

Ivar A. Iversen

Foreign Policy in God's Name

Evangelical influence on US policy
towards Sudan



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Foreign Policy in God's Name

Evangelical influence on U.S. policy towards Sudan

abstract

One in four Americans call themselves evangelicals, and these conservative Protestants have been at the center of American domestic politics for years.

But less well documented is their impact on U.S. foreign policy. Religious conservatives claim they are the reason why President George W. Bush focused increasingly on foreign aid to Africa, religious persecution and human trafficking

This study investigates in detail the case of U.S. peace-making in Sudan. Following a brief discussion of the relationship between religion and politics in the U.S., it describes how a major grassroots coalition for Southern Sudan was built by religious conservatives in the late 1990s, and how this coalition persuaded President Bush to get involved in the peace process between North and South Sudan. This involvement was pivotal in securing the peace deal in 2005, which ended Africa's most persistent civil war.

Pressure from religious conservatives was the main reason why Bush got involved in Sudan. Religious conservatives shaped the U.S. policy agenda, but not the policy substance once the administration had become involved, the paper concludes. Nevertheless, religious conservatives are a group which needs to be taken into consideration when trying to understand U.S. foreign policy in recent years.

Apart from academic literature, this paper is also based on first-hand interviews with leading religious conservative policy-makers in Washington D.C.

KEYWORDS: US foreign policy, religion, interest groups, Sudan, peace process

Introduction and background¹

Evangelical Christians in America face a historic opportunity. We make up fully one quarter of all voters in the most powerful nation in history. Never before has God given American evangelicals such an awesome opportunity to shape public policy in ways that could contribute to the well-being of the entire world. Disengagement is not an option. We must seek God's face for biblical faithfulness and abundant wisdom to rise to this unique challenge.

– *Opening words from “For the Health of the Nation”, policy document adopted by National Association of Evangelicals on October 7, 2004.*

Since the late 1960s, religious conservatives have been fuelling the domestic political debate on issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage and stem-cell research in the United States. But less well documented is that since the mid 1990s the same groups have also become increasingly visible in the field of foreign policy. Faith-based lobbyists led by evangelical Christians claim they are the main reason why religious freedom legislation has been passed by Congress, why President Bush has increased the aid budget to Africa by 67 percent, and why the United States continues to be Israel's strongest ally, to mention just a few examples. According to the U.S. foreign-policy scholar Walter Russell Mead at The Council on Foreign Relations, “the recent surge in the number and the power of evangelicals is recasting the country's political scene – with dramatic implications for foreign policy.”² Mead's cover story “God's Country?” in *Foreign Affairs* is a recent example of a

1 This article is an edited version of a master's thesis in political science submitted to the University of Oslo in May 2007. A more thorough discussion on theory and methodology can be found in this thesis. Thank you to my tutor Svein Melby (autumn 2006/spring 2007) for guidance on the thesis; as well as Johannes Rø, Anders Romarheim, Michael Mayer, Olof Kronvall, Jostein Askim and Birgitte Iversen for giving feedback and reading through drafts; plus two anonymous reviewers for valuable remarks as the thesis was edited into this article.

growing corpus of scholarly work recognizing the influence of religious conservatives in U.S. foreign policy-making, and the fact that this influence extends beyond just abortion and Israel.³ Although Mead's claim is at least in part a prediction of evangelical influence in years to come, he also refers to several cases when evangelicals are said to have already altered U.S. policy priorities, such as the peace treaty that ended twenty-three years of civil war between Northern and Southern Sudan in 2005. "Thanks to evangelical pressure, (...) the [United States] has led the fight to end Sudan's wars," Mead claims.⁴

Are Mead's claims true? Has the recasting of the religious landscape in the U.S. altered the country's foreign policy? And is this evident in U.S. policy towards Sudan? These questions will be discussed in this article. A number of studies have emphasized the Bush administration's deep involvement in the Sudanese peace process as an example of the influence of religious conservative lobby groups on the administration's policies.⁵ But none of these has studied in detail the influence of such groups on the policy-making process.⁶ The aim of the following case study which looks into the evangelical influence on U.S. Sudan policy is: 1) to shed light on how these conservative religious groups worked to influence policy in this particular case; 2) to use the case study to make generalizations about the evangelical influence on U.S. foreign policy; and 3) to peek into the "black box" of foreign policy to discuss how domestic politics influences foreign policy. But first, some background in brief will be presented about the role of religion in American politics, the rise and recent revival of the evangelical movement and how this movement in recent years has become an influential foreign-policy pressure group.

2 Walter Russell Mead, "God's Country", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 5 (2006): 24–43. The quote is taken from the summary of Mead's article on Foreign Affairs' web page [online 1 Dec 2006].

3 Elliott Abrams, ed., *The Influence of Faith. Religious Groups and US Foreign Policy* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Allen D. Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children. The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004); Elizabeth Castelli, "Praying for the Persecuted Church: US Christian Activism in the Global Arena", *Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2005): 321–351; Martin Durham, "Evangelical Protestantism and Foreign Policy in the United States after September 11", *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 38, no. 2 (2004): 145–158; Dan Gilgoff, *The Jesus Machine. How James Dobson, Focus on the Family, and Evangelical America are Winning the Culture War* (New York: St. Martins Press, 2007), pp. 268– 282; William Martin, "The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy", *Foreign Policy*, no. 114 (1999): 66– 80; Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations. The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-first Century*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Although not widely covered, mainstream US media has noted this phenomenon in recent years as well.

4 Mead, "God's Country": 38.

Religion and politics in the United States

The United States is by far the most religious of the world's developed nations. Surveys show that 85–90 percent of all Americans say they believe in God. Around 70 percent are members of a church or synagogue, and around 40 percent attend religious services every week – all numbers far beyond most Western European nations.⁷ Christianity is easily the largest and most influential religion, and Protestantism is the largest denomination.

The United States was born of religious zeal, and religion has greatly influenced politics ever since the first Puritan refugees landed on American shores in the 1600s. In the 1730s and 1740s, the religious revivalist movement inspired the break from England a few years later. Religion was central to the battle over slavery in the 1850s: supporters of slavery used the Christian faith to pacify their slaves, but Christianity also became a vehicle for blacks to organize themselves politically and served as a motivation for the abolitionists. And since the 1960s, religiously motivated battles over issues such as abortion have dominated public debate.

There are many more examples. Indeed, studies into the relationship between religion and politics in American history seem to agree on one thing - religion shapes American culture in profound ways, including its political culture.⁸ The religious heritage from the Puritans and evangelicals helps explain the U.S.' self-perception of Americans being an exceptional people with a mission to lead the world, whether it be by spreading American values or acting as a moral example (from the "city upon a hill", as the Puritan leader John Winthrop put it). And it helps explain why all American presidents from George Washington to George W. Bush have drawn heavily on religious rhetoric in their speeches.⁹

Religion provides leaders with moral road-maps, guides them in the ethical aspects of decisions, and colors the way they view reality.¹⁰

5 "U.S. – Sudan – Caution, lobbies at work", *Africa Confidential*, vol. 42, no. 7 (2001); Dan Connell, "Sudan. Recasting U.S. Policy", *Foreign Policy in Focus Self-Determination Series*, vol. 5, no. 40 (2001); John C. Danforth, *Faith and Politics. How the "Moral Values" Debate Divides America and How to Move Forward Together* (New York: Viking, 2006); Peter Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

6 I have not come over any such studies, anyway. The only exception is a political scientist at Oklahoma University, Allen D. Hertzke. The problem with Hertzke's book *Freeing God's Children* is, however, that he openly admits being a sympathetic insider to the movement, and he does not provide a balanced judgment of the actual policy impact of the Sudan campaign.

7 Jeff Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics* (London: Pearson Longman, 1998).

8 Robert Booth Fowler and Allen D. Hertzke, *Religion and Politics in America. Faith, Culture and Strategic Choices* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995); Mark A. Noll, *A history of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992); Leo P. Ribuffo, "Religion in the History of U.S. Foreign Policy", in *The Influence of Faith ...*, ed. Elliott Abrams.

So there seems to be little doubt that religion has an indirect impact on politics through the realm of ideas. It is more difficult to prove whether religion or religious groups influence politics more directly, or when religious communities act as foreign-policy pressure groups. However, despite the historian of religion Leo P. Ribuffo's contention that "no major diplomatic decision has turned on religious issues alone", this has occurred several times during the history of the U.S..¹¹ One example is the Israel lobby. Ribuffo notes the swift recognition of Israel by the U.S. in 1948 as "a victory for one of the great grassroots lobbying efforts in American history".¹² And, according to a now (in)famous article by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt about the Israel lobby, "the thrust of U.S. policy in [the Middle East] derives almost entirely from domestic politics, and especially the activities of the 'Israel lobby'".¹³ This lobby consists of not only the Jewish community, but today also "includes prominent Christian evangelicals".¹⁴ The political influence of evangelicals is the subject of this study.

The rise, fall and revival of evangelicals

Evangelicalism is a branch of Protestantism that emphasizes a literal interpretation of the Bible, stresses the importance of converting as an adult (to "accept Christ" and to be "born again"); and evangelizes aggressively to convert non-believers.¹⁵ The evangelical movement first came into being in the early eighteenth century due to the efforts of preachers such as Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley and George Whitefield, and quickly became the dominant strain of Protestantism in Puritan New England, where its emphasis on simple yet fervent bible-based preaching seemed to have especially fertile ground.¹⁶ It remained the dominant religious force in the U.S. until the beginning of the twentieth century (its decline occurring somewhere between 1870–1920), when broad societal changes (the rise of Darwinism, general modernization and urbanization)

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- 9 John B. Judis, "The Chosen Nation. The Influence of Religion on U.S. Foreign Policy", *Carnegie Endowment Policy Brief*, no. 37 (2005); Gary Scott Smith, *Faith and the Presidency. From George Washington to George W. Bush*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
 - 10 Mark R. Amstutz, "Faith-based NGOs and U.S. Foreign Policy" in *The Influence of Faith ...*, ed. Elliott Abrams.
 - 11 Ribuffo, "Religion in the History of U.S. Foreign Policy", p. 21.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
 - 13 John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Israel Lobby", *London Review of Books*, vol. 28, no. 6 (23 March 2006).
 - 14 *Ibid.*
 - 15 Fowler and Hertzke, *Religion and Politics in America*, p. 14.
 - 16 This brief historical overview is based on George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991); Fowler and Hertzke, *Religion and Politics in America*; and Noll, *A history of Christianity ...*

led to a spiritual crisis and a split between religious modernizers and conservatives. The modernizers were willing to modify evangelical doctrines to remain credible in a modern age. The conservatives wanted to retain a literal belief in the doctrines of the Bible. By the 1920s, after the Scopes Trial, many of these conservatives were calling themselves fundamentalists and had by and large withdrawn from public and political life.¹⁷ Another branch of conservatives chose to stay within the mainline denominations. These were called “neo-evangelicals” (later just evangelicals).¹⁸ Today, the term “evangelical” is used on any Christian conservative enough to affirm the basic beliefs of the old nineteenth-century evangelicalism.¹⁹ “Evangelical” includes fundamentalists, who may be considered to be a militant subgroup of evangelicals – or, as the fundamentalist preacher Jerry Falwell likes to put it, “a fundamentalist is an evangelical who is angry about something.”²⁰

By the 1920s, evangelicals had practically disappeared from the radar screen, and their sudden re-emergence in the 1970s as a social and political force surprised most observers. Today, evangelicals are the most numerous and salient religious subgroup in the United States. Though the number of Christians has grown considerably in tandem with population growth since the 1960s, membership in mainline, liberal denominations has dropped sharply: from 29 to 22 million between 1960 and 2003.²¹ The drop in market share is even more dramatic. In 1960, 25 percent of all members of religious groups belonged to one of the seven leading Protestant denominations; by 2003, this had dropped to 15 percent.²² At the same time, the number of members of the main evangelical denominations has exploded. The largest, the Southern Baptist Convention, has gained more members than the main liberal denominations combined have lost. Furthermore, the number of evangelicals or born-again Christians within the mainline denominations has increased. Today, a majority of Protestants in the States define themselves as evangelicals and they constitute around one quarter of the total population of the country – some 75 million people.²³

17 John T. Scopes was a young high-school teacher in Tennessee, who was brought to trial by the state for breaking the antievolution law by teaching Darwinism in school. The case got enormous attention in the press, and the state ultimately lost.

18 In addition, a number of neo-evangelicals came from fundamentalist churches and organizations. In the years after the Scopes trial, they began to question the decision to withdraw from society, many of them influenced by Carl F. H. Henry, the early editor of *Christianity Today*, who had a profound influence on the neo-evangelical movement. See Carl F.H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1947).

19 Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism ...*, p. 4.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

21 Mead, “God’s Country”: 36.

22 *Ibid.*

What can explain this sudden and dramatic change in the religious landscape? On the surface, the rise of religious conservatism as a political force is a counter-revolution. Just as the first rise of fundamentalism was a reaction to the secularization of society in the late 1800s, the revival of the religious right in the 1960s started as a direct response to events such as the civil rights movement, the rise of a liberal counter-culture (visible above all in the protests against the Vietnam War) and the 1973 Supreme Court decision on abortion. Conservative churches promised certainty in times of uncertainty; clear, biblical answers to complex societal problems.²⁴ But to understand the rise of the Christian Right, one also has to take into account some predisposing circumstances in American religion, such as its “this-worldly” orientation (i.e. what you do in life matters, as opposed to fatalism), its emphasis on values and morality and its massive institutional resources. In the late 1960s, conservative church leaders, having built a strong organizational network in the previous decades, capitalized on their resources and centered around conservative radio networks, television stations, bible groups, think tanks and leadership networks.²⁵

It is important to note that the rise of the Christian Right has not only been a Protestant evangelical revival. In all denominations, there has been a shift from liberal to more conservative strains. The main religious divide in American religion today is no longer between Protestants and Catholics, but between liberals and conservatives within all denominations. Likewise, people’s political behavior is not predicted by their denomination, but by whether they are a religious modernist or a traditionalist.²⁶ Several different terms are used to describe the conservative branches of all beliefs. In this study, I shall from now on refrain from using the terms Christian Right and religious right, since these political terms do not fit all the groups I am studying. There are religious conservatives also on the left of American politics. Political activist and founder of the organization Sojourners, Jim Wallis, is a prominent example of a religious conservative who campaigns on issues traditionally associated with the political left in the U.S.²⁷ And several

23 Estimate made by Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, “American Evangelicals and Israel”, fact sheet, 15 April 2005 [online 2 Mar 2007]. But because evangelicals are found in all denominations and have a low degree of institutional identity, the estimates vary from 40 to 100 millions, depending on how the question is framed in surveys, and by which definition is used. Most estimates are in the upper range of this spectrum though.

24 Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism ...*, p. 105.

25 Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion. Society and Faith Since World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

26 John C. Green, “The American Religious Landscape and Political Attitudes. A Baseline for 2004”, survey report (Washington DC: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 9 November 2004) [online 21 Dec 2006].

27 Jim Wallis, *God’s Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It* (San Francisco: Harper, 2006).

of the evangelical foreign-policy campaigners label themselves centrists, not members of the Christian Right.²⁸ However, these political liberals and conservatives share a conservative religious belief, so terms such as religious conservatives and conservative Christians will be used alternately to describe the faith-based activists which I am studying. These terms cover evangelical Christians as well as the conservative Catholics and Jews within the coalition. Nevertheless, the revival of conservative Protestants (evangelicals) is the main focus of this thesis, and I shall also use the term evangelical when I describe evangelicals specifically.

It should be noted here that the term “evangelical” is contested within American Christianity as well. Adherents to mainline denominations such as the theologically liberal Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ECLA) also subscribe to the label.²⁹ However, I have chosen to retain the term “evangelical” and not, for instance, use “conservative evangelical”, as evangelical is a well established term in the literature from the field, and the evangelical groups which are the subject of this study use this term to describe themselves.³⁰

Religious conservatives expand their agenda

The impact of the shift towards more conservative religious beliefs is not hard to find in domestic politics in the United States. Political and legal battles over issues such as abortion, gay rights and stem-cell research have been a dominant part of the political landscape since the 1970s. A plethora of books analyzes these “culture wars”.³¹ But far less attention has been given to the Christian-conservative influence on foreign policy.³² One reason might be the impact of political realism, the belief that foreign policy to a greater degree than domestic policy is viewed as an area of strategic calculation and national interests. Another may be the impact of so-called secularization theory, the belief that the impact of religion on public life diminishes as modernization moves

28 Richard Cizik, vice president at the National Association of Evangelicals is one example: Richard Cizik, personal interview with author, 8 February 2007.

29 In fact, presiding bishop of the ECLA, Mark S. Hanson, told in a personal interview that one of his great frustrations has been that the term evangelical has been “taken away” from his church and reserved for religious conservatives. See Mark S. Hanson, personal interview with author, February 2007.

30 Marsden and Whutnow both use the term evangelical as defined in this paper. See See Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism ...*; and Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*.

