

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

Interview # 76 –Executive Summary

*Interviewed by: W. Haven North
Initial interview date: April 10, 2007
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Executive Summary

The interviewee is from Southern Sudan living in the U.S. He has been an active advocate for peace and minority rights in Sudan. He opened the first English language school for southern Sudanese who were refugees in Khartoum.

In addressing the reasons why the North and South agreed to come together to negotiate, the interviewee concludes that the North found that it could not “wipe out” the South militarily. Dr Garang played an important role in bringing some of the northern opposition parties into the Southern Peoples Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/SPLA). The main impetus for the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was the U.S. Government’s passing of the Sudan Peace Act; African countries were there, as well, to pressure the Khartoum government.

He supports the idea of inviting the major groups to sit at the table— inclusiveness— and of consulting with other groups such as the Equatoria Defense Force, which was not integrated in the SPLA/SPLM. In Darfur, the Khartoum government is taking advantage of the situation by dividing the groups—signing peace agreements with some and not with others.

The implementation of the CPA is disturbing, especially the border issues and oil issues. The Khartoum government is not honoring the protocols on these issues. The formation of the Government of Southern Sudan—one of the results of the CPA—is helping to pressure the Northern government on implementation to a certain degree.

Nothing is being done to prepare for the elections; a census is not underway. There is a concern about the southern refugees in Khartoum and outside the country being able to participate in the elections. There is no doubt about the outcome of the referendum. The southern people want to be independent and to have their own country without any obstacles from the Khartoum government. However, they will be going through a lot of discouraging years. The Southern government needs human resource help from around the world; it is not capable now. Nothing much is being done now because of internal issues and it has no plan. Meanwhile, the people are suffering.

The Darfur situation is a disaster. The Khartoum created that situation to take the attention of international community away from Southern Sudan. If the CPA cannot be

implemented, it seems unlikely the Darfur situation could be resolved. The Bashir government wants to rule by division; it does not want the Sudanese people to come together, which is what the interviewee advocates.

The interviewee advocates outside support and media attention for the elections, the lifting of the U.S. sanctions from southern Sudan, American business investing in Southern Sudan. The people in Southern Sudan understand the CPA; in the north, some understand some do not; the Khartoum government had misled the northern people all these years.

The U.S. Government has an excellent experience with the CPA, but it is not following up. It should involve the Sudanese and the neighboring countries in addressing the situation.

The interviewee is wants to set up a TV station so the whole world can see what is happening.

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Q: What has been your association with Sudan and with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)?

A: My direct association with Sudan, particularly the peace agreement signed January 9, 2005, was that I am originally Sudanese from southern Sudan. I am a first hand expert on the situation in Sudan and the CPA. My involvement has been since I was in high school. I was very active as a student, advocating for student rights, advocating for a Sudan government policy for minority rights in Islam. In response to that, I was elected as a student leader and when I went to Khartoum, we fought through the Ministry of Education of the Khartoum government to open the first English course for the Southern Sudanese who were refugees in Khartoum. The school was located in the Faculty of Education of Khartoum University in Omdurman. That is my link. When I was in Khartoum, I became more involved with educating our community and also defending the Sudanese Bill of Rights against the security forces in Khartoum.

When I came here to the U.S. I took a very strong lead in advocating about the situation in Sudan. Of course, I gave testimony to the U.S. Congressional human rights caucus on the importance of the U.S. government engaging in bringing peace in southern Sudan and Sudan at large. I represent the diocese of Bishop Paride Taban here in this country. So that has been my relationship to Sudan.

Q: What was your understanding of what initiated the negotiations for the CPA? There had been a long period of warfare between the North and the South. What led to having the negotiations at all?

A: First of all, when the late Dr. John Garang de Mabior came up with the idea of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM), it was initially, of course, the suffering of the Southern Sudanese people at the hands of the leadership of the Khartoum government, not only with this current regime. It started a long time ago, during Abboud's time, Sadiq's time, then Gaafar Mohammad Nimeiri, then to a military man called Siwar adh Dhahab, then again Dr. