

What did the candidates say about Darfur in the foreign policy debate?

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About 2.5% percent of the words spoken in the foreign policy debate concerned Darfur. This does not include Kerry's digression on the under-prepared military (166 words), which was actually more words than those he uttered concerning Darfur (140 words). Here is what the candidates said, after stripping away some filler sentences.

Kerry: With respect with Darfur, yes, it is a genocide.
Bush: In terms of Darfur, I agree it's genocide. And Colin Powell so stated.

Kerry: I think the reason that we're not saying send American troops in at this point is several fold. No. 1, we can do this through the African Union, providing we give them the logistical support. Right now all the president is providing is humanitarian support. We need to do more than that. They've got to have the logistical capacity to go in and stop the killing. And that's going to require more than is on the table today. If it took American forces to some degree to coalesce the African Union, I'd be prepared to do it because we could never allow another Rwanda. It's a moral responsibility for us in the world.

Bush: We've committed \$200 million worth of aid. We're the leading donor in the world to help the suffering people there. We will commit more over time to help. I agree with my opponent that we shouldn't be committing troops. That we ought to be working with the African Union to do so. Precisely what we did in Liberia. We helped stabilize the situation with some troops. And when the African Union came we moved them out. My hope is that the African Union moves rapidly to help save lives.

The hedging by both candidates is obvious.

Kerry: "to some degree", "if it took", "to coalesce"... To coalesce whom? The African Union. It is a "moral responsibility" (not a policy?).

Bush: "We helped", "with some troops", "We moved them out", "My hope is that.."
Who? The African Union.

So much for the genocide convention.

A report today on an epidemiological study published in The Lancet demonstrates that mortality rates in Darfur have been extremely high. "Violence accounted for between 68-93 percent of deaths, with males aged over 15 the biggest number of casualties. They were between 29 and 117 times likelier to be killed than women or children. After displacement, the death rates remained extremely high, being between three and 10 times higher than the comparative rate elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, the study found."