31 The phrase was made famous by James Davison Hunter's book *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* in 1991. For a good discussion on this topic written by two Englishmen outside the struggle, see John Micklethwait and Adrian Woolbridge, *The Right Nation. Conservative Power in America* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

forward. However, over the past few years, religion seems to have been rediscovered as part of the foreign-policy calculus.³³

This study is based on the assumptions that domestic politics does affect foreign policy; and that religious groups are part of this political debate. A look at the foreign-policy debate in the United States since the 1980s clearly shows that Christian groups have been very visible. Their achievements may be divided into four main areas:

1. *Expansion of the domestic agenda.* Since the 1980s, religious conservatives have taken the battle over abortion, sexual abstention, gay rights and other so-called moral issues into the international arena. Conservative Christians campaigned strongly before the launch of President Reagan's "Mexico City Policy", which decreed that no overseas agency that promoted abortion could receive federal assistance from the U.S..³⁴ The UN has been a favorite whipping boy, and is widely considered to be a corrupt cradle of secular ideas – in some Christian-conservative circles, it is even judged to be the Anti-Christ.³⁵ But campaigning against UN programs and conventions has also meant working within the "Anti-Christ's" system, and may have helped make the UN more legitimate in the eyes of many conservatives.³⁶
2. *New emphasis on foreign aid.* Religious conservatives have not only contributed to aid being withheld, but also to U.S. aid to poor countries being increased. Under George W. Bush, aid to Africa has risen by 67 percent, including 15 billion dollars in new funds to combat HIV/Aids.³⁷ This is widely attributed to campaigning by evangelical lobby groups, particularly their links with Michael Gerson, himself an evangelical, who as policy adviser to and speechwriter for President Bush was called the social conscience of the White House.³⁸

32 Whereas the studies on the Christian Right can be counted in the hundreds, I have only come over one monograph (Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*) and one collection of essays (Abrams, *The Influence of Faith*) entirely devoted to religious conservative's foreign policy agendas (not including the several books on the Christian Right and Israel, the impact of George W. Bush's personal beliefs and a number of shorter articles).

33 Abrams, *The Influence of Faith*; Peter L. Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmann Publishing Company, 1999); Bryan J. Hehir, ed., *Liberty and Power: A Dialogue on Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy in an Unjust World* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004); Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion ...*

34 This policy was lifted under President Clinton, but reinstated again under President Bush. See Jim Lobe, "Population Activists Angered by Bush Freeze on UN Fund", *oneworld.net*, 15 January 2002 [online 21 Dec 2006].

35 In the fiction novel series "Left Behind", which has sold 63 million copies since the 1970s, the Secretary General of the United Nations is depicted as Anti-Christ.

3. *Strong support for Israel.* Today, what is known as the Israel lobby does not only consist of Israelis or Jews. There are also evangelical Christian. The evangelicals' literal understanding of Biblical doctrine makes them Israel's staunchest supporters in the United States, as a widespread Christian view is that Christians, not Jews represent the new and true children of Israel. A majority of evangelicals base their belief in this on the prophecies of the Old Testament which say that God has given Israel (including the West Bank) to the Jews, and that the Jews will have to occupy the Holy Land before Christ can return.³⁹ Many also believe the majority of Jews will turn to Christ just before he returns, which reduces the need for conversion to build an alliance between the two groups. The exact impact of the evangelical groups on the Israel lobby, and the lobby's impact on U.S. foreign policy, is hard to measure. Mearsheimer and Walt nonetheless contend that the lobby is the main reason why the United States is Israel's staunchest supporter.⁴⁰ And Walter Russell Mead contends that the evangelicals' contribution to the continued, strong U.S. support for Israel will be one of their main foreign-policy legacies.⁴¹
4. *Campaign against religious persecution.* The latest development within faith-based activism in the United States is a steady campaign to combat the persecution of Christian minorities in far corners of the world. In the mid-1990s, a congressional lobby campaign was developed by a number of highly motivated and well-connected individuals in Washington D.C. think tanks and within the political wings of evangelical denominations. Their campaigning and alliances with central lawmakers on Capitol Hill seem to have contributed considerably to the signing of five congressional acts:
 - i) *The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998* made the promotion of religious freedom abroad an explicit foreign-policy goal for the United States, one of only two countries in the world to do so.⁴² The Act established an office within the

36 Jennifer Butler, "New Sheriff in Town. The Christian Right Nears Major Victory at the United Nations", opinion paper, *publiceye.org*, 2003 (Political Research Associates [online 21 Dec 2006]).

37 Mead, "God's Country".

38 "Right on", *Economist*, 30 June 2005.

39 In a Pew survey from 2003, 62 percent of the evangelicals say "Israel fulfils biblical prophecy about second coming", compared to 36 percent in the population as a whole. 72 percent say God gave land of Israel to the Jews, compared to 44 percent of all those surveyed. Pew Forum, "American Evangelicals and Israel."

40 Mearsheimer and Walt, "The Israel Lobby."

41 Mead, *God's Country*.

State Department, an ambassador-at-large and an independent commission, all designated to advise the government how countries perform on religious freedom. Countries given poor ratings can face economic sanctions at the order of the President.

- ii) *The Trafficking Victims Protection Act* of 2000 was motivated by stories of Christian women being enslaved and becoming sex-trade victims in Muslim countries.⁴³ It gave the President new powers to order sanctions against countries which did not fight trafficking. New legislation signed by President Bush in January 2006 will provide an estimated 360 million dollars to fight human trafficking.⁴⁴
- iii) *The Sudan Peace Act* of 2002: its aim was to bring pressure to bear on the Muslim regime in Khartoum by opening up for direct aid to the Christian rebels in the South for the first time, and by establishing benchmarks for Khartoum's conduct in the ongoing peace negotiations. The benchmarks were accompanied by the threat of direct sanctions.
- iv) *The North Korea Human Rights Act* of 2004 required President Bush to appoint a special envoy for human rights for North Korea and states that human rights in the country shall be a "key element in future negotiations between the United States, North Korea and other concerned parties in Northeast Asia". Korea has been a major area of evangelization for more than a century, and American missionaries estimate that some 100,000 Christians, persecuted because of their faith, are in North Korean jails.⁴⁵
- v) *The Advance Democracy Act* of 2005 states that promoting "freedom and democracy in foreign countries [shall be] a fundamental component of United States foreign policy". It aims to establish a new Office of Democratic Movements and Transitions at the State Department and requires the Department to issue an annual democracy report. It was introduced by the

42 The Vatican city-state is the other one. Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Legislating International Religious Freedom", event transcript, 20 November 2006 [online 21 Dec 2006].

43 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, pp. 315–335.

44 Robert MacMahon, "Christian Evangelicals and US Foreign Policy", *Council on Foreign Relations Background*, 28 August 2006 [online 21 Dec 2006]. These efforts have been noted by the Norwegian newspaper *Verdens Gang* as well: Hanne Skartveit, "Vår tids slaver" [The slaves of our time], *Verdens Gang*, 24 February 2007.

45 Jasper Becker, "Christian underground smuggles North Koreans to safety in South", *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 February 2003.

same group of evangelical politicians and pressure groups who initiated the previous four laws.⁴⁶

Saving Sudan

As a whole, these achievements seem to add up to a considerable evangelical influence on U.S. foreign policy in recent years. However, there are two major difficulties involved in drawing such a conclusion based on this brief review. First, as mentioned in the introduction, no detailed, in-depth case studies have been performed to investigate and weigh up claims of evangelical influence as opposed to other explanations for U.S. policy. Second, these points do not necessarily add up to major changes in the direction of U.S. foreign policy; the U.S. has always been Israel's strongest supporter, even long before the evangelical revival. The launch of a new 15 billion dollar aid program does not mean that the promised increases actually are implemented in the end. The fact that the U.S. now has a law on religious persecution does not imply that the U.S. is aggressively pursuing a policy against religious persecution around the world. And the fact that human rights according to Congress are supposed to be central in U.S. policy towards North Korea does not mean that they are. In fact, the religious lobby groups themselves have complained several times that the laws they have campaigned for have yet to make any significant impact.⁴⁷

It might be the case that the influence of new conservative Christians has altered U.S. foreign policy. But this case may also be overstated by placing too much emphasis on symbolic policies and congressional decisions, and too little emphasis on the implementation and the relative importance of the policies. With these objections in mind, I have chosen U.S. policy towards Sudan under President George W. Bush as a case study against which to assess the evangelical (in a coalition with other religious conservatives) influence on U.S. foreign policy. The reason I have chosen Sudan is first of all that this is an area where there has been a marked shift in policy: from the Clinton administration's hands-off approach to the active involvement of President Bush. Mead and other observers claim this changes largely due to the lobbying of conservative Christians with almost unlimited access to Bush's White House. Secondly, there were opposing lobbying interests at play in the case of

46 John Feffer, "All Democracy, All the Time", *Salon.com*, 15 March 2005 [online 19 Dec 2006].

47 Horowitz, personal interview with author, 7 February 2007; Deborah Fikes, "The Grassroots Movement of North Korea Advocacy Efforts and Role of Evangelical Christians", speech given at Institute for Corean-American Studies, 11 October 2005; Pew Forum, "Legislating religious freedom".

Sudan: the oil and business lobbies favored a different approach from that of the Christian-conservatives. Thirdly, national security interests became an increasingly important part of U.S. policy considerations in Sudan after September 11 2001, and the national security interest was not the same as the conservative Christian interest.

I will elaborate on this argument in my analysis, but in short it is as follows: by the end of 2000, Sudan was not a country in which one would expect the United States to invest much political capital. And if the U.S. were to intervene, both economic and security interests seemed to indicate a policy in favor of the regime in Khartoum, not a confrontational line favoring the Christians in the south as the religious conservatives propagated.

A case study may disclose that other interest groups and/or interests are just as plausible explanations for U.S. policy towards Sudan as pressure from conservative Christians. But if it seems likely that the United States became heavily involved in Sudan because of evangelical pressure, and that the actual policy towards Sudan corresponded to the policy input of the evangelicals and not to those of other vital interests, then this would strengthen Walter Russell Mead's claims of a "recasting" of foreign policy. We may in fact be witnessing an example of what Mead calls a "Wilsonian revival" in U.S. foreign policy.⁴⁸

48 Walter Russell Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), p. 88.

Interest groups and foreign policy

Interest groups defined

A study of the influence of lobby groups rests on the basic premise that people organize themselves into groups to promote their interests. “The causes of faction are sown in the nature of man,” James Madison wrote in *The Federalist Papers*.⁴⁹ His definition of faction still serves as a definition of an interest or pressure group: “By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.”⁵⁰ In this study, evangelical groups are treated as a faction according to Madison’s definition. They are united by a common impulse to protect fellow Christians from persecution. Whether they are averse to the rights of other Americans is perhaps debatable, but they are certainly averse to the Islamist regime in Sudan.

Theories on foreign-policy interest groups

A large body of literature exists on the role of interest groups in policy-making. The classic studies are, however, preoccupied with interest groups oriented towards economic and domestic policy.⁵¹ Mancur Ol-

49 James Madison, “Federalist 10” in *The Federalist Papers*, 2nd ed., ed. Roy P. Fairfield (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1981), p. 16.

50 Ibid.

51 This section is based on the overview given in Burdett A. Loomis and Allan J. Cigler, “Introduction: The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics” in *Interest Group Politics*, ed. Cigler and Loomis (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2002). Classic theories include: Arthur Bentley, “The Process of Government”, 1908, reprint in *Pressure Groups*, ed. Jeremy Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Theodore Lowi, *The End of Liberalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1979); and Mancur Olson, “The Logic of Collective Action”, 1965, reprint in abridged form in *Pressure Groups*, ed. Richardson.

son, the man behind one of the classic interest-group theories, noted that his theory “can be extended to cover communal, religious and philanthropic organizations, but the theory is not particularly useful in studying such groups.”⁵² Furthermore, traditional interest-group theories are mostly concerned with describing the proliferation of interest groups, not their influence. This might be due to the fact that determining actual influence is, as one lobbyist has noted, “like finding a black cat in the coal bin at midnight”.⁵³

These facts make traditional interest-group theories ill suited for the purposes of this thesis. The theoretical body of interest-group influence on foreign policy is much less developed. One reason is probably that the tradition Walter Russell Mead calls “continental realism” is so strong in the study of international relations.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, assuming that states as foreign policy-makers cannot be considered to be “black boxes”, one has to consider domestic politics. Domestic politics matters: and interest groups matter in the decision-making process.

As little has been written about religious lobby groups’ influence on foreign policy, little theory exists. One may, however, make some assumptions about the nature of this influence based on theory within a similar subject field: ethnic lobby groups and foreign policy. From the Israel lobby to the Greek, Taipei-Chinese and Cuban lobbies, ethnic groups in the United States have often influenced U.S. policies towards the groups’ countries of origin. Based on studies of ethnic lobby groups, one may extract the following criteria as indicators of likely success when attempting to influence U.S. policy. These indicators may also be used to discuss the likely influence of religious groups:⁵⁵

- most importantly, groups must pressure for a policy in line with U.S. strategic interests.
- ethnic groups must be assimilated into U.S. society, yet retain enough identification with the “old country” so that this foreign-policy issue motivates people to take some political action. For religious groups this may be translated into identification with the country or group they are lobbying on behalf of.
- the policies that are advocated ought to be backed by the broader public.

52 Olson, “The Logic of Collective Action”, p. 25.

53 Quoted in Loomis and Cigler, *Interest Group Politics*, p. 28.

54 Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence. American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 35–55.

55 The first two criteria are taken from Mohammed E. Ahrari, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Foreign Policy* (New York: Greenwood, 1987), pp. 155–158; number three to five are listed in Eric M. Uslaner, “Cracks in the Armour? Interest Groups and Foreign Policy” in *Interest Groups Politics*, eds Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2002), p. 358.

- the groups must have members enough to be able to wield political influence. Here, one may include other resources: skilful staff, active members and strategically placed allies.
- the groups must be perceived as pursuing a legitimate interest.

These are general indicators of lobby groups' chances of influencing a foreign-policy issue. Since most studies of ethnic lobbies deal with lobbying in Congress, one may include a few other indicators of influence on Congress specifically:⁵⁶

- pressure directly from a representative's constituency gives a representative incentives to act.
- personal access to decision-makers may secure direct action, as representatives act as individual "entrepreneurs" and not as party representatives.
- success is more likely if there is no competition from other groups or groups with conflicting views on the issue.
- an ability to build broad and unlikely coalitions, so-called "strange bedfellows", produces a greater potential for breakthrough in Congress.

Congress' influence on foreign policy-making is often limited, however, and one may add one last criterion for success:⁵⁷

- the ability to lobby the executive directly is a measure of an interest group's influence.

This adds up to a list of ten indicators of interest groups' influence on foreign policy-making. Many of these are commonsense assumptions, but it is advantageous that most of them have also been tested in studies of ethnic lobbies. As an example, the pro-Israel lobby has been cited as the most prominent example of a group that has satisfied most of the first seven criteria and has therefore been very influential for many years. The pro-Arab lobby, on the other hand, does not meet any of the seven criteria and remains a weak force in American foreign policy-making.⁵⁸

56 Criterion five to nine are based on Cecil V. Crabb Jr., Glenn J. Antizzo, and Leila E. Saredidine, *Congress and the Foreign Policy Process* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), pp. 137–155.

57 This indicator is the author's own addition. Crabb et al., *Congress and the Foreign Policy Process*, p. 138, claim Congress' influence is minimal. Randall B. Ripley and James M. Lindsay, eds, *Congress Resurgent. Foreign and Defence Policy on Capitol Hill* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993) claimed Congress was resurging in foreign policy matters in the early 90s. Nowadays, talk of the "imperial presidency" is in fashion again. See Donald R. Wolfensberger, "The Return of the Imperial Presidency?" *Wilson Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2002): 53–56.

Questions concerning U.S. policy towards Sudan

How does one define U.S. policy towards Sudan? To answer this, one first needs to determine who conducts U.S. foreign policy. According to the U.S. Constitution, foreign policy is primarily the President's domain. He is the chief diplomat who with his cabinet conducts foreign policy on a day-to-day basis. He makes diplomatic appointments, negotiates treaties and sets policies through speeches and directives. Therefore, the policies of the President and his administration are the main objects of this investigation. Congress also has a formal role in foreign policy-making, through scrutiny, budgets and the approval of appointments and treaties. In the case of evangelical influence, the role of Congress is interesting since congressional legislation has been one of the evangelicals' main areas as a pressure group. Therefore, I shall return to a discussion of what influence congressional law-making has over presidential decision-making in the foreign-policy field in my case analysis.

Walter Russell Mead and others claim the evangelicals' main contribution has been to draw and alter the attention of the foreign policy-makers. Therefore, I shall first look at attention, via the level of rhetoric: how often is Sudan mentioned in administration speeches, statements and policy documents? And, more importantly, in which speeches and documents, and by whom is Sudan mentioned? But foreign policy is more than attention. Mentioning the misery in Sudan now and then does not necessarily mean Sudan is a high foreign-policy priority. Therefore, the second aspect of my analysis is policy substance. Is it true, as Mead claims, that the U.S. "led the fight to end Sudan's wars"?⁵⁹ And if so, what kind of political investments did this leadership demand? I shall discuss substance by looking at which specific measures the Bush administration utilized towards Sudan, compared to the Clinton administration, and by discussing the level and intensity of the involvement.

