

United States Institute of Peace  
The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training  
Sudan Experience Project

**Interview # 21 - Executive Summary**

*Interviewed by: Marilyn Bruno*  
*Initial interview date: September 19, 2006*  
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The Interviewee is a member of an NGO working in Sudan for over twenty years, exclusively in the South. He sees little or no improvement in the area in the period he has been involved. He attributes this to lack of capacities and resources, while arguing that locally the commitment and intellectual level are high.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are reluctant to move back to their original homes, because of lacking infrastructure and removal of their lands in the years of their absence.

Lack of transport and lack of basic subsistence materials create a cycle difficult to break. Confused chains of command leave doubt as to who is authorized to make local decisions, with a large number of people – including local administrators – seemingly unaware that the CPA has not yet led to official status of the Government of South Sudan.

Lax implementation has left ambiguity in border issues, and lacking outside pressure has allowed the authorities of the North to sidestep benefits formally ceded to the South in the CPA. Money transfers, for example, exist in theory only, with development projects being abandoned in mid course in villages and towns in the South, for lack of implementation resources. The pattern seems to be committed administrators in the South able and willing to provide manpower to meet developmental needs, but empty-handed to complete building and infrastructure projects.

The CPA was a clear step forward and “was wonderful in providing the opportunity for all this to get started,” and has halted violence for the time being. But it is likely to fray as measures stipulated in the Agreement go continuously disregarded.

While the U.S. Government gets points for its efforts to improve the situation on the ground, the interviewee points out the conspicuous absence of donors from Arab countries and even a lack of full-scale support from European donors.

The Darfur crisis was predictable, and was in fact foreseen by many aid workers on the ground. It is harming the CPA by diverting attention from the North-South issues. Intransigence by the North, if left unchecked, will leave North-South issues festering.

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*Q: Could you describe your familiarity with Sudan and the work of you and your organization there?*

A: I have three histories with Sudan. I worked in Sudan in the late Eighties and early Nineties for the U.S. Government for four years, covering all of Sudan from Khartoum, with USAID. Then I worked there again for four years, up until 2005, as the country director for an NGO-U.S. We had probably the largest NGO program in the country. We covered all of Sudan, including Darfur. Having left there and come here, we started a new program for this NGO in South Sudan, in Malakal. I refused to take the NGO to North Sudan. We've now been working for about nine months in South Sudan and I've made several visits. In February 2006, I spent six weeks there, but that was after many years of living there.

*Q: Have you seen any improvements since the Nineties?*

A: I haven't seen any improvement. Things only get worse in Sudan, and Darfur is a great example, but it's certainly not the only one. In Southern Sudan, where we've been focusing recently, things are not necessarily getting far worse, but they're not improving. That's due to a lot of reasons.

*Q: Is this because the Comprehensive Peace Agreement doesn't have an independent entity monitoring implementation? That implementation has been left to the country itself?*

A: I'm not sure if that is the reason. I think the reason is a lack of understanding, a lack of capacities, and a lack of resources. The Southern Sudanese are very agreeable to the Peace Agreement and they want to get on with their lives. They obviously are looking towards the day of the referendum, so that they can become a country. But they are tired of fighting. The problem is they've been fighting for so long that they don't know how to do anything else. They haven't been given the training, skills, and the psychological and theoretical foundations for operating in a peaceful society. So, I don't know that outside monitoring is the key. There are several things: they don't have enough human resource or financial resources to implement anything yet, and they don't know how to do it. All they know is now people are supposed to stop shooting.

*Q: Are any of the NGOs working on these issues, the capacity building, the description of the CPA, and what this referendum is really going to be about?*

A: There may be. I'm not really sure, but the timing is interesting. Yesterday and today I was reviewing how our agency is actually implementing the conflict resolution and peace building field survey. Right now, today, in South Sudan, we have a team there.

