our money where our mouths are. And we must begin to do so now. Second, over the longer term, we have to drain the swamps where the terrorists breed. Many of these are in the Middle East and South and Central Asia. But many are also in Africa today and, potentially, in the Caribbean and Latin America tomorrow. Islam is a large and fast growing religion in Africa. That in itself is not a concern. But the fact that some of Islam's most radical and anti-American adherents are increasingly active from South Africa to Sudan, from Nigeria to Algeria should be of great concern to us. Much of Africa is a veritable incubator for the foot soldiers of terrorism. Its poor, overwhelmingly young, disaffected, unhealthy and under-educated populations often have no stake in government, no faith in the future and harbor an easily exploitable discontent with the status quo. For such people, in such places, nihilism is as natural a response to their circumstances as self-help. Violence and crime may be at least as attractive as hard work. Perhaps that is part of the reason why we have seen an increase in recent years in the number of African nationals engaged in international terrorism. These are the swamps we must drain. We must do so for the cold, hard reason that to do otherwise, we place our national security at further and more permanent risk. We must do so not for liberal, humanitarian or moral reasons, but out of realpolitik recognition that our long-term security depends on it. To drain these swamps, we must reduce this burgeoning hostility and address its sources. We must view it as our fight, not just the developing world's, to close the gaps between rich and poor. It must be our fight, not just Africa's, to educate the uneducated, prevent and treat infectious

diseases especially HIV/AIDS, to increase trade, investment and growth, to fight corruption, as well as to promote greater respect for human rights and strengthen democratic institutions. Without progress on these fronts throughout the developing world, we should expect bin Laden and future such enemies to find a growing constituency for their radical form of Islam, whose chief tenet is hatred of America and the civilized world. Moreover, we must recognize that regimes lacking legitimacy and failed states are convenient safe havens as well as breeding grounds for terrorists. If we are serious about our anti-terrorism commitment, whether we like it or not, the U.S. must become more rather than less engaged in the difficult tasks of peacemaking, peacekeeping and national reconstruction - from the Great Lakes to Sierra Leone, from Liberia to Sudan and Somalia. We must also find effective ways to secure Africa's vast natural resources - its diamonds, cobalt, uranium, oil, timber, coltan, its gold - so they do not provide currency for the world's terrorists. Fighting these battles will not be swift or cheap. America, leading our partners in the developed world, both in the public and private sectors, will have to invest on a scale previously inconceivable, if we are to defend ourselves against this pervasive threat. We will have to open our markets completely to goods and services from the developing world, provide much more trade and investment financing, bridge the digital divide, increase assistance for education (especially for girls), build necessary health infrastructure and treat the infected, invest greater resources in debt relief and in finding a vaccine for HIV/AIDS. We will also have to invest in bolstering democratic institutions and civil society so that we foster political cultures in which individual human beings are valued and in which religious freedom and other human rights are respected. In short, we will have to pay the price, billions and billions, to help lift the peoples of Africa and other under-developed regions out of poverty, political and social injustice, and, thus, despair. If we do not, we will reap the harvest of a disaffected generation's hostility and growing anti-Americanism - from the Middle East to Central and South Asia and, indeed, to Africa. It goes without saying that the United States cannot do this alone. Nor could together all the developed countries on earth. African peoples and African governments will have to provide the leadership, the transparency, the will, and the commitment to forge a better future. Without this, all well-intentioned efforts will fail. But with mutual commitment and serious, sustained investment, we can achieve mutual security and, eventually, even mutual prosperity. Unfortunately, these are by necessity budget-busting times. It's not enough to ramp up spending, as we are and we must, for defense and intelligence. We must also dramatically increase resources in the Foreign Operations accounts to help would-be partners in Africa and elsewhere in the world fight with us side-by-side in the war on terror. The Foreign Operations budget is all but final and, regrettably, it is business as usual - almost a straight-line appropriation. At the end of the day, Pakistan will get supplemental resources and therefore fare better than last year, but much of the rest of the world will not. And Africa, after several years of progressively increasing resources under President Clinton, will predictably and shortsightedly, get