On the use of sources

Since the presidential records of the Bush administration have not yet been disclosed, I have had to rely on open sources to peek into the administration's deliberations. Existing research, though limited, has provided material for literature review. As have news stories. I have systematically searched the of news archives of the newspapers *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* for Sudan stories, as well as searched

58 Uslander, "Cracks in the Armour? ...", pp. 358–364. Uslander claims, however, that the Israel lobby has failed to meet several of the conditions in recent years, so the lobby is not the same dominant force as it used to be. Mearsheimer and Walt, "The Israel Lobby", seem not to share this view.

59 Mead, "God's Country": 38.

the religious press, such as the evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*. I have looked in particular for op-ed pieces by and interviews with religious leaders as well as their policy statements to get an impression of these groups' activities and views. Archives on the web pages of the various campaign organizations also provided material, as did transcripts of testimonies at congressional hearings, presidential speeches and transcripts of hearings from press conferences with the President as well as administration officials, and congressional hearings. Finally, I conducted first-hand interviews with lobbyists, observers of the Sudan campaign and analysts of Sudan in Washington D.C. All the interviews were on the record and all statements are openly attributed to the interviewees in the text.⁶⁰

60 A list of names and titles of the interviewees is included as an appendix.

Evangelicals and US policy on Sudan

U.S. policy in Sudan before 2001

When the warring factions in Northern and Southern Sudan signed a peace treaty in January 2005, they ended a 21-year long civil war which had claimed an estimated two million lives.⁶¹ The latest in a number of civil wars erupted when the national government in the North revoked in 1983 the autonomy that the South had been granted for 11 years. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) took up arms against the North under its armed faction the SPLA, led by John Garang. Muslims opposed to Khartoum, organized in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), later joined these rebels.

Although most commonly portrayed as a conflict between Muslim oppressors in the North and Christian and animist rebels fighting for autonomy in the South, the roots of the conflict are more complex. Sudan's recurring civil wars are a product of several historical factors.⁶² Among these are the exploitive relationship between the central government in Khartoum (the North) and the peripheries (the South); the introduction of militant Islam to the Muslim North that sharpened this divide; the postcolonial legacy and Sudan's position in the power play of the cold war.

U.S. policy towards Sudan up until 2001 is commonly interpreted as a reaction to this last factor: Sudan's position in the cold-war struggle determined the U.S. geopolitical interest of the U.S. in the country.⁶³ When Sudan went pro-Soviet Nasserite in 1969, the U.S. put the coun-

61 Randolph Martin, "Sudan's Perfect War", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 81, no. 2 (2002) [online 21 Dec 2006].

62 Douglas C. Johnson lists ten different factors in Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Oxford: The International African Institute, 2003).

63 Connell, "Sudan. Recasting U.S. Policy"; James J. Hentz, "The contending currents in United States involvement in sub-Saharan Africa", in *Africa in International Politics*, eds Taylor and Williams (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 27–29; and Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa*, pp. 17–37.

try on its enemy list. When neighboring Ethiopia went pro-Soviet in 1977, the U.S. again started supporting Sudan – during the 1980s, Sudan was the sixth largest recipient of U.S. military aid. But when the Islamist NIF (National Islamic Front) seized power in 1989, the U.S. stopped all bilateral aid immediately. As Osama bin Laden had moved to Sudan, and the regime in Khartoum supported Iraq in the Gulf War in 1991, the U.S. increased its effort to isolate the country. The Clinton administration labeled Sudan a “rogue state”, prohibited U.S. investment and increased anti-Sudan moves in the UN. In 1998, the U.S. bombed a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum as a reprisal for Sudan’s suspected harboring of those responsible for the bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. And Secretary of State Madeleine Albright promised U.S. military aid to the SPLM.

None of this did much to stop the civil war that continued to rage between the North and South. And before 2001, the U.S. had not shown any great interest in brokering a peace agreement between the North and South. A peace process had been underway for some years under the seven-country regional development organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). But by 2000 this process had largely stalled. In 1999, Madeleine Albright told a group of religiously conservative Sudan activists that the U.S. would not charge Sudan with genocide, though the activists desired this. Such a designation would require serious action from the government. But the human rights situation in Sudan was “not marketable to the American people”, Albright said.⁶⁴ Two years later, the U.S. had become deeply involved as the main negotiator in peace talks between North and South Sudan. What had happened? Possible answers to this will be discussed in the following analysis. First through a description of the coalition of religious conservatives who had become involved in Sudan in the late 1990s, then by discussing different explanations for U.S. policy attention and substance towards Sudan.

Religious conservatives awake

There have been Christians in today’s Sudan far longer than there have been Christians in the United States. The first Christian missionaries arrived in Sudan from the Middle East in the sixth century. 1300 years later, the first American missionaries arrived to convert Muslims, traditional believers and believers in traditional Sudanese Christianity to the

64 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, p. 275.

new gospel.⁶⁵ The historical roots of the U.S. Christian involvement in Sudan lie in this missionary movement.

Walter Russell Mead calls the story of American missionary activity the “lost history” of American foreign policy. “It has played a much larger role in the relationship of the United States to the world (...) than is generally recognized”.⁶⁶ In tandem with the great revivals of Christianity in the United States, American missionaries have spread around the world at an increasing tempo. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were around 5000 American protestant missionaries around the world.⁶⁷ The vast majority was in Asia, especially in China and Korea. Protestantism was introduced to Korea by American missionaries in 1899, and a few years later, Korea was considered such fertile ground for missionaries that Pyongyang, now the capital of communist North Korea, was widely known as “Asia’s little Jerusalem”.⁶⁸ Today, around 30 percent of the population in South Korea is Christian (19 percent Protestant).

Today, there might be as many as 100,000 Americans serving on religious missions abroad.⁶⁹ And the power shift from traditional, mainline Christianity to the more conservative evangelical branches has been just as evident in the field of missionary work as in the religious landscape in the U.S. Though eight of ten protestant missionaries came from the mainline denominations at the end of the First World War, those same churches supplied less than one of ten missionaries by 1996.⁷⁰ The influence of the Catholic Church has also declined considerably. Today, the Southern Baptist Convention alone fields the same number of missionaries as the entire U.S. Catholic Church, and the same number as all mainline U.S. denominations combined.⁷¹

This long history of missionary activity, combined with the dramatic transformation of the missionary field, help explain why religious conservatives became increasingly aware of the persecution of Christians in Sudan in the mid-nineties, and decided to launch a campaign for Christians in Sudan, as well as for those in North Korea and China. An-

65 Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, p. 14.

66 Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 139. Madeleine Albright makes a similar point in *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God and the World* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2006), p. 26. This point may be valid for Norway as well. Mead's emphasis on missionary activity as a foreign policy driver bears resemblance to Olav Riste's description of the “missionary impulse” as one of the main pillars of Norwegian foreign policy history: Olav Riste, *Norway's foreign relations: a history* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2001).

67 Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 142.

68 Robert Marquand, “Evangelicals in Korea poised to move north”, *Christian Science Monitor*, 11 June 2003.

69 Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 142.

70 Paul E. Pierson, “The Rise of Christian Mission and Relief Agencies” in *The Influence of Faith. Religious Groups and US Foreign Policy*, ed. Elliott Abrams (New York: Rowan & Littlefield, 2001), p. 160.

71 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, p. 20.

other explanation is the bonds between the existing, native churches in Sudan and churches in the U.S. Not all activists were missionaries, not by far. Many American Christians also became involved in Sudan when they learned how “their” churches were being bombed and burned.

The goal of the campaign that emerged was (and still is) to be *Freeing God's Children*, as Allen D. Hertzke has called his insider's account. Hertzke notes four underlying conditions paving the way for this movement: (1) The spread of evangelical Christianity had shifted the bulk of the Christian population towards the global South. Whereas 80 percent of the world's Christian population lived in Europe and North America in 1900, this had declined to 40 percent by 2000. (2) The communications revolution had brought this new Christian population and their often difficult conditions much closer to fellow Christians in the States through the news network of the missionaries.⁷² (3) Furthermore, the fall of the iron curtain had opened up for new areas for evangelization. (4) And finally, the revival of the religious conservatives and their organizational network in the United States had created a powerful movement able to become involved for their persecuted brothers and sisters worldwide.

This movement has its organizational roots in movements set up to counter Communism and its persecution of Christians after the Second World War. Groups like Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors with Brother Andrew and Christian Solidarity International smuggled bibles through the iron curtain and raised money for Christians in the Soviet Union and China. The iron curtain eventually fell, but religious persecution did not perish with it. Christians in the United States continued to receive news about persecuted believers in countries like China, North Korea – and Sudan. “More Christians have been martyred for their faith in the twentieth century, than in the previous nineteen centuries combined”, human rights lawyer Nina Shea at the Center for Religious Persecution at Freedom House dramatically claimed in her book *In the Lion's Den*.⁷³ Along with her colleague Paul Marshall's *Their Blood Cries Out*, this book became a rallying call for the lobbying campaign against religious persecution in the U.S. Congress.⁷⁴ A campaign that

72 Several places missionaries provide the main source for international news. As Peggy L. Shriver, former assistant general secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ writes: “Combing 30 years of North Carolina's *Gastonia Gazette*, 1940–70, (...) I was struck with how parochial the newspaper was. Almost the only international news appeared in the *Gazette's* religion page, usually reporting missionary accounts”. Peggy L. Shriver, “Evangelicals and World Affairs”, *World Policy Journal*, vol. 23, no. 3 (2006): 52.

73 Nina Shea, *In the Lion's Den* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), p. ix.

74 Paul Marshall and Lela Gilbert, *Their Blood Cries Out. The untold story of persecution against Christians in the modern world* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1997).

triumphed as Congress in 1998 passed the International Religious Freedom Act.

The way towards this act was not straightforward, however. Nina Shea and Michael Horowitz had considerable difficulty getting evangelical policy organizations interested in religious persecution in the mid-90s. As Allen D. Hertzke notes, American Christianity, including its evangelical versions, is a pluralized world not easy to unite behind one single issue (apart perhaps from abortion). A meeting convened by Shea, Horowitz and Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals in early 1996 played an important role in getting central conservative Christians on board.⁷⁵

By the time the International Religious Freedom Act was passed, Sudan was already high on the religious conservatives' agenda. Since the seizure of power by the National Islamic Front in Khartoum in 1989, American missionaries had been sending news home of a forced Islamization, and even of the mass slaughter of Sudanese Christians in the South. While traditional historians and secular analysts would emphasize the complex nature of the civil war, Christian activists bluntly stated that this was "a war on religion", as Nina Shea titled an op-ed in the *The Wall Street Journal*.⁷⁶ Neither did missionaries nor their organizations back home hesitate to use the word genocide to describe what was being done to their brothers and sisters in Sudan.⁷⁷ Some even contended that the loosely estimated two million victims of the war between the North and South were all Christians that had been purposefully slaughtered, although the victims comprised both Muslims and believers of old faiths.⁷⁸

But it was really the campaign against slavery in Sudan that prompted evangelical organizations into action in the United States.⁷⁹ Initiated by the U.S. director of Christian Solidarity International (CSI) John Eibner, it spurred thousands of Christians in the States to raise money to redeem Sudanese Christians from Arab slave-traders. Along

75 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, pp. 78–89.

76 Secular analyzes include Human Rights Watch, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights* (Washington DC: Human Rights Watch, 2003) [online 8 Jan 2007]; Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*; and Center for Strategic and International Studies, *U.S. Policy to End Sudan's War*, report of the CSIS Task Force on U.S.-Sudan Policy (2001). Nina Shea, "A War on Religion" was a letter in *Wall Street Journal*, 31 July 1998.

77 "Much like a novice writer enchanted with exclamation points, it repeatedly uses the term "genocidal" to describe the actions of the government in Sudan", T. Jeremy Gunn of the American Civil Liberties Union mocked the advisory Commission on International Religious Freedom's use of the word in 1999. See T. Jeremy Gunn, "When Our Allies Persecute", *Religion in the News*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2001). Nonetheless, the House of Representatives followed suit, and labeled Sudan "genocidal" later the same year. See Nina Shea, "Sudan's Genocide and U.S. Indifference", *Sbma. An online journal of Jewish responsibility* (February 2000) [online 9 Jan 2007].

78 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, p. 261.

79 Faith McDonnell, personal interview with author, 5 February 2007; William Saunders, personal interview with author, 5 February 2007.

with fellow evangelist Charles Jacobs, who founded the American Anti-Slavery Group in 1994, Eibner claims to have redeemed at least 80,000 slaves by buying off local slave-traders.⁸⁰ This undertaking caused controversy. Organizations such as UNICEF and Human Rights Watch criticized the practice, and in 2002 a front-page article in *The Washington Post* claimed that SPLA commanders were exploiting the redeemers by stage-managing transactions and passing off free people as slaves.⁸¹ Nevertheless, millions of dollars were raised by evangelical networks in the States, slavery in Sudan became an issue on Christian television networks and a high-school class made national headlines by raising 50,000 dollars for the redemption of slaves.⁸²

Another course of action was humanitarian relief. Several evangelical relief organizations were established in Sudan in the 1990s. The most notable was probably Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse. Son of Billy Graham (the father of modern evangelicalism in the States) and heir to his empire of ministries, Franklin Graham is also one of President Bush's closest religious confidantes, and held the invocation at the President's inauguration ceremony in 2001. Graham visited Sudan several times, and wrote and spoke about Sudan in the press. "This carnage, the most appalling I have seen in my 25 years as an international relief worker (...) is happening in Sudan, where the Muslim government is waging a brutal war against Christians," Graham wrote in an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* in 2000. He concluded with the following warning: "If we turn a blind eye to the plight of the people being mistreated in Africa (...), I believe God will judge this nation. His hand of blessing could easily and quickly be removed."⁸³

Graham was not the only top-tier evangelical leader to speak out about Sudan in the late 1990s: Richard Land, policy director of the Southern Baptist Convention (by far the nation's largest protestant denomination) made Sudan part of his policy advocacy. Chuck Colson – once chief council to President Nixon, and who was jailed for Watergate, was born-again as an evangelical in jail and later became the founder of Prison Fellowship to reform U.S. jails – campaigned for Sudan through his own think tank the Wilberforce Forum (named after the English statesman and evangelical who led the fight to abolish slavery in the 1800s). Colson is considered one of the best-connected lob-

80 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, p. 112.

81 Human Rights Watch. "HRW Background Paper on Slavery and Slavery Redemption in the Sudan" (1999) [online 10 Jan 2007]; Karl Vick, "Ripping of Slave 'Redeemers'", *Washington Post*, 26 February 2002.

82 Mindy Sink, "Schoolchildren Set Out to Liberate Slaves in Sudan", *New York Times*, 2 December 1998; Richard Woodbury, "The Children's Crusade", *Time Magazine*, 21 December 1998.

83 Franklin Graham, "Stand Up for Sudan's Christians", letter, *Wall Street Journal*, 15 March 2000.

bysts of the U.S. evangelicals.⁸⁴ Richard Cizik is a third example. As chief lobbyist for the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), he had a power base of 30 million members (and potential voters) to use in his campaigning for Sudan.⁸⁵ In comparison, the National Rifle Association (NRA) has around four million members. The largest non-governmental organization in the United States, the American Association of Retired People (AARP), has 35 million members.⁸⁶ As noted, membership is an important indicator of political influence.⁸⁷

It is important to note that although their organizational basis consisted mainly of evangelical churches, not all faith-based activists were evangelicals. Nina Shea is a Catholic. And the activist Richard Land and Richard Cizik consider to be the most central, Michael Horowitz, is a Jew.⁸⁸ Horowitz, a former appointee at Reagan's White House is now an activist and analyst at the Hudson Institute where he took the initiative for what became the International Religious Freedom Act, and later spearheaded the evangelical Sudan campaign. His PR initiatives included hiring celebrity lawyers like Ken Starr and Johnnie Cochran to defend him in court when he was arrested for protesting outside the Sudanese embassy.⁸⁹ Horowitz is not shy about taking credit for his role in the Sudan campaign: "Debbie and I were behind the peace deal in Sudan," he bluntly states.⁹⁰ Debbie is Deborah Fikes of the Midland Ministerial Alliance in Texas, who built a grassroots effort for Sudan in President Bush's hometown.⁹¹ Horowitz attributes his commitment to persecuted Christians to his Jewish background: "Sudan is the Hitler-regime of our time," he says about the Islamist regime.⁹² Horowitz was not the only prominent Jewish American who campaigned for Christians in Sudan. Elliot Abrams, once Assistant Secretary of State under Reagan, traveled to Sudan to interview Christian refugees as chairman of the Commission on International Religious Freedom, and in an article in *The Weekly Standard* he outlined how the Bush administration should approach the crisis.⁹³ One month after the article was printed,

84 Matthew Cooper and Karen Tumulty, "America's 25 most influential evangelicals", *Time Magazine*, 7 February 2005.

85 Jeffery L. Sheler, *Believers. A Journey into Evangelical America* (New York: Viking, 2006), pp. 227–271. Both Land and Cizik were interviewed personally for this study.