*Q: What exactly are the components of that project?*

A: It's preparatory. It's not a project. It's in preparation for designing a program for which we are going to seek donor funding. So it is in preparation for project design, intended to impress a donor. But we have a team there right now that will be doing not only the conflict resolution but other aspects of our programming as well. They will be using normal field research methodologies -- focus groups, observation, interviews -- and they will be exploring at the functionary level, the local Government level and among the returning IDP's (internally displaced persons), refugees and residents. They will assess how they define conflict and how they resolve conflict and how much they understand of the CPA, which we could probably predict but we won't. And then they will try to get at the root causes of the conflict. One of the things we did was to send a team that is not tremendously familiar with Sudan, so it would not bias responses. But conflicts are now at the tribal level, at the resource level, at the intercultural level and not at the macro-political level. There are small flare-ups, but then again everybody is still carrying guns, and everybody's still wearing military fatigues. It's a daily occurrence, no matter where you are. But the conflict right now tends to be classic herders versus farmers, or clashes over water or clashes over good agricultural land.

We are concerned about returning IDP's coming back after twenty years, and the people who stayed behind got the good agricultural land. Now these people return and they say, "We're back. We're ready to restart our livelihood systems and we need good land, too, but it's all taken."

At the surface level, everybody insists that everybody will get along. Everybody insists that they will openly welcome back the returning, the lost souls from their villages. But we don't think so.

We're trying to get at what it is that sets off the hostilities at the local levels and what might resolve these, both physically -- more water, more schools, more land -- and socio-culturally, psychologically, in terms of peace counseling, joint activities, intertribal knowledge sharing. We're trying to explore these issues.

*Q: When you say tribally, presumably there's a tribal authority meting out the law and order, or is there some sort of rudimentary judicial system in place?*

A: No, there is not. There are tribal leaders in herding groups or communities and the tribal leader decides, according to his perceptions of what's appropriate. But there is no macro authority. The macro authority comes from the tribal leader's having some sense

of the behavioral norms of that tribe. But nothing is written, nothing is formalized. It's all *ad hoc*, but it's interpreted according to a set of values. If you're a herder you have a set of values and if you're a farmer you have another set.

*Q: And yet you made the initial comment that they're going to vote for separation and therefore you're going to have an entity without a judicial system.*

A: That's correct. That's because the government itself has so few resources that they do not have the capacity to get out into the countryside where people live. So you see a lot of people with guns but they're ex-militants who are not official police, they are not government officials. If there are government officials around -- and we've met the ones that are -- they're on foot. They have no offices, no office equipment, no radios, and no telephones. They have a notebook and a pen. And they're out in the villages and they're charged with being "the Government" in the countryside. What are they supposed to do? The fact that there's no judicial system -- there may be one that is developing in Juba or even in places like Malakal, which is where we're based, which is another big Southern city -- but it is not reaching out. Not for lack of will, but for lack of capacity. If you're trying to move around through thousands of square kilometers and you don't even have a motorcycle, it's not going to work.

*Q: You're painting a very bleak picture here. Is there a disconnect between the CPA, which is so detailed in what's supposed to be happening according to what time frame, and the reality?*

A: Yes. That's the problem, that you spend a fair amount of time in the field and you become a little cynical and a little pessimistic or discouraged and pretty realistic and pragmatic, and this is what we find. A few years ago, we were working in Abyei. Abyei is one of the contested areas, and we were the very first NGO to operate in the area in twenty years. It was a real honor to be invited in as the first NGO. But the Government was very cautious and very concerned and very scared about what would happen.

*Q: When you say the Government, are you referring to Northern Sudan?*

A: Yes. Afraid of what would happen if there was any sort of outside influence or if anybody went to Abyei. In fact, for a while, we weren't allowed outside our compound. We were told by the Government that we needed to get prior permission, 48 hours in advance, to leave our compound and we weren't allowed to talk to Sudanese people. And we had to only talk to Sudanese in front of a Government officer. That got a little bit relaxed over time but that's not my example. I went down with a high level U.S. Government mission, so the Government had to step back and let us do what we wanted. And we met with something that had developed in Abyei called the Peace Committee. It was a home-grown, multi-tribal or intertribal committee of people trying to work out the Dinka-Nuer issues and the North-South issues, because Abyei sits right on a river that divides North and South. One of the things that people said to us, which was just shockingly insightful, was that in years past, over hundreds of years, the tribes always knew how to settle their own differences, because there were cultural systems for conflict

resolution. I'm an anthropologist, so this was very appealing. And they said, "We always knew how to fix the problems between us but over the past twenty years there have been politics and macroeconomics overlaid on top of our own conflicts and we haven't been able to utilize our traditional systems. So now when we fight, it becomes a big political issue and we're not allowed to resolve them by ourselves. It's amplified by both sides and by who is fighting politically." They said, "Just please, leave us alone and let us go back to solving our problems, because we know how to do it." I was stunned when I heard that.