less than last year. Now is the time to reverse that trend. We cannot realistically hope to win a truly comprehensive, global war on terrorism without substantial additional Foreign Operations resources. If we are going to fight this war big, we must also fight it smart. Sudan We must also deal with the unique challenges posed by Sudan. Sudan has been an active and aggressive state sponsor of terrorism. It has been for many years the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa that poses a direct threat to U.S. national security. As evidenced by recent bombing by GOS forces of a WFP food distribution center in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan continues to be one of the worst abusers of human rights on the planet. They support the enslavement of their own citizens, bomb regularly innocent civilians, persecute people for their religious beliefs and prosecute one of the deadliest and long-standing wars on earth. Sudan is also notorious for saying one thing and doing quite another. But suddenly and rapidly in the wake of September 11, according to Administration officials, Sudan has begun meaningful cooperation with the U.S. on terrorism. Good. Fear, in this case of more American military strikes, can be a great motivator. But can it be a converter? Time will tell. If Sudan indeed provides meaningful, comprehensive and sustained cooperation to the United States in the war on terrorism, we ought to acknowledge it. We cannot forget Sudan's past role in plots to destroy American people and interests, but we can seize all valuable assistance in our current battle. Yet given its recent past, Sudan still has a long way to go if it is to become a credible member in good standing of the global coalition against terrorism. To achieve such standing, Sudan must detain, offer for interrogation and, if requested, render to the U.S. or responsible partners all suspected terrorists within its borders. Sudan must share all intelligence on terrorist networks and activities, past and present. It must freeze the assets and shut down the businesses, NGOs and charities that provide financial life-lines to all U.S.-designated terrorist organizations active in Sudan, not just Al-Qaeda. Sudan must close down all terrorist training camps and allow them to be inspected on a random basis. It must crack down on the loose issuance of entry visas and abuse of its passports. And Sudan must halt the mobilization for war in the South on the basis of "jihad." If Sudan falls short on any of these key criteria, it should be reminded of President Bush's promise to go after unreconstructed state sponsors of terrorism the way we have gone after the Taliban. Let us not forget that, in the current context, Sudan needs to cooperate with us more than we need its cooperation. Moreover, and very importantly, we need to separate the issues of potential Sudanese cooperation on terrorism from our longstanding objections to Sudan's human rights abuses, its brutal prosecution of the civil war, its use of humanitarian assistance as a weapon of war, and its efforts to destabilize neighboring states. The Administration must continue to make plain to Sudan that cooperation on terrorism will not afford it a "get out of jail free" card on human rights or any other issue. We must hold the Government of Sudan's feet to the fire, stressing that there can be no improvement in the overall bilateral relationship, including no lifting of U.S. sanctions, until Sudan halts its egregious human rights abuses (most notably slavery, aerial bombardment of civilian targets and religious persecution) and compromises sufficiently to achieve a just peace on the basis of respect for the human rights of each of its citizens, whether Arab or African, Christian or Muslim. If Sudan is genuinely interested in a substantially improved relationship with the U.S., as opposed simply to avoiding more U.S. military strikes, then the U.S. may now face an unprecedented opportunity to pressure the GOS more effectively to change fundamentally its behavior. Personally, I doubt Sudan is so motivated at present. I'd be delighted to be wrong on this, but I'll be surprised if I am. In any event, the U.S. ought to continue to press Sudan on these issues now as hard as ever. Additionally, we should give

no comfort to Sudan that, absent such fundamental changes in its policies and practices, the U.S. posture will shift (except on terrorism issues, as may be warranted by potential Sudanese cooperation). Unfortunately, the Administration's continued efforts to stall Congressional action on the Sudan Peace Act provide Khartoum with just such comfort. In this context, Khartoum is all but certain to pocket the appeasement without making any meaningful or sustained changes on human rights, the peace process or humanitarian access. Therefore, we ought to maintain, and indeed, increase the pressure on Sudan to change fundamentally its behavior. We ought not to lift our bilateral sanctions. We ought to pass the Sudan Peace Act, in its toughest form. And we ought not to alter any fundamentals of our bilateral relationship unless and until Sudan first demonstrates a conversion in deeds, not just words. Commissioners, thank you for your interest and attention. I look forward to your questions.