86 Numbers taken from the organizations' web pages in March 2007.

87 Uslaner, "Cracks in the Armour?" p. 358.

88 Richard Land, personal interview with author, 5 February 2007; and Cizik, personal interview.

89 William Raspberry, "The Am-I-Dreaming Team", *Washington Post*, 5 May 2001. The two were the main stars of two of the most famous legal battles in US history: The investigation of president Bill Clinton (Starr), and the O.J. Simpson-case (defended by Cochran).

90 Michael Horowitz, personal interview.

91 George Neumayr, "Midland Ministers to the World", *American Spectator*, 12 August 2003.

92 Kate O'Beirne, "A Faraway Country ... about which we know a lot – 17 years of civil war in Sudan", *National Review*, 5 March 2001.

Abrams became one of National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice's deputies.⁹⁴

Another important component in the Christian-conservative campaign for Sudan was to be found at Capitol Hill. The Republican landslide election in 1994 had made Congress considerably more religiously conservative.⁹⁵ Many of these politicians came to be involved in Sudan. When a disastrous famine spread across Southern Sudan in 1998, evangelical relief agencies supplied aid to prevent what they considered to be a "manufactured famine" to exterminate the Sudanese Christians.⁹⁶ One of the relief workers who went to Sudan with Samaritan's Purse in 1998, was the physician and junior senator from Tennessee, Bill Frist, who five years later was to become Senate majority leader and one of the most powerful politicians in the United States. "The radical Islamic regime in Khartoum is unmatched in its barbarity toward the sub-Saharan or "black African" Christians of the countries south," Frist wrote in an op-ed in *The Washington Post* upon returning from his trip.⁹⁷ He called for a much tougher U.S. policy towards the regime in Khartoum. Frist is the most prominent example of the Christian-conservative politicians who began raising the issue of Sudan in Congress from the late 90s onwards. Apart from him, Allen D. Hertzke's list of "fervent members of Congress" includes Senators Sam Brownback (Republican) and Don Nickles (R); and House Representatives Chris Smith (R), Frank Wolf (R), Tony Hall (Democrat), Tom Tancredo (R), Joseph Pitts (R) and Spencer Bachus (R). Eight Republicans and one Democrat, all Christian-conservatives.⁹⁸

By 1999, an organized "Sudan Campaign" had been formed in Washington D.C. under Nina Shea's direction at the Freedom House.⁹⁹ Although largely a "grass top-movement" consisting of elite lobbyists and activists from faith-based organizations, the campaign also activated the grassroots of American evangelicalism. From 1996 and on, "In-

93 Elliot Abrams, "What to do about Sudan", *Weekly Standard*, 7 May 2001.

94 Abrams was appointed Senior director for democracy, human rights, and international operations at the National Security Council.

95 One measure is the Christian Coalition's scorecards. In the Congress before 1994, 30 percent of House representatives and 26 percent of the senators voted in line with their views in at least 80 percent of the votes. After 1994, the numbers were 43 and 36 percent respectively. See Martin, "The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy".

96 Shea, "A War on Religion".

97 Bill Frist, "Sudan's Merciless War on Its own People", op-ed, *Washington Post*, 17 July 1998.

98 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, appendix. Seven of the nine received a full 100 points in the Christian Coalition's scorecard in 2004. Frank Wolf received 84 points and Tony Hall was not in the House at the time. Pitts and Brownback also co-chaired the "Values Action Team", a forum which coordinated strategy between lawmakers and social-conservative activists. See Peter Stone and Bara Vaida, "Christian Soldiers", *National Journal*, 3 December 2004.

99 The campaign organization still existed in early 2007, but was then directed towards Darfur.

ternational Days of Prayer for the Persecuted Church” were organized annually by the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF). From a core group of 7,000 churches, this day of prayer quickly grew to encompass over 100,000 U.S. churches of all denominations, and ordinary churchgoers would pray for fellow Christians in Sudan and learn about their plight from the pulpit.¹⁰⁰ Director Faith McDonnell of the Church Alliance for a New Sudan quotes Representative Frank Wolf who has noted the following about this phenomenon: “There are more churches than chambers of commerce in the United States. So if you want to influence foreign policy, you have to influence the churches.”¹⁰¹

News about Sudan also penetrated the religious media. One example is the religiously based television series “Touched by an Angel”, which was one of most popular shows on CBS in the 90s. An entire episode was aired dedicated to the issue of slavery in Sudan in 1999. Christian college networks and Christian rock stars also campaigned for Sudan.¹⁰² In August 2001, 30,000 young Christians gathered in Midland, Texas (George W. Bush’s hometown) for the festival “Rock the Desert”. The following year, 90,000 attended. There they were met by campaign material such as a mock slave cell to inform them about the persecution of Christians in Sudan. This event spurred what was later to become the Midland Ministerial Alliance, which became a central part of the evangelical Sudan campaign at later stages.¹⁰³

When the Bush administration came into office in January 2001, the issue of Christian persecution in Sudan had already been well established among evangelicals as a cause worth fighting for. In a survey by the Ethics and Public Policy Center, more than 70 percent of the 300 pastors, advocates, radio hosts and other members of the “evangelical elites” who were asked had “heard a lot” about the situation of Christians in Sudan. More than 40 percent had contributed to an organization working for Sudan.¹⁰⁴ However, the activists felt they had got nowhere with the Clinton administration on the issue. According to Michael Horowitz, Clinton was “awful on Sudan”.¹⁰⁵ The activists were “struck by the huge disparity between the genocidal scale of atrocities being committed by the government of Sudan and the muted response of the President and Secretary of State of the United States,” Nina Shea said in a testimony before Congress on September 28, 2000 as a representative of the International Commission on International Religious

100 Numbers are WEF's own estimate. Taken from their webpage in March 2007.

101 Faith McDonnell, personal interview with author, February 2007.

102 William Lobdell, “Raising Their Voices”, *Los Angeles Times*, 19 February 2001.

103 Neumayr, “Midland Ministers to the World”.

104 Ethics and Public Policy Center, “Survey of Evangelical Elites” (2002) [12 Jan 2007].

105 Horowitz, personal interview.

Freedom.¹⁰⁶ By the end of the year 2000, the faith-based movement was ready to take on the new President and his administration on Sudan.

U.S. policy attention

Suddenly, Sudan

The premise underlying the thesis of Walter Russell Mead and others that evangelical pressure directed President Bush's attention towards Sudan is that President Clinton did not pay the same level of attention. Is this true? A search in the The American Presidency Project's database for the keyword "Sudan" reveals that President Clinton did mention Sudan in 12 speeches during his last four-year term in office.¹⁰⁷ Thus, Nina Shea's claim in *The Weekly Standard* that President Bush "became the first president to emphasize the Sudanese conflict in a public speech" is obviously not true.¹⁰⁸ In fact, the last time Clinton mentioned Sudan in a public speech – just a few weeks before he left office – he addressed Shea and her compatriots directly: "[L]et me say especially to the students, religious communities, and human rights activists who have done so much to publicize the atrocities of Sudan, America must continue to press for an end to these egregious practices and make clear that the Sudanese Government cannot join the community of nations until fundamental changes are made on these fronts."¹⁰⁹

However, apart from this speech, a closer look at the 11 others speeches shows that Clinton never actually addressed the conflict in length until this single occasion, when he was on his way out of office. On four occasions he mentioned the U.S. bombing of a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan. In the other seven speeches, Sudan is only mentioned summarily in sentences like: "War still tears at the heart of Africa. Congo, Sierra Leone, Angola, Sudan have not yet resolved their conflicts."¹¹⁰ No initiatives were taken by the Clinton administration to mediate in the conflict between North and South. Clinton did appoint a special envoy to Sudan in 1999, former congressman Harry Johnston. But Johnston did not take any new peace initiatives. The administra-

106 Nina Shea, "Progress on Sudan Policy", *Center for Religious Freedom Newsletter*, 2000 [12 Jan 2007].

107 The database is located at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and contains all public papers issued by presidents Clinton and Bush.

108 Nina Shea, "From Sudan to the East River. John Darforth's unsung service", *Weekly Standard*, 21 June 2004.

109 Bill Clinton, "Remarks on Presenting the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights and the Presidential Medal of Freedom", 6 December 2000 [online 12 Jan 2007].

110 Bill Clinton, "Remarks to the Conference on United States-Africa Partnership for the 21st Century", 16 March 1999 [online 12 Jan 2007].

tion's approach was to isolate rather than engage Khartoum. And although Secretary of State Madeleine Albright did meet with SPLA commanders and promised them direct aid, no such aid materialized.¹¹¹ In other words, Sudan seems to have remained a "back-burner issue" for the Clinton administration, as the faith-based movement has claimed.¹¹² This is confirmed by observers not affiliated to the faith-based campaign movement interviewed in Washington D.C. Sudan expert David Smock at the congressionally founded United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and Sudan campaign manager at the International Crisis Group (ICG) Colin Thomas-Jensen both state that there was a marked shift in policy from the Clinton to the Bush administration.¹¹³ Former special envoy for the UN to the Horn of Africa and Norwegian ambassador Tom Vraalsen states the same in his exposé on the experiences from conflict resolution in Sudan: "In 2001, a fundamental change occurred in U.S. policy towards the civil war in Sudan. From a non-interventionist policy, which was mainly limited to condemning the regime in Khartoum, the United States now moved on to a policy of constructive engagement".¹¹⁴

When George W. Bush entered the White House, there were no indications that Sudan would become a higher priority for him than it had been for his predecessor. In fact, the general impression from Bush's election campaign was that he did not have much of a foreign policy at all, apart from a perception that the country was better off not getting heavily involved in foreign conflicts.¹¹⁵ When Bush was asked about his policy on Africa in one of the television debates, he simply answered: "We don't have any vital interests there."¹¹⁶ However, after only four months in the White House, Bush had already mentioned Sudan on three different occasions. First, Sudan was mentioned in two speeches in March 2001 along with China, Cuba and Iraq as countries that deny religious freedom to their citizens.¹¹⁷ At the same time, Secretary of State Colin Powell, at his first hearing before the House Committee on International Relations stated that "there is perhaps no greater tragedy on

111 Connell, "Sudan. Recasting U.S. Policy": 2.

112 According to the Sudan Campaign, the term "back-burner" even figured in a policy paper on Sudan from the Clinton administration. "About the Sudan Campaign", background document, 2000 (Freedom House [online 24 Nov 2007]).

113 David Smock, personal interview with author, 6 February 2007; Colin Thomas-Jensen, personal interview with author, 6 February 2007.

114 Tom Vraalsen, "Erfaringer fra konfliktløsning i Afrika: En vurdering av resultater og virkninger – tilfellet Sudan" [Experiences from conflict resolution in Africa: An assessment of results and consequences in the case of Sudan], *Internasjonal Politikk*, vol. 63, no. 1 (2005): 75–88. Quote on p. 79, my translation.

115 Svein Melby, *Bush-revolusjonen i amerikansk utenrikspolitikk* [The Bush revolution in US foreign policy], (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2004), pp. 9–16.

116 Princeton N. Lyman, "A Strategic Approach to Terrorism", in *Africa – US Relations. Strategic Encounters*, eds Donald Rotchild and Edmond J. Keller (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), p. 49.

the face of the Earth today than the tragedy that is unfolding in the Sudan".¹¹⁸ Powell promised the country would be a top priority for him. This prompted *The Washington Post* to write a story entitled "Suddenly, Sudan"; and then, two weeks later the cover story "Christians' Plight in Sudan Tests a Bush Stance" was written, pointing out the contrast between this rhetoric and the lack of attention to foreign policy, and especially to Africa, before the election.¹¹⁹

Then, in a speech to the American Jewish Committee on May 3 – with Shimon Peres, Joschka Fisher and Vicente Fox as guests – Bush devoted three full paragraphs to the civil war in Sudan: "We must turn the eyes of the world upon the atrocities in the Sudan," Bush stated, and announced that he had appointed U.S. AID Chief Andrew Natsios as a special humanitarian coordinator to Sudan. "Our actions begin today, and my administration will continue to speak and act for as long as the persecution and atrocities in the Sudan last," the President concluded.¹²⁰

During the summer of 2001, a Sudan policy review was under way in the State Department. And by September 6, 2001, Bush's actions had led him to appoint long-time senator and Episcopalian priest John Danforth as "Special Envoy for Peace to The Sudan". Danforth was given a considerable number of staff with a full-time presence at the peace negotiations in Kenya.¹²¹ He was also given a specific mission to end the country's civil war: "Our administration is deeply committed – is deeply committed – to bringing good folks together, from within our country and the leadership of other nations, to get this issue solved once and for all," Bush stated at the ceremony in the Rose Garden.¹²² What explains this sudden willingness to get involved in this then 18-year old and complicated civil war in a continent far away?

117 George W. Bush, "Remarks at the Christening Ceremony for the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan in Newport News, Virginia", *The American Presidency Project*, 4 March 2001 (University of California [online 12 Jan 2007]); George W. Bush, "Remarks at the Dedication of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center", *The American Presidency Project*, 22 March 2001 (University of California [online 12 Jan 2007]).

118 U.S. House Committee on International Relations, *Reinvigorating U.S. Foreign Policy: Hearing before the U.S. House Committee on International Relations*, 107th Cong., 1st sess., 7 March 2001, p. 48.

119 Mary Mcgrory, "Suddenly, Sudan", *Washington Post*, 11 March 2001; Steven Mufson, "Christians' Plight in Sudan Tests a Bush Stance", *Washington Post*, 24 March 2001.

120 George W. Bush, "Remarks to the American Jewish Committee", *The American Presidency Project*, 3 May 2001 (University of California [online 12 Jan 2007]).

121 U.S. House Committee on International Relations, *Sudan: Peace Agreement Around the Corner? Hearing before the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Africa*, 11 March 2004.

122 George W. Bush, "Remarks Announcing the Appointment of John Danforth as Special Envoy for Peace to The Sudan", *The American Presidency Project*, 6 September 2001 (University of California [online 12 Jan 2007]).

Evangelical pressure

Media and observers by and large explained Bush's involvement in Sudan as a result of pressure from evangelical lobby groups. "The Bush administration, prodded in part by American Christian evangelical groups, (...) has taken an unusual interest in the Sudan civil war," *The New York Times* stated.¹²³ "Bush officials have been lobbied heavily by fundamentalist Christian groups," *The Washington Post* explained.¹²⁴ "The conservative religious lobby in the U.S. (...) pressured the U.S. government to maintain a harder line on Sudan," Human Rights Watch concluded in one of its analyses.¹²⁵ There are, however, other possible explanations why Sudan suddenly caught the Bush administration's attention. I will turn to these soon. But first: how plausible is the established thesis that Bush's involvement in Sudan was a result of faith-based pressure?

One indication that faith is involved is found in Bush's own rhetoric on Sudan. The first two times Bush mentioned Sudan, he did it as an example of religious persecution (whereas Clinton talked about the civil war without mentioning religion). When Bush appointed John Danforth, Bush did not mention religious persecution. He did, however, mention the slavery issue. And as he explained his motivation for intervening, he seemed to be addressing organizations like Billy Graham's Samaritan's Purse directly: "We're committed to bringing stability to the Sudan, so that many loving Americans, nongovernmental organizations, will be able to perform their duties of love and compassion within that country without fear of reprisal."¹²⁶

The appointments of Andrew Natsios and John Danforth as special envoys can in themselves be interpreted as gestures towards the faith-based movement. The appointments were made in spite of the new Secretary of State Colin Powell's initial wish to scale back on the use of special envoys.¹²⁷ Natsios' previous job was as director of WorldVision, one of the Christian relief organizations involved in the campaign. Danforth was an ordained minister, and this appointment went down well with the evangelicals.¹²⁸ In fact, the Bush administration's first choice as special envoy had been Chester Crocker, U.S. Secretary of State for African Affairs in the Reagan administration. But members of the Sudan coalition claim their pressure ensured that Crocker was not appointed. "We

123 Steven R. Weisman, "Powell Tries to Nudge Sudan Toward Peace", *New York Times*, 22 October 2003.

124 Karl Vick, "Powell Calls for Reconciliation in Sudan", *Washington Post*, 27 May 2001.

125 Human Rights Watch, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, p. 478.

126 Bush, "Remarks Announcing the Appointment of John Danforth ..."

127 U.S. House Committee on International Relations, *America's Sudan Policy: A New Direction? Joint hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights*, 107th Cong., 1st sess., 28 March 2001.

fought pretty hard against Crocker,” states Faith McDonnell of the Church Alliance for a New Sudan.¹²⁹ Crocker was one of the architects behind the “constructive engagement” policy with apartheid South Africa in the 1980s and did not have the trust of the religious conservatives. In the end, Crocker turned the job down himself as he realized he would not be able to get sufficient guarantees that religious conservatives would not interfere in his work.¹³⁰ Danforth himself was in no doubt as to who were the main forces behind Bush’s Sudan policy: “[T]he energy fueling our effort in Sudan was clear to me when I saw the Christian leaders in the audience that day [when Danforth was appointed as envoy in the Rose Garden] and when I considered the religious convictions of President Bush. American Christians wanted our government to make every effort to end the world’s longest lasting civil war,” he writes in his autobiography.¹³¹

Franklin Graham’s position as one of President Bush’s religious mentors indicates one of the most crucial factor behind the apparent success of the faith-based campaign – elite access. As noted earlier, direct access to Representatives is crucial, since the Representatives may act as individual entrepreneurs in law-making.¹³² But in foreign-policy matters, the “Entrepreneur-in-Chief” is undoubtedly the President.¹³³ According to *The New York Times*, Graham has himself said he used a breakfast with Bush one week before the election to pressure the soon to be President on the need for American involvement in Sudan.¹³⁴ Shortly after Bush took office, a delegation of religious leaders was summoned to meet with Bush’s principal advisor Karl Rove for an hour-long discussion of Sudan.¹³⁵ Among the leaders was Charles Colson of the Wilberforce Forum. He is said to be a personal friend of President Bush, and is one of the evangelical leaders who later were to have weekly conference calls with Karl Rove and Bush’s liaison with the evangelical community, Tim Goeglein, to discuss policy initiatives.¹³⁶ Another is Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention. According to him,

128 Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children*, p. 289. Danforth is, however, a self-proclaimed religious moderate, and in 2005 he wrote a sharp critique of the Christian Right, which prompted a sharp rebuttal from Richard Land and other evangelicals who were involved in the Sudan campaign: John C. Danforth, “Onward, Moderate Christian Soldiers”, *New York Times*, 17 June 2005; Peter Slevin, “‘St.Jack’ and the Bullies in the Pulpit”, *Washington Post*, 2 February 2006.