*Q: How did that play with the Abyei Border Commission?*

A: One of the problems was, two months later the Government abolished the Peace Committee.

*Q: And named this the Border Commission?*

A: This was two, three years ago that the Peace Committees were abolished. But it's just an example of how confused everything is in Sudan. You try to make some progress and somebody's attitude or suspicion or somebody else's fear of being observed or being criticized or something intervenes. I won't even touch Darfur, which is an ultra case of that. But I think that even in South Sudan, where we are working now, there are a lot of factional fights and our agency is proposing to work in an area that's very violent at the moment.

*Q: You are in Malakal?*

A: We're in Malakal. It's on the Nile River and there's another river that runs eastward into Ethiopia, so it's at a crossroads. You can take a river barge down from Khartoum and hit Malakal. And people are also coming across the other river or along the side of it and coming in from Ethiopia. So it's really a crossroads. It's a very big town. But just to the west of that, the Northwest and Southwest of that, there are ex-SPLA and ex-Government militia factions that are still armed and they fight. They fight over politics, they fight over land, over resources and they have guns. And so the example of Abyei doesn't quite work anymore, because now it's not just the traditional intertribal fight that can be resolved easily. People have been trained to use guns, and you can make a big issue of something and it will be very difficult for them to just revert back to peaceful conflict resolution.

*Q: Because it's taken the authority away from the tribal leaders?*

A: Tribal leaders and militia commanders don't agree. So, going back around to the CPA, the CPA is not, has not been able to, address any of these issues.

*Q: And the commissions that it created also are speaking on one level when the reality is at a completely different level?*

A: In Sudan, things don't leave the meeting rooms. There were multiple times when ministers or deputy ministers or commissioners made absolute total statements, promises to NGOs in Khartoum and swore that a certain thing would be implemented immediately and you go out to the field and you get stopped by the regional authority and they said, "We never heard of this and we're not going to listen to it. We think it's a bad idea and nobody ever told us to do it so we're not going to do it. So go home." Things don't leave the conference table. They don't get disseminated. A problem with the CPA, a problem with Sudan, is that you have such a seriously factionalized country that there are many minor authorities who think that they're major authorities, spread throughout Sudan. When they hear of a new rule or a new regulation they think that they have full authority to decide whether or not to implement it. So very often something will come from the state capital or the provincial capital or the national capital and somebody out in the countryside will say, "I don't like that rule. I'm not going to implement it." I don't have the answers to how to solve that, but that's the reality.

*Q: So the peace process itself was agreed to, and led to peace. So there is a success. Implementing the actual details of the CPA to enable these factions to move forward as one united country, or separate countries, is really not there. The elements are not there?*

A: No. The peace agreement has several components and the focus was on one of them. The focus of the peace agreement was on shooting, was on the violent parts of it. But ultimately the intention of the CPA was to get people to move back home and not be displaced and not be refugees. And that part of it got left out somehow, because what we're seeing now is many people coming back to the South after twenty years of displacement but there are several decision points people have. One is, is there still shooting? No. Are there schools? No. Are there clinics? No. Is there farmland? No.

Okay, the shooting that stopped is a nice thing. But if you can't maintain your health or teach your children or grow your crops, why should you move back? So the CPA, the bullets part of the CPA, only went a little ways towards the ultimate goal, which is getting people to resettle and live in their own homes.

*Q: A lot of what you describe seems to be a function of rebuilding infrastructure. Is this something the international community has failed to adequately address? There seems to be some urgency, if we want the rest of the CPA to be implemented. Is the problem a function of money?*

A: It's money and capacity. It's not only money, because just pure money will get thrown away. There's been a lot of money going to Sudan but it's difficult to manage that money so that it gets used appropriately.

*Q: And the country itself now has revenues.*

A: It does, but what matters is where it's going. The last time I was in Khartoum they were building a whole series of beautiful new roads, which is not what Khartoum needs. Khartoum would be nice with new roads but the money could be spent better elsewhere.

*Q: How are those decisions made? The North is going to spend its Northern revenues on itself and the South is going to spend its revenues on itself?*

A: Absolutely. Another case in point was that we discovered, or not discovered but we saw when I was there in February, a series of facilities that had been built by the North, through different means, the government and religious agencies, but we found a series of facilities which were three-quarters built hospitals and schools, beautiful structures with metal roofs and beautiful brick structures and 15 to 18 to 20 room buildings with beautiful cement floors and outbuildings for staff to live in and kitchens and everything else, beautiful facilities for South Sudan -- you never see that kind of stuff -- and they had been being built by the North before the CPA. When the CPA was signed, the North said, "Okay, they're not ours anymore. We're done with them. You finish them." The South has absolutely no resources or capacity whatsoever. So these beautiful facilities are just standing unused and three-quarters finished throughout South Sudan. So it was that, now that the CPA is signed, they're your problem now. But where is the Southern Government going to get the money for those? It's a good example of the kind of thing that's been going on.

*Q: So do you think the donor community is not coordinating to develop a real strategic plan? Is that one of the current failures of its approach?*

A: It's hard to say. I know that the U.S. Government has chosen certain cities that they focus on and certain projects that they feel are the most strategic.

*Q: What would they be?*

A: Well, there are certain key cities. There's Juba and Yei and Uwayl. And then they've focused on things like big road projects, like billion-dollar road projects. I'm not really aware of the specifics. But yet we spent ten months going from agency to agency to try to get resources to finish the schools and the hospitals that I just described and nobody was interested.

*Q: No U.S. agency?*

A: And the Government of South Sudan, when we went down there, said, "Please, can you finish these for us and we'll staff them but we can't finish building them." And they literally almost handed us the deeds to these facilities. We have photographs. We have actual letters from the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education. We made the rounds with proposals to finish these facilities for the South and be able to actually give them a finished hospital instead of a shell. Nobody was interested. It's not in our priorities.

*Q: Was this a million dollar windfall?*

A: A million dollars. Nobody was interested. It's not our priorities. I don't want to start complaining, but we were told, "These are not our priorities. This is something that the Sudanese Government should do." But they can't. So these facilities, the one hospital that we wanted to finish building, there's 85,000 people in that service area that would potentially benefit from that hospital. We were told, "That's not part of our priorities."

*Q: It's confusing in the context of the CPA, which is expecting people to vote and feel that they're constituents in a country. Yet, you're describing areas where the central Government is providing very little.*

A: That's the other thing. The politics of it, the people in the countryside have no idea. They don't know whether their government is based in Juba or in Khartoum still. They don't know what the responsibilities of the government are. This is all civil society stuff. They basically have a general idea that now everybody's supposed to not fight anymore, but that's as far it goes. They don't even know where their government is based. We'll find out from this study that we're doing right now but many people think that South Sudan is independent and that their government actually does reside in South Sudan, in Juba. Many of the government officials believe that as well and it's very hard to know, we were told a number of times when we said, "Well where should we refer this issue to?" We were told "We decide here" or at the very most, Juba. "Do you then have to wait for a response from Khartoum?" And they said, "No, no, Khartoum has nothing to do with this whatsoever. Khartoum's not involved." Technically, this is sort of true and sort of not true, but nobody's really quite sure. Even the Southern Sudanese Government isn't really quite exactly sure.

*Q: You mentioned militias that apparently don't report to anybody. Is this also due to a failure to implement the security aspect of the CPA? There were supposed to be joint forces and other security measures in place.*

A: Yes, but there are no UN peacekeepers. There are supposed to be, I guess, at this point. But when I say factions, maybe they are, maybe they're not. Maybe they're a bunch of demobilized militia that still have some kind of a relationship with each other and still have their weapons. And they've actually reverted back to herding but they look like a militia. And you don't want to go and ask them.

*Q: This little boy in a uniform, was that a uniform of militia?*

A: That was in Wau. That's the North. It was an event sponsored by the Khartoum Government. So, that is not a real uniform but it was loosely an event sponsored by the Khartoum Government in Wau. It was actually a vaccination campaign. So they took the opportunity of a vaccination campaign, which was supported by UNICEF to show how they really think: little homeless kids should grow up to be soldiers.