129 McDonnell, personal interview.

130 “Fight Brewing On Sudan Policy”, *Inter Press Service*, 1 June 2001.

131 Danforth, *Faith and Politics*, pp. 189–190.

132 Crabb et.al., *Congress and the Foreign Policy Process*, p. 141.

133 Hence criterion ten: direct access to the executive.

134 Laurie Goodstein, “Inaugural Pastor’s Youthful Trajectory Was Like Bush’s”, *New York Times*, 20 January 2001.

135 Bumiller, “Evangelicals Sway White House ...”

136 Stone and Vaida, “Christian Soldiers”. As a further illustration of close ties: Tim Goeglein was a former aide to Gary Bauer, previous leader of Family Research Council, evangelical Sudan-advocate and another participant at the weekly conference calls.

“there’s no question this is the most receptive White House to our concerns and to our perspective of any White House that I’ve dealt with, and I’ve dealt with every White House from Reagan on.”¹³⁷ Other activists share this impression: “We tried to reach Clinton, but did not get much response. He had a firewall around him that did not let us in that much,” Faith McDonnell stated.¹³⁸

But having access does not imply getting everything your own way. “It’s not like the Bush administration did everything evangelicals wanted, not by a long shot,” William Saunders at the Family Research Council underlines.¹³⁹ He founded the organization Sudan Relief Inc. to campaign for Sudan. But Bush’s White House does nevertheless seem to have been more receptive to evangelical groups than previous administrations.¹⁴⁰ One reason may be that the Bush administration itself was full of evangelicals. According to presidential historian Garry Scott Smith, there have never been as many conservative Christians in the White House as under George W. Bush.¹⁴¹ One of them was Michael Gerson, who was Bush’s principal speechwriter at the time the President made the speeches in which Sudan was mentioned. “During my time in the White House, the most intense and urgent evangelical activism I saw did not come on the expected values issues—though abortion and the traditional family weren’t ignored— but on genocide, global AIDS and human trafficking. The most common request I received was, ‘We need to meet with the president on Sudan’ – not on gay marriage,” Gerson writes in a commentary in *Newsweek*.¹⁴²

Elite access was also secured through the recruitment of the new administration. I have already mentioned Elliot Abrams as one Sudan-advocate who secured a post in the Bush administration. Michael Miller is another. He also secured a job in the National Security Council. Before that, he had been Senator Bill Frist’s assistant, and traveled with Frist to Sudan.¹⁴³ Frist himself was “Bush’s main man in the Senate and sees the president all the time,” according to *The Washington Post*.¹⁴⁴ It also seems probable that Frist and other Christian-conservatives in Congress who had campaigned for deeper involvement in Sudan all had

137 Richard Land, interview, *Frontline/The Jesus Factor*, Public Broadcasting Service, 18 November 2003 and 4 February 2004 (PBS [online 15 Jan 2007]).

138 McDonnell, personal interview.

139 Saunders, personal interview.

140 The views differ though: Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals said the receptiveness depends on the issue (Cizik, personal interview). David Kuo, who served as Deputy Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in the Bush administration wrote a whole book lambasting what he believed was a hypocritical attitude towards evangelicals in the administration: David Kuo, *Tempting Faith: An Inside Story of Political Seduction* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

141 Smith, *Faith and the Presidency*, p. 366.

142 Michael Gerson, “A New Faith-Based Agenda”, *Newsweek*, 13 November 2006.

143 McGrory, “Suddenly, Sudan.”

144 Ibid.

greater access to the Bush administration than they had to the Clinton administration.¹⁴⁵

Another argument is organizational strength. Although largely a “grass tops movement”, the faith-based lobbyists gained strength and legitimacy from their grassroots support in the evangelical community. As described in the introductory chapter, evangelicals have come to constitute a very important subgroup in American society in terms of numbers. “When you get 100,000 churches focused on this, they begin to talk to their congressmen,” Richard Land says about the Sudan campaign.¹⁴⁶ One example of how this grassroots power worked is the involvement in Sudan of Tom Tancredo. He came into Congress in 1999 from the district in Colorado where schoolchildren had drawn national attention for raising 50,000 dollars for slave-redemption in Sudan.¹⁴⁷

Just as important as numerical strength is probably the evangelicals’ organizational strength: “Religious conservatives have created the largest, best-organized grassroots social movement of the last quarter century,” Harvard Professor of public policy Robert D. Putnam writes in *Bowling Alone*, his study of the development of civil engagement in the States since the 1960s.¹⁴⁸ According to Putnam, “faith communities are arguably the single most important repository of social capital in America.”¹⁴⁹ Churches are among the arenas where most Americans meet most often, not only to pray but also to discuss and learn about social issues. And whereas overall church attendance has dropped somewhat since its peak in the early 1960s – along with overall civic engagement, evangelical activism provides one of the counter-trends of increased activism. This means that the relative numerical and organizational power of evangelicals has increased considerably over the past decades. This is evident in their voting power: in 2004, self-professed born-again Christians constituted 40 percent of George W. Bush’s electorate. If one also includes the votes of Catholic traditionalists and

145 The elite access-argument seems further strengthened when one considers the signatories of a letter sent to President Bush a few days after his inaugural, calling on him to make ending the “genocide” in Sudan a foreign policy priority, along with stopping sex trafficking and religious persecution of minorities in China. See Steven Mufson, “Bush Urged to Champion Human Rights”, *Washington Post*, 26 January 2001. Among the signatories were (apart from the already mentioned Elliot Abrams, Chuck Colson and the president of the National Association of Evangelicals) Paula J. Dobriansky of the Council of Foreign Relations (who was nominated by Bush as Under Secretary of State a few weeks later); Harvard professor Michael Novak; Marvin Olasky (the man behind the concept “compassionate conservatives”); and former CIA-director James Woolsey.

146 Land, interview, *Frontline/The Jesus Factor*.

147 Human Rights Watch, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, p. 484. According to Crabb et.al., *Congress and the Foreign Policy Process*, p. 142, “no single factor is likely to be more crucial in determining the positions of members of the House and Senate on questions of public policy than constituency influence” (criterion six).

148 Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schusters, 2000), p. 162.

Mormons, then Bush received 60 percent of his vote from religious conservatives.¹⁵⁰ Finally, strengthened organizational and voting power also means strengthened lobbying power: one indicator is the polls conducted by *The National Journal* on perceived lobby strength in Congress. In 2005, representatives were asked the question “which special interest group would members of your party buck more often if the group wasn’t so powerful?” Christian-conservatives came second among Republicans, beaten only by the National Rifle Association.¹⁵¹

One final argument in the explanation for evangelical pressure is the breadth of the Sudan coalition. Although grassroots activity was largely confined to evangelical groups, the elite coalition was much broader, encompassing Jews, Catholics and secular activists. Allen D. Hertzke calls it an “unlikely alliance for human rights.”¹⁵² Michael Horowitz cites gaining left-right support as one of the main principles of his lobbying strategy.¹⁵³ But the most unlikely factor in the Sudan coalition was the bridging between religious groups with centuries-long antagonisms. Historically, Protestants and Catholics have not been natural bedfellows in American politics; neither have evangelicals and Jews in modern times. The fact that the campaigns for religious freedom and Sudan seem to have contributed to a diminishment of old theological tensions may be one of the movements’ main strengths. “American evangelicals and orthodox Jews appear set to write a new and original chapter in the long and troubled story of relations between the faiths. Their alliance could well be deeper and more stable than many observers believe,” Walter Russell Mead predicts.¹⁵⁴

In the case of Sudan, this new alliance is evident in the campaigning of Jews like Michael Horowitz and Elliot Abrams, which I have already described. Other examples are the involvement of Elie Wiesel, who was among the people who wrote to President Clinton about “how the genocide in Sudan haunted him”; and the long Sudan activism of Rabbi David Saperstein of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC).¹⁵⁵ Yet another is the fact that the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum made the plight of Southern Sudan the first exhibit mounted by

149 Ibid., p. 66.

150 Smith, *Faith and the Presidency*, p. 376.

151 Bara Vaida, “Special Report: Congressional and Political Insiders Poll”, *National Journal*, 11 November 2005.

152 The subtitle of his book *Freeing God's Children*. Crabb et.al. *Congress and the Foreign Policy Process*, p. 144, call it “strange bedfellows” (criterion nine).

153 Horowitz, personal interview.

154 Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace and War*, p. 92. In a personal interview, expert on the relationship between religion and politics John C. Green at Pew Forum, however claims that “alliance is too strong a word” to describe the relationship between Jews and evangelicals. In his opinion, Israel is about the only issue that unites the two groups. John C. Green, personal interview with author, 7 February 2007.

155 Sudan Campaign, “About the Sudan Campaign”. RAC is the center for social activism for more than 900 Jewish congregations representing 1.5 million American Jews.

its then newly founded “Committee of Conscience”. Among the participants at a meeting about Sudan organized by the museum in February 2001 were the American Civil Liberties Union and several Catholic bishops.¹⁵⁶ The U.S. Catholic Conference condemned the “cruel, fratricidal conflict in Sudan” in 2000 and sent a delegation to the country led by Cardinal Bernhard Law.¹⁵⁷

Alternative explanations

Present at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in February 2001 were also representatives of the Congressional Black Caucus, the organization representing African-American members of Congress. One might assume that the longest civil war in Africa would be just as big a concern for the African-American communities as for the predominantly white evangelicals; and activism by African-American lobbyists is one of several alternative explanations for the Bush administration’s involvement in Sudan. Others include pressure from other human-rights lobby groups; and the possibility that foreign policy is in this case not at all best explained as a result of domestic lobbying, but rather as a product of the President’s personal convictions, or of economic or security interests. These four possible explanations will be explored in this section.

African-American lobbying

“The lesson should be to involve more organizations in the fight against the Sudanese genocide. Where are the organizations of African Americans in this campaign? Why are they not crying out about African holocausts?” one commentator asked after having attended a press conference of the Sudan campaign at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, just a few months before a large meeting where African-American groups were heavily represented.¹⁵⁸ Although there had been African-American voices speaking up for Sudan in the United States since the early 1990s, a review of academic literature, reports and articles in the press strongly suggests that the African-American community was not a main force in the domestic lobbying campaign for Sudan. They were however to become an important part of the campaign initiated by Christian-conservatives, and this may help explain why this campaign became such a persuasive force.

156 Mufson, “Bush Urged to Champion Human Rights”.

157 United States Office of Catholic Bishops, “Sudan’s Cry for Peace”, *Policy statement*, 14 November 2000.

158 “Media neglects Genocide in Sudan”, commentary, *Afrol.com*, 19 November 2000.

Furthermore, there were few voices from Sudanese exiles in the debate on Sudan. There were some, but as a whole white American voices dominated. One reason may be that there is no coherent Sudanese-American society in the States. Sudanese migration to the U.S. is a relatively new phenomenon; almost all Sudanese have arrived since the late 1980s onward, and up until around the year 2000, annual numbers were still in their hundreds.¹⁵⁹ Which means the assumption that an ethnic group must retain ties to its “old country” to be motivated into action is probably not met.¹⁶⁰ This assumption in fact seems to be a more fitting description of the ties between missionaries in Sudan and their “brothers and sisters” in the United States. The missionaries had both strong emotional ties to Sudan as well as a strong organizational network in the United States. One group of exiles is worth mentioning, however: the lost boys of Sudan. These were a group of around 3,600 young boys who had lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for several years after having fled the war in Sudan. In 2001 they were allowed to resettle in the States, and their stories received broad media coverage. Secretary of State Colin Powell met several of the boys personally in June 2001, as the review of Bush’s Sudan policy was underway.¹⁶¹ “To act you must get to know those you act on behalf of. You must have a personal stake in it. The lost boys did a lot to move people into action,” Faith McDonnell states.¹⁶² She has worked with several of the lost boys.

According to Human Rights Watch, the U.S. African community was split on the Sudan issue until Louis Farrakhan “faded out of the debate” due to illness in the late 1990s.¹⁶³ Farrakhan, head of the organization “Nation of Islam”, was a strong defender of the Islamist government in Khartoum, and had considerable clout in the debate on the issue among African-American organizations. Allen D. Hertzke suggests black leaders like Jesse Jackson remained silent on Sudan for fear of offending Muslim allies.¹⁶⁴ The fact that the Sudan had become a “Christian Right issue” also made it difficult for African-American organizations to join the campaign. African-Americans are no less religious than white Americans, but there are deep historical splits between white and black churches. According to an expert on religion and politics, John Green, at Pew Forum, “one of the biggest divisions in American religion is on race. Many researchers like to think of black churches as a separate religious tradition, even though the theology is the same.

159 Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf, *Wanderings: Sudanese Migrants and Exiles in North America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 6–9.

160 Criterion number two in the theory.

161 According to a press release from the State Department, 19 June 2001.

162 McDonnell, personal interview.

163 Human Rights Watch, *Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights*, p. 486.

164 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, p. 253.

Many evangelicals have worked very hard to disavow racism, but the divisions are still there.”¹⁶⁵

“In the early phases of the Sudan campaign black support was limited to disparate leaders,” Hertzke writes.¹⁶⁶ Among these disparate leaders was Congressman Donald Payne (Democrat from New Jersey). He was among the activists arrested in a protest outside the Sudanese embassy in the spring of 2001, and he later introduced the final version of the Sudan Peace Act in Congress.¹⁶⁷ In 2001, Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson, previous presidential contenders, made trips to Sudan. At this point, Sudan had become a hot topic among African-Americans as well. “This has the possibility of becoming a new South-Africa”, one staffer for a black Congressman told the newsletter *Africa Confidential*.¹⁶⁸ Chuck Singleton, pastor of the largest African-American congregation in California was another leader on the issue. In 1999, he explained that the lack of attention to Sudan from black leaders was due to their being too busy with other issues. “So to call their attention to and get them to change directions or add another agenda item is a very difficult thing to do,” Singleton said.¹⁶⁹

In early 2001, Sudan activists like Payne and Singleton did succeed in bringing elite organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the Congressional Black Caucus into the faith-based campaign network for Sudan. This added considerable strength to the campaign.¹⁷⁰

Human-rights group lobbying

Christian-conservatives were by no means the first to introduce Sudan as an issue to U.S. civil society. But they seem to have been just about the first to highlight the religious dimension of the civil war in Sudan. Human Rights Watch (HRW) had issued a report on the Christian Coptic minority years before Sudan entered the Christian-conservative radar screen.¹⁷¹ Ever since the seizure of power by the Islamists in Khartoum in 1989, HRW had issued regular reports on the civil war in Sudan. But apart from the report on the Copts, only one other underlined special-

165 Green, personal interview.

166 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, p. 253.

167 Barbara Reynolds, “Making a Stand against Slavery”, *Washington Post*, 15 July 2001.

168 “U.S. – Sudan – Caution, lobbies at work”, *Africa Confidential*.

169 Tom Bearden, “Crisis in Sudan”, interview by Jim Lehrer, *Jim Lehrer/NewsHour*, Public Broadcasting Service, 31 May 1999 (PBS [online 24 Jan 2007]).

170 This seems to underline religious historian Leo P. Ribuffo's point that “religious interest groups have been most effective when they found allies outside their own communities and invoked widely shared American values.” Ribuffo, “Religion in the History of US Foreign Policy”, p. 21. Which again resonates with criteria three and nine: Policies ought to be backed by the larger public, and the lobbyists need to have the ability to build broad coalitions.