*Q: So, the direct work of your NGO is providing assistance, doing advising, seeking funding for projects? Sounds like that's a role that somebody should be playing.*

A: We do seek funds to do our programming. What we do now is work right now with UNHCR in a program to help resettle returning IDP's and refugees. What we do on the one side is to monitor the returnees to see where they settle, how they settle, what their needs are, what their numbers are, how well they integrate back into the communities. On the other side we give them resettlement inputs. We give them household goods and seed and tools to help them get restarted with their livelihoods and their lives. It's not a very big program. That's why right now we're designing a much larger program, which is what this survey is about, to actually scale up our agriculture, marketing and resettlement activities.

*Q: Is there a land registry now in place so that, if someone is farming, it at least reverts to him and his family?*

A: No, not that I know of. Technically, the land is owned by the village leaders, who allocate it. But they're not going to kick off the land somebody that's already been there for a long time. It's interesting because you can go through the village and see who the newcomers are because all of the dwellings are made out of grass and grass ages and it changes colors. So if you're good at it, you can tell how many months somebody's lived there by the color of the grass. You can see like the outer circles, the newer grass, outer perimeter. Of course, just like in America, you have to live in the suburbs when there's no space in the city. But you can see where people are being asked to settle or where people are being allocated living space, as more and more people come.

*Q: And this returnee timetable is not according to the expectations, is that correct?*

A: No. Everybody falsely assumed that people would go running home as they did recently in Lebanon. I just got back from Lebanon. People have, even in their displacement in the horrible conditions around Khartoum or Kaduqli or Al Ubayyid, have a semblance of schooling and a semblance of medical care and they're smart enough not to go back to a place that has no possibility of supporting their lifestyle. So they're going back much more slowly and much more cautiously than was expected. They're waiting for some resources and some infrastructure to get started.

*Q: From your description it seems as if the CPA and all the provisions are operating in a vacuum.*

A: The CPA was wonderful in providing the opportunity for all of this to get started. Without the CPA this process never would have gotten started or initiated. So the CPA sort of broke the ice or broke down the Berlin Wall and that was an absolutely critical and necessary step. But then there were other, subsequent necessary steps. But that did start the process. That was indispensable. I can't say anything bad about having accomplished the CPA. It's just that the follow through is equally important.

*Q: So it's not really a case in which circumstances arose that were not foreseen.*

A: We all knew it.

*Q: We all knew it?*

A: If you lived there and worked, you may not be tremendously politically astute, but when I worked in Sudan 18 years ago, all of us back then predicted what's going on in Darfur right now. We knew 18 years ago, absolutely, that Darfur was going to be like this now. We just didn't know when. You know this stuff. It's no surprise. And we knew what would happen after the CPA. And we told as many people as we could tell.

*Q: No one tapped into your knowledge bank?*

A: Oh, yeah, we were consulted. When the CPA was being signed, there were four or five NGO directors that were directors of the largest NGOs in Sudan and we were like the gang. Whenever the Assistant Secretary of state came through, or Kofi Annan, or whenever the vice president of Sudan wanted input from the NGOs or whenever the United Nations coordinator wanted, it was us. So I have personal experience of that because I was in that gang that always got consulted. When the UN High Commissioner for Refugees came through, where the UN Commissioner for Human Rights came through, we were always the ones that were called. So I know what we said to these people. We said what I'm saying to you.

*Q: It seems that so many millions of dollars are being thrown at the country by donors, the country itself has resources and the needs are not being prioritized. What is the story with the other donors? Are roads and railroads and transportation the number one priority because realistically that's what's needed for the fabric of a country to build on?*

A: Yes and no. The transport infrastructure's very important, but even without that infrastructure people get around. But what's more important is people feeding their families. It's great to build railroads and great roads, so that then you can travel faster to a village that has no resources. I think you need to start with giving some basis for people to survive. Perhaps you build up people's household resources and then give them better means to sell their crops or get around or seek medical attention. There needs to be a balance.

*Q: This model that you're describing, why hasn't it been the focus?*

A: I think part of it, unfortunately, is that the donors are smart. As agencies they might be frustrating and very irritating sometimes. For instance, I would like much more money from them to do more work, so they're frustrating, as agencies. As individuals, many of them are very smart, intelligent, well experienced veterans of this kind of work and they know what the story is. I've worked in about twenty countries and I think that in Sudan, the biggest obstacle is the people themselves, the politicians, the functionaries, and the bureaucrats. I would almost say that they're socio-culturally stubborn. If the

donor community or the political/diplomatic community suggests going this way, they say, “We insist on our individuality and our rights and we don’t want to be perceived as being led around. So if their advice is to do X, we’ll do Y.” And it’s almost an obsessive feeling of “We don’t want to be subservient.” Well, again, what’s happening in Darfur right now, with the government refusing the UN, is that they are protecting their sovereignty. It’s that “We insist that we are in control and if we do something that somebody else tells us, then it’s not us in control. It’s us listening to somebody else.”

That’s a very personal opinion and it may or may not be held by others. But that is what I have gathered in my eight years there.

*Q: So it’s not lack of experience. It’s an attitudinal issue. And so the way to garner cooperation would be by showing that this is in their best interest, for whatever reason. Do you think punishment and threats and sanctions is a more persuasive way to move forward?*

A: I’m at a loss because I’m so pessimistic about this. If you try to lead by consensus and persuasion and guidance you get resistance, because “We don’t want to be subservient.” If you try to manage by threats and force, then there’s greater resistance, because “You’re bullying us and we’re going to stand for it.”

*Q: So status quo is attractive to them?*

A: It goes back to sort of the psychological issue, which is, “Appeal to their best interests.” We don’t really know what their best interests are. We’re still confused about that and I can’t say what they are. We would have to understand far better what their best interests are but then again if their best interests are self-serving and contrary to human rights and equity, then how can we appeal to their self-interest?

*Q: You said Darfur was predictable. In what way?*

A: For the same reasons that people are saying that it erupted recently. It was neglected. There was a huge amount of tribal animosity. The feelings that have been overblown and exaggerated between the farming populations and the *Janjaweed* were always there. In addition, there was government neglect; Darfur felt like it was on its own, it was ignored, it was far away from Khartoum, it never got any resources or assistance, so it had to make up its own rules and take care of itself. And with population pressure, with CPA and oil revenues starting to look very attractive, all of a sudden these things surfaced even more. And the Darfuris started thinking, “Well, everybody else is benefiting. The South is benefiting. Everybody’s getting oil. There’s all of this promised aid and assistance, and we’re still being ignored.” So it’s more of what we saw a long time ago, that the isolation, the marginalization, the factionalization, the intertribal frictions that nobody was addressing.

For instance, issues like water. Water is critical to agriculture and to livestock but nobody was helping with the water situation. So what do you do? You keep fighting.

If a problem is simmering and you don't address it at all, it simmers until it explodes.

*Q: And what we call genocide is just the way conflicts have been resolved on the tribal level for generations?*

A: No, no, no.

*Q: What makes that different? This isn't CPA implementation, but it seems to play into the psyche of that.*

A: Genocide is not a traditional tribal response. Tribal responses have always been, you attack, you inflict some damage, maybe a few people get killed and then you declare victory. But tribal cultural behavioral mechanisms have never included annihilation. That's just a new thing. That's a thing when you arm people with automatic weapons and so things have fallen apart.

*Q: So could it ever play that role of Central Government of a Federated Sudan, which is one of the options of the referendum?*

A: If you mean by "it" the current Government, then no, never. Another Government, sitting physically in Khartoum, sure. Other countries have succeeded in doing it.

*Q: With fair representations of the populations, because it seems they're creating political parties, are these different from regional parties?*

A: It's too late to learn new tricks, it really is. I think that a lot of what's happened recently has been very strategically orchestrated but not real or heart-felt or internalized. It wasn't true, it was just PR.

*Q: If Bashir really wanted peace in Darfur, could he achieve it?*

A: Yes, but he doesn't. Again, it goes back to this, "We're stubborn; we're not going to compromise. Compromise is a sign of weakness. Negotiating is a sign of weakness. Following somebody else's lead is a sign of weakness."

*Q: John Garang seems to have been so monumental in this picture. Is there anybody who could take his place?*

A: I can't intelligently address the political arena. I've tried to stay focused on the job of helping the victims, because, to paraphrase something that people say, "Focus on what you can do and don't waste your time and effort on things that you have actually no power to change." So just focus on that narrow part of the work, which is trying really hard to help people. We're not going to have any impact on the Government.