171 Human Rights Watch, *The Copts: Passive Survivors Under Threat* (Washington DC: Human Rights Watch, 1993).

ly the religious aspects of the conflict.¹⁷² The same goes for Amnesty International. Their annual reports document massive human-rights abuses, including the mass killings of civilians in Southern Sudan throughout the 1990s. But a review of all of their annual reports since 1995 indicates that the conflict is not framed as a religious struggle, or as the genocide of Christians. An electronic search through the reports shows that abbreviations of the word “Christian” are mentioned only once in eleven reports (in a description of an episode inside a Church in 2002). The word “religious” is mentioned three times, but not as a description of the conflict.¹⁷³ Neither do the traditional, mainline denominations seem to have played any significant role in getting Sudan on the map of U.S. concerns. “Sudan has been a frustration. We have not put enough energy into it, and I don’t think we have been as persistent and public as the crisis demanded,” presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ECLA) admits.¹⁷⁴

These arguments all support the claim of the Christian-conservative activists that an emphasis on the religious elements of the conflict was lacking.¹⁷⁵ Says William Saunders of the Family Research Council: “Very, very few knew about Sudan in the mid-90s. We were concerned that mainstream human rights groups did not pay sufficient attention because of the religious element of the conflict.”¹⁷⁶

The framing of the civil war in Sudan in religious terms might be one explanation why the religiously conservative campaign caught the attention of the Bush administration. Another might be that theirs was a *campaign* in a more profound sense of the word than the activity of traditional groups like Human Rights Watch and Amnesty. Although these last groups were concerned about abuses in Sudan as well, neither of them made Sudan a special priority over other countries with similar abuses. In fact, Human Rights Watch’s executive director Kenneth Roth had criticized the faith-based campaign against religious persecution in the 1990s as “special pleading” and “an effort to privilege certain classes of victims.”¹⁷⁷ This enraged campaign strategist Michael Horowitz, who tried to get Roth fired by sending letters to board members of HRW and stepping up public criticism of Roth. There were, in other words, both personal and political antagonisms making it hard for liberal and faith-based activists to cooperate on Sudan.

172 Human Rights Watch, “In the Name of God”, *Human Rights Watch Report*, vol. 6, no. 9 (1994).

173 Reports accessed on Amnesty USA’s web page.

174 Hanson, personal interview.

175 Horowitz, personal interview; McDonnell, personal interview.

176 Saunders, personal interview.

177 Samuel G. Freedman, “Horowitz’s List”, *New York Magazine*, 31 March 1997.

Reading through op-eds in major newspapers and academic literature on American Sudan policy made it clear that public campaigning for Sudan in the late 90s was largely conducted by faith-based groups, not the traditional secular human-rights groups. Personal interviews confirmed this impression. David Smock at the U.S. Institute of Peace and Colin Thomas-Jensen at the International Crisis Group both worked closely with Sudan in the late 90s for secular groups. Both mention religious conservatives as the main reason why the Bush administration got involved in Sudan. According to Thomas Jensen, “Bush came under pressure from his base.”¹⁷⁸ Smock calls evangelicals “Bush’s natural constituency – and he listened to them.”¹⁷⁹ This might also have a structural explanation: although rich in topical and political expertise, organizations like HRW and Amnesty do not have the same organizational grassroots strength as evangelical groups. Amnesty International USA represents 300,000 members, while the National Association of Evangelicals represents 30 million.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, while evangelicals according to Robert Putnam have built up some of the strongest grassroots movements in the United States over the past few decades, organizations like Amnesty have developed from grassroots organizations into “participation-by-proxy” organizations, where the links between paid activists in Washington D.C. and paying members are increasingly weak.¹⁸¹

Nevertheless, four secular initiatives for Sudan do need mentioning to paint a complete picture of Sudan activism in the United States around 2000–01: first, at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a “Task Force on U.S.-Sudan Policy” was established in July 2000 to “revitalize” the debate on Sudan in the U.S. and generate “pragmatic recommendations for the new administration.”¹⁸² This task force was in part a reaction to the strong Sudan activism of U.S. evangelicals and others. People like Walter H. Kansteiner III, who was to become Undersecretary of State for African Affairs in the Bush administration, and Elliott Abrams participated in the task force, and its recommendations were to be influential on the new administration.¹⁸³ Secondly, similar activities had been ongoing at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) throughout the 1990s, under the auspices of Chester A. Crocker, who was President Bush’s first choice as special envoy to Sudan in 2001, but who turned down the job.¹⁸⁴ The report “A new Approach

178 Thomas-Jensen, personal interview.

179 Smock, personal interview.

180 Numbers taken from the organizations’ web pages.

181 Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 159.

182 Center for Strategic and International Studies, *U.S. Policy to End Sudan’s War*, p. 1.

183 The influence of these institutions will be discussed further in the analysis of US policy towards Sudan.

184 Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa*, p. 120.

to Peace in Sudan” triggered a State Department conference at which ideas for renewed involvement were discussed.¹⁸⁵ Thirdly, a “Sudan Working Group” was established, which consisted of several liberal church groups and which cooperated closely with Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. This group also produced several policy papers on Sudan and wrote letters to the Clinton administration. And lastly, the International Crisis Group continuously campaigned on Sudan, particularly through its Africa expert John Prendergast, who also worked on Sudan in the State Department during the Clinton administration.

Result of personal convictions

So far, the entire analysis has rested on the assumption that domestic policy concerns influence foreign-policy decisions. Although not an uncommon assumption, neither is it an uncontroversial one. It is difficult to prove a causal relationship between the actions of domestic lobby groups and foreign-policy decision-makers. Another question is whether these relations are best described as causal. An increasing corpus of scholarly works investigates foreign-policy decisions in terms of so-called constitutive relations rather than causal ones.¹⁸⁶ Within these various social-constructivist perspectives, the main argument is that decisions must be considered in light of the decision-makers’ identity: how they view reality. Instead of speaking of Christian-conservative lobbying, one may speak of a Christian-conservative discourse, which is part of the constitution of the decision-makers’ worldview.¹⁸⁷

The vast majority of the works dealing with religion and foreign policy-making in the Bush administration seem to be drawing to various degrees on this theoretical perspective, even though few of the authors label themselves constructivists or discuss constructivist theory directly.¹⁸⁸ Instead of discussing the causal influence on religious ideas and interest groups, their primary interest is to look at President Bush’s personal faith as an explanation for his actions.¹⁸⁹ One example is Andrew J. Bacevich and Elizabeth H. Prodromou’s article “God is Not Neutral: Religion and Foreign Policy after 9/11”, which opens with the following statement: “George W. Bush is a man of genuine religious conviction. Since September 11, 2001, his personal religiosity has had

185 Ibid.; and United States Institute of Peace, *A new Approach to Peace in Sudan* (Washington: USIP, 1999).

186 John Gerard Ruggie, “What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge”, *International Organization*, vol. 52, no. 4 (1998).

187 Susanne Scholz, “The Christian Right’s Discourse on Gender and the Bible”, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2005): 81–100.

188 Instead of using the language of social constructivism, one may use the language of political psychologists and speak of belief systems and operational codes, this study uses neither. The following discussion on Bush’s personal conviction is only a brief presentation of an alternative approach to the subject of US Sudan policy.

a marked effect on U.S. foreign policy.”¹⁹⁰ Their conclusion is that the President’s religion informed his alliance with neo-conservative thinkers and “may well ensure the dominance of neoconservative precepts in U.S. foreign policy for the foreseeable future.”¹⁹¹ Another widespread conclusion is that Bush’s personal faith infuses him with certitude, not to say stubbornness, when pursuing his personal goals. “He truly believes he’s on a mission from God. Absolute faith like that overwhelms a need for analysis”, Republican columnist Bruce Bartlett claims in Ron Suskind’s analysis entitled “Without a Doubt”.¹⁹²

It is no wonder Bush’s personal faith fascinates journalists and researchers. His own speeches and remarks are full of references to the United States being “called” or given a “mission” by the “Author of Liberty” or “Maker of Heaven”. As are speeches of every American president throughout all times. Abraham Lincoln spoke of being “a humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this his almost chosen people”; and Franklin D. Roosevelt declared during World War II that “we on our side are striving to be true to [our] divine heritage.”¹⁹³ This makes it difficult to draw a strong conclusion about the influence of Bush’s personal faith by reading his speeches. He is perhaps not as much exposing his personal faith as continuing a rhetorical tradition as old as the Republic. And even if personal faith does affect Bush’s foreign policy, this faith is not an intrinsic force in Bush’s mind alone. Whether the relationship is causal or constitutive, there seems to be a strong argument that the implementation of Bush’s faith is influenced by groups with whom he shares a basic religious worldview and whom he considers to be close allies and even personal friends. “Due to personal connections he had, Bush became personally interested in the issue [of Sudan],” Faith McDonnell believes.¹⁹⁴ According to campaign leader Nina Shea, the President’s wife Laura also expressed a personal interest in Sudan when Shea was talking to the President about the issue at a White House event in 2002. Shea later learned that Laura Bush’s mother had attended several meetings about Sudan at her church in Midland, which was one of the most active on the issue.¹⁹⁵ Special Envoy John

189 David Aikman, *A Man of Faith. The Spiritual Journey of George W. Bush* (Nashville, Tennessee: W Publishing Group, 2004); Madeleine Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God and the World* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006); Andrew J. Bacevich and Elizabeth H. Prodromou, “God Is Not Neutral: Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy after 9/11”, *Orbis*, vol. 48, no. 1 (2004), pp. 43–54; Laurie Goodstein, “Personal and Political, Bush’s Faith Blurs Lines”, *New York Times*, 26 October 2004; Judis, “The Chosen Nation”; Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of George W. Bush* (Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House, 2003); Smith, *Faith and the Presidency*; Ron Suskind, “Without a Doubt”, *New York Times*, 17 October 2004.

190 Bacevich and Prodromou, “God Is Not Neutral”: 43.

191 *Ibid.*: 54.

192 Suskind, “Whitout a doubt”: 1.

193 Smith, *Faith and the Presidency*, p. 91; Judis, “The Chosen Nation”: 1.

194 McDonnell, personal interview.

Danforth has said that “not only did the President appoint me as special envoy, he repeatedly talked to me about Sudan afterwards. Every single time I went to either Sudan or Kenya for peace talks, I talked to the President in advance, either in the Oval Office or by telephone – every time. He was intimately involved in it.”¹⁹⁶ In his autobiography, Danforth suggests that Bush had a specific motivation for engaging in Sudan: “President Bush saw the prospect of peace in Sudan as a possible model for resolving ethnic and religious conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere. As the president once said to me, ‘If they [the Sudanese] can figure it out, anyone can’.”¹⁹⁷

Yet another explanation is that Bush acted out of what may be called a “never-again” instinct. The phrase “never again” has strong resonance in what may be called America’s “culture of Holocaust awareness.”¹⁹⁸ American politicians react forcefully on a rhetorical level when hearing the word genocide. But this culture does not seem to have spurred the United States into acting forcefully against genocide at any time during the twentieth century.¹⁹⁹

National interest

Classic realism, the belief that countries are driven by interest and the quest for power rather than by ideals and benevolence, is according to Walter Russell Mead a foreign-policy model designed to describe the European power-play in the nineteenth century, and as such is no fruitful starting point for a study of American foreign policy.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, whether labeled realism or Hamiltonianism (as Mead calls it), interests matter, and to understand U.S. policies towards Sudan – including the decision to work for a peace agreement – one needs to consider U.S. interests in Sudan. After all, the most important criterion for lobbying influence on foreign policy, is perhaps whether the issue pushed for is in line with U.S. strategic interests or not.²⁰¹

Sudan has never been a country of great national interest to the United States, either economically or strategically. At the time President Bush came into office, there were, however, two areas where Sudan was of some economic interest to interest groups in the United States: gum Arabic and oil. Gum Arabic is a derivative of the acacia tree, a natural

195 Neumayr, “Midland Ministers to the World”.

196 Jay Nordlinger, “About Sudan: what has been done? What can be done?” *National Review*, 23 May 2005.

197 Danforth, *Faith and Politics*, p. 189. This is consistent with what observers call Bush’s ideals of a “humble” foreign policy; ideals he brought to office, but largely disposed of after 11 September 2001. See Melby, *Bush-revolusjonen*.

198 Samantha Power, “A Problem from Hell”: *America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), p. xxi.

199 Ibid.

200 Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 35–55.

201 Criterion one in the theory.

substance which is required in the production of newspapers (in printers), soft drinks (like Coca Cola) and pharmaceuticals. Sudan provides 70 to 90 percent of the world's supply; and in the 1990s, the United States imported almost all of its gum Arabic from the country.²⁰² When trade sanctions were imposed on Sudan in 1997, an exception was made for gum Arabic after lobbying from groups like the Newspaper Association of America (representing among others *The Washington Post*), the National Soft Drink Association (Coca Cola etc.), the National Food Processors Association, and the Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers Association.²⁰³ These lobbies' interests diverged from those of the faith-based activists. While conservative Christians wanted to isolate Khartoum ("the Hitler regime of our time"), the gum Arabic lobby wanted a better relationship with the regime. This conflict played a role when Congress later discussed strengthening the sanctions against Khartoum. But it seems unlikely that the need for gum Arabic was a barrier to getting more deeply involved in the peace process in Sudan. Quite the opposite: a more stable situation in Sudan was also in the interest of the soft drink and printing industry in the U.S., and the need for gum Arabic does not seem to have played any role in the discussion on whether the U.S. should involve itself in a peace process.

Another economic interest was soon to become much more important than gum Arabic: oil. Large quantities of oil were found in the south of Sudan in the early 1990s, and this was probably one main reason why the civil war escalated at the same time.²⁰⁴ The regime in Khartoum seized control over the oil fields and cut deals with Western and Asian firms, mainly from Australia, Malaysia, China and Canada, to extract the oil. No U.S. companies were directly involved in this new oil boom, but U.S. investors were involved in several of the companies.²⁰⁵ As with the gum Arabic lobby, these companies lobbied for the United States to improve its relationship with Khartoum. An argument could therefore be made that the United States had a strategic interest in favoring Khartoum over the South in order to gain access to the potential oil riches in Sudan, and that engaging in a peace process that could strengthen the South would endanger American interests²⁰⁶. This argument is, however, weakened by the fact that the oil discoveries in Sudan were small compared to other oil riches on the African continent. In

202 Daniel K. Kim, "U.S. Sanctions on Sudan and the Gum Arabic Exemption", *Ted Case Studies* (1998) (American University [online 26 Jan 2006]).

203 Ali B. Ali-Dinar, ed., "Gum Arabic – The Sticking Point?" *Sudan Update*, vol. 8, no. 22 (1997) (University of Pennsylvania, African Studies Center [online 26 Jan 2007]); "Soda Pop Diplomacy", editorial, *Washington Post*, 8 November 1997.

204 Center for Strategic and International Studies, *U.S. Policy to End Sudan's War*, pp. 4–5.

205 Washington Office on Africa, "Slavery, Sudan and Peace in Sudan", *Briefing paper*, vol. 25, no. 2 (1999).

206 Martin, "The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy."

1999, Sudan's known reserves were ranked only tenth among African countries, and the reserves of 36 million tons were dwarfed by Libya's 3,900 and Nigeria's 3,000 million tons.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, an argument could also be made that to secure future oil revenues, it would be in the interest of both Khartoum and the United States to stabilize the situation in the oil-producing areas on the border between the North and the South in order to bring in new investments and explore new areas²⁰⁸. A peace deal could be seen as being in the strategic interest of the U.S. in order to secure future oil supplies.

Economic interest in gum Arabic and oil seem to be more important in the discussion of the substance of U.S. policy towards Sudan – especially in Congress – not in the discussion of whether the Bush administration should get involved in brokering a peace agreement in the first place. None of the people I interviewed mentioned oil or gum Arabic as part of the initial policy rationale behind the Bush administration's Sudan policy. The same conclusion seems fair if one looks at U.S. security interests in Sudan. These were mainly concentrated around the issue of terrorism, which seems to have been the main force behind U.S. policy towards Sudan since the Cold War. In the 1990s, the U.S. imposed sanctions on Sudan, barred the country from entering the UN Security Council, and even bombed Sudan as a part of its counter-terrorist policies. In general, terrorism seems to have been the guiding principle behind the strategic views on Africa of the Bush administration as well. A policy document from the White House states, "In Africa, promise and opportunity sit side by side with disease, war, and desperate poverty. This threatens both a core value of the United States — preserving human dignity — and our *strategic* priority — *combating global terror*."²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, it is hard to find any indications in early statements from the Bush administration that engaging in the peace process in Sudan was considered a part of a strategy against terrorism. When asked about Africa in his first hearing at the House International Relations Committee, Colin Powell stated that "Africa would be a priority for President Bush and me; not necessarily a military or national security priority, but just a priority in the sense that this is a continent of 800,000,000 people who have great needs, and those needs can be satisfied in many ways by United States action and United States effort".²¹⁰ David Smock at the USIP makes a similar point: "Counter-terrorism was not a driving force behind policies in Sudan. It is clearly very much

207 World Energy Council, *Survey of Energy Resources 2001*, 19th ed. (London: World Energy Council, 2001) [online 12 Dec 2007].