*Q: You're pessimistic in looking forward. Do you think the referendum is going to trigger violence or do you think it will just trigger disappointment and the status quo will prevail? Even if the South declares itself independent, what does that do? They're still going to rely on the North, to a large degree.*

A: Right, and the North won't help. Even now I don't know whether it's perceived or real. When we were trying to bring goods and commodities into the South, we stated that it would be easier to bring them in through Port Sudan and Khartoum when it is much more costly and expensive to bring them in through Kenya. The Southern Government officials who are, arguably, part of the national Government, said, "Don't bring them in through Khartoum or Port Sudan. They won't help. It'll get stuck, obstructed. Even at any expense, bring things through Kenya." So there is this attitude.

*Q: Are there airports? Can you just forget the road problem and fly everything in?*

A: Oh, yeah, like \$50,000 a planeload, just for air transport.

*Q: Is that because you're flying things in and there's nothing to transport out, that's why it's so expensive?*

A: Yes, you're chartering planes. There's no real plane service. It costs a lot to charter a plane.

*Q: Are there airports?*

A: Yes, there are. There are dirt strips. This is landing on dirt and grass. The big planes can't land in too many different places. They can land in a few places. But normally we're like landing on soccer fields and things. You can airlift things in but it's just prohibitively expensive. That's not the answer. That goes back to the infrastructure issue of building roads. There is a definite logic in building roads, absolutely. But you have to balance that, also, with giving individual households the resources they need to survive in those places that the roads go to.

*Q: You've described an agrarian South. Are there any professionals, middle class?*

A: Not any more. There have been some great, heartwarming stories about people in the diaspora that have been living in the U.S. or the UK that have come back to Sudan to try to help the Government grow. They've been in the newspapers and things, people that have been working in a highly paid job in the U.S., for \$30-40,000 going back and taking a job with the South Sudanese Government for \$400 a month in the ministry of X. But actual resident professionals? No. They're gone.

*Q: Constituencies for political parties... Trying to equate reality to the terms of the CPA and what you're describing is a complete disconnect. Is that the case?*

A: To be fair, many of the returning IDP's have a professional basis. For instance, we ran into a few people who were returning IDP's and who were upper middle aged, in their fifties or sixties, who were teachers before or agronomists who were coming back, who were very well educated and well spoken. That's not the norm. But you do run into people that have come back and they're struggling, in their grass hut, in the village, but their English is really good and they're fairly politically astute and they can talk about politics and about economics and they have a good grasp of the bigger picture, and they've come back both to help out in the South because their original homes were in the South and to try to make a go of it. So there are scattered people that are a viable constituency. And then the other folks can be trained. People are not dumb. It's just lack of experience and lack of training or education or understanding but you can create constituencies with good training and good education.

*Q: Is there an opportunity for private investment? It sounds like the international partners are not coordinating.*

A: There's a huge amount of money flowing in, but for instance, compared to like Lebanon, where in the International Donors Conference three weeks ago Lebanon got double what they asked for. Lebanon asked for \$450 million and they got \$950 million. Sudan normally gets about 25 or 30 per cent of what's asked for. But that's because it's been so many years and donors are saying, "We've been pumping money in for twenty years. Where's the difference, where's the improvement, where's the advancement?" I can understand that. It's donor fatigue in its purest form.

*Q: But there's a 2011 deadline date that everyone is applauding and the question is, what's going to happen then? What do your tea leaves tell you for the future?*

A: It's an absolute no-brainer that they're going to vote themselves independent but I don't think it's been thought through a lot further. Now, I'm not sitting in the council rooms or in the political chambers, so I don't know. But there's a lot of prep work that has to go into the infrastructure, the capacities and human resources. But it's an absolutely totally foregone conclusion how the vote will be. But then that applies a series of new problems. For instance, access through North Sudan.

*Q: Access to the port. You're now a landlocked, big country.*

A: But everybody in the South is expecting to use Mombassa, at any expense. But then you start to think, "Wait a minute, any expense. Who's going to pay that any expense?" Because the people in the South say, "We've got Mombassa. We'll just bring everything in through Kenya."

*Q: Is there a railroad to Kenya?*

A: No, no. You can get three quarters of the way to Sudan, up to Lokichokio, Kenya, by road but after that you're on your own. See, that's my concern, that the politicians in the

South are saying, “We’ll manage it. We’re not going to go through Khartoum. We’ll go through Kenya. We’ll deal with it.”