208 Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa*, p. 119.

209 Quote taken from the White House online document "Africa Policy" [online 29 Jan 2007]. My italic.

210 U.S. House Committee on International Relations, *Reinvigorating U.S. Foreign Policy*, p. 30.

the driving force behind recent policies in Somalia, but this was not the case for Sudan.”²¹¹

Engaging more deeply in Sudan was perhaps not important to U.S. strategic interests in 2001. But on the other hand it is hard to see that working for peace would be against strategic interests. The conclusion of the CSIS task force in February 2001 was that the approach of the Clinton administration – isolation of Khartoum combined with tough rhetoric – had made little headway in stopping Khartoum’s support of international terrorism. “If the Bush administration is to be effective in advancing U.S. interests in Sudan, it will need a significantly modified approach,” the task force recommended.²¹² One could therefore argue that there was little risk in engaging in peacekeeping in 2001. In fact, changes on the ground made conditions look “ripe for resolution” as the Bush administration reviewed its policies in the summer of 2001.²¹³ These conditions were first of all the military situation; the fact that neither side in the civil war seemed capable of a military victory. This was matched by a lack of any political advance on either side, which made the leaderships weaker both in North and South. At the same time, the repeated attempts to produce a peace settlement in the past had created some common ground from which to launch a new diplomatic offensive. Finally, the regime in Khartoum had approached Washington D.C. several times and offered terrorist intelligence in the final years of the Clinton administration. Although this did not change official U.S. policy towards Sudan, American agents made their first visit to Khartoum to exchange material in May 2000.

All of this meant that the climate in Washington had been changing even before the arrival of the Bush administration, and when Colin Powell ordered a review of Sudan policy in the spring of 2001, both officials in the State Department and policy advisors were positive to a deeper engagement for peace.

U.S. policy substance

Drawing someone’s attention to an issue is just the first step on the way to influencing his or her position. This section examines the content of United States policies towards Sudan from the summer of 2001, when the Bush administration’s new policy was presented, up until January 2005, when a peace agreement was signed between the government in Khartoum and the Southern rebels. To what degree did the Bush administration follow the policy recommendations of religious conserva-

211 Smock, personal interview.

212 Center for Strategic and International Studies, *U.S. Policy to End Sudan’s War*, p. 5.

213 Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa*, p. 117.

tives? And secondly, to what degree did Congress adopt the policy recommendations of these groups, and did the input of Congress influence the administration's policies? Establishing such links, if there are any, does not imply proving a causal relationship between the policy inputs of pressure groups and the administration's policies. But if there is little or no correlation, there could hardly be any influence in terms of policy substance.

Executive policies

To determine what religious conservative pressure groups wanted Bush to do in Sudan is not entirely straightforward. Religious conservatives were not a monolithic group. Plenty of recommendations were made by plenty of people. But as this analysis has tried to establish, some people were more central than others, and one can get a good idea of religious conservatives' views by looking at the statements of some of the most central figures.

There seems to be one theme central to religious conservatives' opinions about Sudan: stay tough on Khartoum. "The United States needs a strong non-military policy to stop the genocide in Sudan – a policy to keep the pressure on Khartoum by publicizing Sudan's atrocities and isolating the regime until the carnage, slavery, rape and deliberate mass starvation stop," the policy declaration on the Sudan Campaign's web page read in 2000.²¹⁴ One may argue that isolate Khartoum was exactly what the Clinton administration did. But according to the campaign, the failure was in that Clinton implemented this policy "half-heartedly": "U.S. foreign policy towards the government of Sudan must be pursued with unwavering firmness and promoted as a policy priority," was the central campaign message.²¹⁵ The same message is evident when one looks at the recommendations given at a hearing on U.S. Sudan policy in Congress in the spring of 2001, called "America's Sudan Policy: A New Direction?" This hearing is a fitting illustration of policy views, since it was held just as the Bush administration was reviewing its Sudan policy, and was the only official outlet of opinion from civil society to the legislature. Campaigners like Professor Eric Reeves, Roger Winter of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and the Reverend Gary Kusunoki were all active in the Sudan campaign, and they all presented the same message: in the words of Kusunoki, "we should treat Sudan as a pariah nation, just as we treated South Africa years ago."²¹⁶

214 Sudan Campaign, "About the Sudan Campaign".

215 Ibid.

216 U.S. House Committee on International Relations, *America's Sudan Policy*, pp. 58–59.

To be fair, religious conservatives made more detailed and nuanced policy proposals as well. Elliot Abrams, who was to become responsible for Sudan at the National Security Council in the Bush administration, made three policy recommendations in his article “What to Do About Sudan?” in *The Weekly Standard* just weeks before his appointment: first of all, appoint a special envoy with full access to the President; secondly, conduct the new diplomatic offensive through the existing Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and thirdly, consider severe sanctions against Khartoum if the regime does not respond to the carrots of peace negotiations.²¹⁷ These recommendations seem to have been supported by most campaigners. But the bottom line, both for Abrams and most other campaigners, seems to have been a deep distrust of the Islamist government in Khartoum. As Nina Shea stated back in the late 90s: “Negotiations with the genocidal dictatorship (...) will not achieve either justice or a lasting peace.”²¹⁸

Yet negotiations were exactly what the Bush administration attempted. Instead of staying tough, the Bush administration decided to stay in touch with Khartoum. U.S. policy objectives were summed up in several speeches and hearing statements by Walter Kansteiner, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the State Department.²¹⁹ The objectives were threefold: first of all, a negotiated peace settlement between the North and South; secondly, cooperation against terrorism from the government in Khartoum; and thirdly, supplying humanitarian assistance to all those in need in Sudan. This meant involving Khartoum in talks on all three issues.

To religious conservatives, Kansteiner represented “the voice of capitulation” on Sudan. Activist Eric Reeves wrote op-eds on Kansteiner’s “shallow and ineffectual” leadership in the State Department, which he called the “deepest shame for the Africa Bureau.”²²⁰ Nevertheless, it was this “voice of capitulation” that won through in the administration, against the more hard-line approach of Elliot Abrams in the National Security Council or Roger Winter and Andrew Natsios in U.S. AID. Special envoy John Danforth summarizes the contrast between the policy input of religious conservatives and the administration’s policy in clear terms in his autobiography: “My understanding of the mission

217 Abrams, “What to do about Sudan”.

218 Shea, “A War on Religion”.

219 U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Implementing U.S. Policy in Sudan: Hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs*, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., 11 July 2002; U.S. House Committee on International Relations, *Following the Danforth Report: Defining the Next Step on the Path to Peace in Sudan: Hearing before the U.S. House Committee on International Relations*, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., 5 June 2002; and Walter Kansteiner III, “Peace, Conflict, and Mediation in Africa: An Historic Opportunity in Sudan”, remarks to the Heritage Foundation, 22 November 2002.

220 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, p. 286.

President Bush gave me differed from the expectations of concerned American Christians.” Danforth describes how religious conservatives, especially in Congress, emphasized how the government in Khartoum was the oppressor and the Southern Sudanese the victims. He concludes: “I did not doubt this observation, but I did not think it relevant to my mission. As I understood it, President Bush had asked me to see if America could be a peacemaker. He did not ask me to be the moral arbiter between the two sides.”²²¹

Religious conservatives got things their way on some issues. They pressured hard to get a special envoy, and to get John Danforth instead of Chester Crocker. They pressured hard to get direct aid supplies to Southern Sudan without Khartoum’s restrictions, and this became the third policy priority of the administration.²²² And the issue of slavery, one of the initial concerns of the activists, was made one of the four tests special envoy Danforth presented to assess Khartoum’s seriousness in the negotiations: indeed, an international commission was set up to look into the allegations of slavery.²²³ But the administration’s overarching policy move remained offering Khartoum carrots like international recognition and an end to UN sanctions in return for peace negotiations and cooperation on terror. This was against the will of most religious conservatives. Activists admit they wanted the administration to be much more aggressive towards Khartoum. “But there are probably a million different ways to go about doing something. The administration’s approach worked,” one says.²²⁴ Secular observer David Smock is categorical in his assessment of the religious conservatives’ policy inputs: “Evangelicals were not helpful in creating policy proposals.”²²⁵

What then, explains the administration’s approach? One obvious candidate is 9/11. The terror attacks on the U.S. occurred five days after John Danforth was appointed special envoy. Khartoum was quick to offer full cooperation on terrorism in the following days, and provided lists and information on terror suspects. “The attacks of 9/11 may not have changed everything, but they did scare Sudan’s government into seeking improved relations with Washington. Suddenly, Bashir [the leader in Khartoum] started to be helpful on terrorism and also to negotiate productively, albeit unhurriedly, with Garang [the rebel leader],” Madeleine Albright states in her memoirs from the period.²²⁶ Albright believes she did everything she could to end the war in Sudan. In her view, it was 9/11 – not the new administration – that changed

221 Danforth, *Faith and Politics*, p. 193.

222 McDonnell, personal interview.

223 Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa*, p. 122.

224 Saunders, personal interview.

225 Smock, personal interview.

226 Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty*, p. 256.

the picture.²²⁷ Cooperation on terrorism was well underway under the Clinton administration before 9/11 as well.²²⁸ But such cooperation was given a much higher priority after the terror attack, both by Khartoum and Washington D.C. “9/11 injected a degree of urgency into our counter-terrorism cooperation with Khartoum. (...) I can with confidence characterize their current cooperation as acceptable,” Walter Kansteiner III told Congress in the summer of 2002.²²⁹

For John Danforth, it was a goal not to make “moral proclamations” against Khartoum. Danforth says he promised the Sudanese foreign minister “normal relations” between Sudan and the United States on the personal behalf of President Bush. “I am convinced that the response of President Bush was a critical factor in persuading the government of Sudan to make the concessions that led to the peace agreement signed by the parties in January 2005,” Danforth concludes.²³⁰ Several factors contributed to that agreement, and not all of them can be attributed to the United States. But according to several observers, the peace deal would never have been struck if the United States had not brought such leverage to the process.²³¹ It is also worth noting that several of the policy proposals the U.S. brought into the process had been tabled by the working groups at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Most important of these was the one-state solution that was to be the central element of the agreement. “I do hope we were helpful,” David Smock says, and adds that the negotiating parties told him that some of his institute’s ideas were generated into peace process.²³² Michael Horowitz scornfully dismissed the work of CSIS as “appeasement” and labeled the think tank “the constructive engagement crowd”.²³³ Although meant as an insult, constructive engagement with Khartoum proved to be crucial in ending the world’s longest civil war.

Legislative policies

Even though foreign policy is primarily a presidential prerogative, the bulk of the campaigning on Sudan was directed at Congress. “We worked very hard, and visited the Hill again and again,” Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) explains when asked

227 Ibid., p. 255.

228 Kenneth Katzman, “Terrorism: Near East Groups and State Sponsors, 2001”, *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress*, 10 September 2001, p. 28.

229 U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations: *Implementing U.S. Policy in Sudan*.

230 Danforth, *Faith and Politics*, pp. 194–195.

231 Smock, personal interview; Thomas-Jensen, personal interview; Vraalsen, “Erfaringer fra konfliktløsning i Afrika”, p. 79; and Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa*, p. 132.

232 Smock, personal interview.

233 Quoted in Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children*, p. 267.

to describe the key to the success of the Sudan campaign.²³⁴ But why Capitol Hill, and not the White House? “Because unless you can put a bill on the President’s desk, you’re dependent on the President’s whims,” Cizik answered.

As noted earlier, law-making is one of the ways Congress may influence foreign policy, and the bill Cizik is talking about here is *The Sudan Peace Act*.²³⁵ The bill was the baby of the religious conservative campaign; in fact Michael Horowitz at Hudson claims he drafted the entire bill himself.²³⁶ It was crafted as a reaction to the oil boom in Sudan in the late 1990s, which gave the regime in Khartoum new resources to wage war on the South. The idea behind the law was to put more pressure on Khartoum, and among the provisions were capital market sanctions to keep companies that invested in Sudan (like Australian Talisman Oil and Swedish Lundin Oil) out of American capital markets. The sanctions were first presented in 1999 by a coalition of religious conservatives and national security hawks who wanted to put extra pressure on Khartoum for counter-terrorism reasons.²³⁷ Later, the semi-official Commission on International Religious Freedom and Elliot Abrams picked up on the idea, before Congressman Spencer Bachus (a Republican from Alabama) included it as the “Bachus amendment” to the proposed Sudan Peace Act in the spring of 2001. After 9/11 the amendment was fiercely contested both by the Bush administration and leading senators who wanted to improve relations with Khartoum. In the end, the administration pressed Congress to suspend the entire bill and help lift UN sanctions on Sudan as a reward for the cooperation on terrorism instead.²³⁸

It was not until October 21, 2002 that a final Sudan Peace Act was signed into law by President Bush. This act had been toned down considerably since the first draft, but still provided new means to maintain pressure on Khartoum in the ongoing peace negotiations: the President was asked to report after six months whether Khartoum was negotiating in “good faith” or interfering unreasonably with humanitarian assistance efforts.²³⁹ If Khartoum was found to be obstructing the negotiations, a number of sanctions would be imposed, including denying access to loans from the World Bank and IMF and a UN embargo on the Sudanese government.

234 Cizik, personal interview.

235 Bills have been the religious conservatives’ main weapons on other subject matters as well, from the International Religious Freedom Act to the North Korea Human Rights Act.

236 Horowitz, personal interview. As previous quotes suggest (“Debbie and I made peace in Sudan”), Horowitz’s claims should be treated with caution, however.

237 Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children*, p. 281.

238 Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa*, p. 128.

239 *Sudan Peace Act*, Public Law 107-245, 107th Cong., H.R. 5531, 21 October 2002 (U.S. State Department [online 2 Mar 2007]), p. 5.

“I will not forget Sudan,” President Bush promised when he signed the Sudan Peace Act into law. And in what Allen Hertzke considers an acknowledgement of the power of the faith-based campaign movement, Bush added: “And if I do, I know that you will prod me.”²⁴⁰ At the same time, in the official press release issued by the White House, the President underlines that foreign policy is his domain, no matter what a bill from Congress states: “The executive branch shall construe these provisions as advisory because such provisions, if construed as mandatory, would impermissibly interfere with the President’s exercise of his constitutional authorities to conduct the Nation’s foreign affairs.”²⁴¹

So, did the law influence U.S. policy on Sudan? As previously mentioned, it is questionable how much influence Congress has on foreign policy in general. In this case, it is hard to draw a decisive conclusion on the impact. President Bush did report to Congress about the negotiations in April 2003 as the law required. He certified that Khartoum was in fact negotiating “in good faith”, even though their forces continued to attack civilians in spite of a signed cease-fire.²⁴² This provoked a massive outcry from religious conservatives, but the administration did not change its assessment no matter how fierce the protests were.²⁴³ Nevertheless, Allen Hertzke claims that the “fierce lobbying by Sudan coalition members” with the Sudan Peace Act as their main weapon was vital to keep the pressure on Khartoum in the final phases of the peace negotiations. Other analysts support this view.²⁴⁴ “Bush was pursuing a constructive engagement where Clinton had been containing and isolating. Bush’s contention was: if you put enough incentives on the table, Khartoum would turn. Congress used the Sudan Peace Act as a stick to compensate for Bush’s carrots, and probably the combination of the two was decisive,” Colin Thomas-Jensen concludes.²⁴⁵

240 Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children*, p. 292.

241 George W. Bush, “Statement by the President”, 21 October 2002 (White House [online 2 Mar 2007]).

242 Eric Reeves, “Monitoring in Southern Sudan: Confusion Abounds, Khartoum Benefits”, online op-ed, *Sudanreeves.org* (2003) [online 2 Mar 2007].

243 Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children*, pp. 295–296.

244 Smock, personal interview; Woodward, *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa*, p. 130.

245 Thomas-Jensen, personal interview.

Conclusion

Attention, not substance

“You never know if you influence someone, or if he just agrees with you,” Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention replied when asked about the evangelical influence on President Bush’s policy towards Sudan.²⁴⁶ Though measuring influence has its intrinsic difficulties, some scholars do not shy away from making clear-cut conclusions: “The faith-based movement has bent the arc of Sudanese history,” Allen Hertzke emphatically claims in his account of the religious conservative campaigning for persecuted Christians in Sudan.²⁴⁷ His claim is somewhat hyperbolic. Had the Bush administration followed the advice of the faith-based movement on how to conduct peace negotiations in Sudan (stay tough on Khartoum), there may never have been a peace agreement. On the other hand, if the well-connected faith-based movement had not lobbied so consistently, the Bush administration would probably not have become heavily involved in peace-making in Sudan in the first place. Even though personal convictions probably played an important role, there seems to be a strong case for religiously conservative influence being the primary explanation for the Bush administration’s policy attention. The case is weaker in terms of policy substance, even though the Sudan Peace Act may have been an important component in the U.S. efforts for peace. Thus, Walter Russell Mead is probably right when he claims that “thanks to evangelical pressure, (...) the [United States] has led the fight to end Sudan’s wars.”²⁴⁸ Evangelical pressure explains why the United States got involved in Sudan, but it does not explain why the administration fought the way it did once involved.

246 Land, personal interview.

247 Hertzke, *Freeing God’s Children*, p. 299.

248 Mead, *God’s Country*, p. 38.

Theoretical conclusions

The shape of Christian-conservative involvement in foreign affairs seems largely to be consistent with the influential involvement of ethnic lobbies in the past: the group retained strong ties to the country lobbied for through missionary groups and Sudanese exiles. The campaign for Sudan was backed by a broad public, though not by everyone, by virtue of evangelical constituencies, and as Walter Russell Mead notes, “the projection of religious faith and values onto the arena of foreign policy has tremendous appeal and resonance for tens of millions of Americans”.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, the campaign had plenty of members and other resources; and the plight of Sudanese Christians was widely considered a legitimate interest, even though secular human rights groups accused the faith-based groups of “special pleading” for Christians.

Concerning the pressure directed at Congress, we have seen examples of direct constituency pressure in the case of the state of Colorado; the importance of personal access to decision-makers through the work of, for instance, Bill Frist; and an ability to draw “strange bedfellows” into the coalition in the case of Jewish and Catholic groups, plus African-Americans. There was, however, competition from groups with conflicting views: potentially in the case of oil, and from an active lobby on gum Arabic. But the gum Arabic lobby’s significance seemed to have faded in importance, and it is far from obvious that oil interests were a barrier to involvement in the peace process. Finally, although we have seen plenty of examples of direct lobbying of the executive through personal contacts with President Bush, the bulk of lobbying seems to have been directed towards the legislature. Therefore, the criterion of the ability to lobby the executive directly is only partially met.

The term “Wilsonian revival” has been used to describe the increasing influence of evangelicals on foreign-affairs issues.²⁵⁰ “Wilsonian” is a way to describe those who emphatically believe there is a vital linkage between American security and the pursuit of American values of freedom abroad. Judging from the description of the faith-based campaign for Sudan presented here, religious conservatives share this idealistic agenda. There is one major difference, however. Whereas the traditional Wilsonians addressed questions of values primarily in secular terms like freedom and human rights, the “born-again Wilsonians” have an explicitly religious agenda of religious freedom and religious rights.²⁵¹

Although Wilsonian revival may be a fitting description of the Christian-conservative lobby movement, U.S. policy substance in this case has looked more like Hamiltonianism. Hamiltonians constitute the

249 Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace and War*, p. 91.

250 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

251 *Ibid.*

traditional, realist camp in American foreign-policy thinking. And traditional realist interests like cooperation on national security seem to have been just as important a motivation as a Wilsonian will to transform or even dispose of an authoritarian regime in the case of Sudan. Or, put differently: the peace process in Sudan is a case where Hamiltonian (realist) and Wilsonian (idealistic) interests merged. As a representative of the Bush administration, counterterrorism coordinator Karl Wycoff, put it before the House International Relations Committee in 2004: “[A] successful conclusion to the Sudanese peace process will help make the region more stable and less vulnerable to terrorists and their facilitators.”²⁵² Before 9/11, Sudan was not very important in terms of national security. After 9/11, the most important success criterion identified in studies of ethnic lobbies was fulfilled: the lobby campaign pressed for a policy – a peace deal in Sudan – in line with U.S. strategic interests – counterterrorism. A brief look at three other cases suggests that evangelical lobby success is less likely when this decisive criterion is not met.

Apart from Sudan, the religiously conservative campaign has been most concerned with persecuted Christians in North Korea and China. Modeled on the Helsinki Process in which human rights were used as leverage for regime change in the Soviet Union in the 1970s, the North Korea Human Rights Act (NKHRA) was initiated by religious conservatives and passed by Congress in 2004. Its first paragraph stated that “it is the sense of Congress that the human rights of North Koreans should remain a key element in future negotiations between the United States, North Korea, and other concerned parties in Northeast Asia.”²⁵³ But when the United States, North Korea and the other parties in the six-party talks signed a “denuclearization action plan” in February 2007, human rights were not mentioned at all in the official State Department release.²⁵⁴ “The State Department is out there to give Kim Jung Il ‘peace in our time’. Human rights are not on the table at all, and Helsinki is anathema to the State Department,” Michael Horowitz, the author of the bill, gloomily commented a few days before the action plan was signed.²⁵⁵

In the case of North Korea, denuclearization seems so far to have trumped human rights. In the case of China, economic interests seem to have been strongest. In 2000, religious conservatives campaigned hard to prevent the Clinton administration granting China permanent, nor-

252 U.S. House Committee on International Relations, *Fighting Terrorism in Africa: Hearing before the U.S. House Committee on International Relations*, 108th Cong., 2nd sess., 1 April 2002.

253 *North Korea Human Rights Act*, Public Law, 108th Cong., 2nd sess., H.R. 4011, p. 4.

254 State Department: “North Korea – Denuclearization Action Plan”, media note, Office of the Spokesman, 13 February 2007 [8 Mar 2007].

255 Horowitz, personal interview.

malized trade relations because of China's persecution of Christians and other religious minorities. The campaign did not succeed, and China got its trade relations. However, religious conservatives celebrated it as a major victory when President Bush demanded to give an uncensored speech on religious freedom on his state visit to China in 2002.²⁵⁶ But apart from such largely symbolic gestures, conservative Christians have not had much success in altering U.S. relations with China. In fact, when asked why his people had such success swaying Bush on Sudan, Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention simply answered: "Because Khartoum is not Beijing." Then, he elaborated: "We can't intervene everywhere. But we have to intervene where we can make a difference."²⁵⁷

In the case of Sudan, evangelicals did make a difference. But even in Sudan, neither the U.S. government nor American evangelicals can bend the arc of history alone, even when their interests are aligned. Consider what is happening in Darfur. Fighting between government-supported troops and rebel groups started in Darfur well before the peace agreement for Southern Sudan had been signed, and the two conflicts were obviously connected.²⁵⁸ Nevertheless, in 2003–04, evangelical mobilization against the mass killings in Darfur was much slower and more fragmented than it was for Southern Sudan a few years earlier. "I pray that diminished evangelical action is not due to the fact that Muslims are being slaughtered and not Christians," Allen D. Hertzke remarked in a lecture in November 2004.²⁵⁹ By 2006, however, a massive grassroots campaign was in action for Darfur as well, dominated by evangelicals.²⁶⁰ By this time, President Bush had reacted forcefully, pushing for UN forces on the ground and sanctions on Khartoum. But the conflict remained unresolved as of December 2007. The main reason: the regime in Khartoum, which the U.S. stayed in touch with to

256 Hertzke, *Freeing God's Children*, p. 311.

257 Land, personal interview.

258 CFR's online backgrounder gives an overview: "Darfur's Peace Process", backgrounder, 2007 [online 26 Nov 2007].

259 Allen D. Hertzke, "Freeing God's Children", annual Paul Henry lecture, Calvin College, 11 November 2004. Another explanation may be that evangelicals, as most other stakeholders, were too preoccupied with securing a peace deal in the south to fully notice what was going on further west. Yet another, that the conflict was (mis)represented as a racial conflict between "Arabs" and "Africans" that matched deep-seated fears of an "Arab-Islamic threat": "A Strange Friend? The Role of Evangelical Christians in the Making of United States Policy Towards Africa", paper, Standing Group on International Relations Turin Conference 2007 (SGIR [online 26 Nov 2007]).

260 Most evangelicals interviewed for this paper cited Darfur as their prime concern at the moment (February 2007): Land, personal interview; McDonnell, personal interview; Cizik, personal interview. Colin Thomas-Jensen of the ICG even claimed Darfur was the number one foreign policy issue for activism at the moment: Thomas-Jensen: personal interview.

secure a peace deal in the south, had now decided to stay tough in return and hinder international involvement in the conflict.²⁶¹

The future of evangelical foreign policy

U.S. policies towards North Korea, China, and even Darfur, are obvious cases for further research to test Walter Russell Mead's claim that "the recent surge in the number and the power of evangelicals is recasting the country's political scene – with dramatic implications for foreign policy".²⁶² The case of Southern Sudan indicates that there is some truth to his claim, although the revival of the Wilsonian camp may be more a supplement than a replacement of the Hamiltonian impulses in U.S. foreign policy. What about the future? Can Mead's thesis, if not a description of the present situation, serve as a prediction of future power?

The evangelical moment may already be over in U.S. foreign policy. An initial indication of this is that religious conservatives think so themselves. In the interview in February 2007, Michael Horowitz expressed concern over what he had seen in the evangelical community over the last year or two. Mainly because of a lack of recognition of their efforts in the national press, he said, there had been "a decline in priority and attention given to foreign-policy issues. Some Christians are reverting back to the default options of abortion and gay marriage. Others are going into the politically correct issue of global warming."²⁶³ In a roundtable on Mead's *Foreign Affairs* essay in the journal *Faith & International Affairs*, managing editor of the leading evangelical newspaper *Christianity Today*, Mark Galli, expressed similar concerns. He claimed that evangelicals are only interested in "specific problems that affect specific people in specific ways."²⁶⁴ Therefore, Galli predicted that evangelicals will become less interested in foreign policy when they discover how complex it is. According to Galli, Mead is too generous in his description of the role of evangelicals: "Both our history and our DNA suggest that these optimistic assessments will not bear up. (...) We will continue to have flashes of international genius – like abolition and religious freedom – but in all, our unique contribution to the world lies elsewhere."²⁶⁵

261 One may argue, as do many activists, that president Bush should have reacted sooner and more forcefully on Darfur. The main point here, though, is that even activism and US action combined is not enough to secure peace. Complicated facts on a complicated ground matter as well.

262 Mead, "God's Country".

263 Horowitz, personal interview.

264 Mark Galli, "Evangelical DNA and International Affairs", *Faith & International Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2006): 54.

265 *Ibid.*: 55.

A second argument against future evangelical influence on foreign policy is demographic. Although still the most religious of the world's industrialized countries, even Americans are becoming less religious. Overall religious participation has declined significantly since its peak in the 1960s.²⁶⁶ And though this general decline has affected traditional denominations the hardest, evangelical churches are affected too: "Evangelicals fear the loss of their teenagers," the headline of a *New York Times* article read in October 2006. The article cited statistics predicting that only 4 percent of teenagers today will be "Bible-believing adults" later in life, a sharp decline from 35 percent in the baby-boomer generation and 65 percent of the World War II generation. The statistics prompted the National Association of Evangelicals into adopting a resolution deploring "the epidemic of young people leaving the evangelical church."²⁶⁷

Finally, although evangelicals were considered to have some influence on the Reagan administration, the current influence of evangelicals seems closely connected to Bush's personal faith and the composition and electoral basis of the Bush administration.²⁶⁸ Their influence on future administrations is uncertain. Although some republicans claim the Grand Old Party has become God's Own Party, the frontrunner in the upcoming presidential election (as of November 2007), Rudy Giuliani, has few if any ties to the evangelical community.²⁶⁹ David Smock of the U.S. Institute of Peace contended that evangelicals were not a strong force in the 2006 midterm elections, that a possible Democrat administration would feel "much less beholden" to them, and finally that evangelicals "will have much less influence on future administrations."

Nevertheless, it would be premature to write off evangelical influence on U.S. foreign policy altogether. The Christian Right has been written off before, when the Moral Majority dissolved in the late 1980s or when the Christian Coalition's influence waned in the mid-90s. Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals does not share Michael Horowitz or Mark Galli's gloomy predictions of evangelical foreign-policy activism. "What we are witnessing, is the rise of a new, centrist evangelicalism. An activist and internationalist foreign policy

266 Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, pp. 70–72.

267 Laurie Goodstein, "Evangelicals Fear the Loss of Their Teenagers," *New York Times*, 10 October 2006.

268 Smith, *Faith and the Presidency*.

269 Chris Hedges even uses the word fascist to describe the Christian right: Chris Hedges, *American Fascists. The Christian Right and the War on America* (New York: Free Press, 2006). Republican Kevin Phillips settles with "God's Own Party": Kevin Phillips, "How the GOP Became God's Own Party", op-ed, *Washington Post*, 2 April 2006. Esther Kaplan claims that the Christian right believes they have God on their side: Esther Kaplan, *With God on their Side* (New York: New Press, 2004). As for Giuliani, he has, as have all GOP presidential candidates, tried to befriend evangelicals as much as he can. See Adele M. Stan, "Giuliani, Gays and Values Voters", *American Prospect*, 10 October 2007.

that cares about pursuing a role that is not arrogant,” Cizik says.²⁷⁰ Cizik is one of the evangelicals pushing what Michael Horowitz called “the politically correct” issue of climate change the hardest within the evangelical community, and predicts that evangelicals will play a pivotal role in turning official U.S. climate policies in the future.²⁷¹ Policy analyst John Green at Pew Forum agrees with Cizik’s thesis of a more centrist evangelicalism, and predicted that the next generation of evangelicals will be more diverse in their policy opinions than today’s Christian Right. According to him, “foreign policy concerns are here to stay for evangelicals.”²⁷²

One should probably be more nuanced when interpreting the second argument against an evangelical foreign-policy future. Although belief patterns may be changing, the picture is not entirely clear. “Young people have always been less engaged. They tend to return to church when they grow older, marry and settle down. And this return is higher among evangelicals than mainstream Christians,” John Green points out.²⁷³ And a 2006-survey from Pew Forum indicates that Americans in general remain more supportive of religion’s role in public life today than they did in the 1960s.²⁷⁴

Finally, although a future presidential administration may not be as receptive to evangelicals as the Bush administration has been, it would also be premature to write off evangelicals’ role in electoral politics. Exit polls from the 2006 elections show that so-called “value issues” were considered among the most important for voters in these elections as well, as they were in 2004.²⁷⁵ And the religious divide between Republican and Democratic voters, the so-called “God Gap”, persisted: white evangelicals and those who attend church frequently continued to support Republicans by large margins and remained the party’s most loyal voters.²⁷⁶ This means a future Republican president will have to take evangelicals into account. And should a Democrat reach the White House in 2008 or later, the self-proclaimed evangelical center is ready to influence him or her. Richard Cizik tells how he had approached both Democratic presidential frontrunners Hillary Clinton and Barack

270 Cizik, personal interview with author.

271 Among Cizik’s achievements is the *Evangelical Climate Initiative*, signed by around 80 evangelical leaders in January 2006 [online 13 Dec 2007]. On the other hand, around 25 leading evangelical leaders in March 2007 called for Cizik to resign for being to activist on climate change issues. See Adelle M. Banks, “Dobson, Others Seek Ouster of NAE Vice President”, *Christianity Today*, web edition, 2 March 2007 [online 8 Mar 2007].

272 Green, personal interview.

273 Ibid.

274 Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, *American Views on Religion, Politics, and Public Policy*, report (August 2006).

275 “Exit Polls”, *America Votes 2006* (CNN [online 6 Mar 2007]).

276 Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, “Religion and the 2006 Elections”, *Surveys* [online 6 Mar 2007].

Obama almost a year before the Democratic primaries to discuss religious persecution and other foreign-policy issues with them.²⁷⁷ And all frontrunners, Republican and Democrat, have courted evangelical voters extensively throughout the run-up to the 2008 primaries.²⁷⁸ Although their future influence might be uncertain, it seems certain that evangelicals have come to stay as a source of influence on the foreign policy of the United States.

277 Cizik, personal interview.

278 Claire Brinberg, "Democratic candidates trying to reach religious voters", *CNN.com/politics*, 22 July 2007 (CNN [26 Nov 2007]); Paul Steinhauser and Xuan Thai, "Romney wins straw poll at Values Voters Summit", CNN.com, October 20, 2007.

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Appendix

List of **names**, titles and *categories* of people interviewed in Washington DC 5–8 February 2007 (all interviewees are also referred to as sources in the literature list):

Cizik, Richard: Vice President for Governmental Affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). (*Religious conservative.*)

Green, John C.: Senior Fellow in religion and American politics at the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics and Professor of Political Science at the University of Akron. (*Analyst.*)

Horowitz, Michael: Senior Fellow and Director of Hudson Institute's Project for Civil Justice Reform and Project for International Religious Liberty. (*Religious conservative.*)

Land, Richard: President of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC). (*Religious conservative.*)

McDonnell, Faith: Director of the Church Alliance for a New Sudan (CANS) at the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD). (*Religious conservative.*)

Saunders, William: Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Human Life and Bioethics at the Family Research Council (FRC). Founder of Sudan Relief and Rescue, Inc. (*Religious conservative.*)

Smock, David. Vice President at the Center for Mediation and Conflict Resolution and Associate Vice President for the Religion and Peacemaking Program at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). (*Activist not affiliated to religious conservatives.*)

Thomas-Jensen, Colin: Africa advocacy and research manager at International Crisis Group (ICG). (*Activist not affiliated to religious conservatives.*)

Interviewed in Oslo 16 March 2007:

Hanson, Mark S.: Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ECLA). (*Activist not affiliated to religious conservatives.*)