*Q: But no plan on how to get from A to B?*

A: I can’t say whether they have a plan or not. I’m not privy to that.

*Q: I also heard that the rainy season knocks out all activity for six months of every year. So even building a road would have to be timed.*

A: Yes. You can’t even use air. You only can use helicopters and these things can’t even land, because they can’t land in the mud. The mud is this deep.

*Q: So there’s no cement airport?*

A: There are a few. Juba, Yei, and some other places have airports. Not cement, they use gravel. It’s either dirt and grass or hard-packed clay and then the next step is ladorite, which is like gravel and then the next step is tarmac. So, tarmac is like the five star version, that’s the ultimate. But that’s a couple steps above what’s there.

*Q: So, once you have these roads, do you have vehicles? Do you need big four-wheel drive vehicles?*

A: Vehicles are no problem. they will come in from any place. There’s lots of trucks already there, plying the dirt roads.

*Q: Can you get gasoline to fuel your trucks?*

A: More or less. You can get gas now. So, with a better infrastructure, fuel will be even more available.

*Q: Apparently the largest subterranean aquifer runs from Sudan to Libya, and Libya is putting billions of dollars to pump the water out. Is there any project or thought of doing a deep, deep well to make sure that Sudan captures some of this aquifer? It’s not renewable. Once it’s dry, it’s dry.*

A: I don’t know. Throughout Sudan it’s all small scale. Nothing connects. You can’t build pipes between areas, unless it’s inside a town or a village and there are still no pipe networks. But to actually connect anything to anything else is something that’s never been done in Sudan before. So each community has to have its own series of boreholes or wells. I was very impressed in Lebanon. They have pumping stations that actually serve like a whole district, which is a new concept to me. I’m used to places where in each village you have to have a half a dozen wells, so that you can walk to the well or at least pipe water like a hundred meters from the well to your house. But there’s no such thing as a kilometer or two or three long pipes. Khartoum has a water system throughout the city but that’s all I’ve seen.

*Q: We're looking at the CPA. Are there any lessons learned? Is this a model agreement for other conflict resolutions?*

A: I think the lesson is that it's a good start but you have to look at the socioeconomic implications. Once you open up the borders and once you clear the way for people to move about, you have to give them reason to move about. You have to give them the capacity to go to where they've been wanting to go and stay there. So, the CPA opened the doors but it didn't build the house. The lesson is that something like a CPA is like a first step of a four or five step process and all the other steps have to be in place and planned and at least be prepared to be initiated conscientiously and decisively following something like a CPA.

*Q: Is this something the U.S. should take leadership on?*

A: Not necessarily. The U.S. has provided the lion's share of resources to Sudan and I have had trouble over the years understanding why. Sudan doesn't mean much to us in the global picture. Why should we care so much about Sudan, except that it's a poor country? We could say it's a regime that we want to try to improve and we want to improve the democratization of it and all of that and we want to take credit for it. But what about some of the other countries? What about the UK or the Europeans? It's a Muslim country. I've always been very disappointed that Sudan cherishes and prides itself on being a Muslim country. Where are some of the Arab countries? They never show up at the donation table. The U.S. has done a tremendous share of the work. Not that it's been successful, but it's been as successful as you can be in Sudan. But I think that it's really not the responsibility of the U.S. always to be the leader of the pack in Sudan. I think some of the other countries should step up, especially the Muslim countries that have a lot of money.

*Q: Well, the way forward, I guess, is getting the support for all this building that needs to be done. The question is would Muslim countries want to rebuild the South?*

A: There's a perception problem, though, that the Sudanese pride themselves on being Muslims and to some extent Arabs and the Islamic Arab countries consider the Sudanese as Africans and not as part of their inner circle.

*Q: Francis Deng has made the point about identity, saying, "Until we have a Sudanese identity we can't be having these discussions." Actually, in reality, that is the case.*

A: Well, there's a large segment of the population that says, "We don't want to be considered Arabs." And then there's another segment of the population saying, a lot of Sudanese you meet in Khartoum, at least the middle and upper classes, will say, "Oh, I'm Egyptian-Sudanese." They don't want to say they're full Sudanese. They want to have that Arab identity mixed in, right at the beginning.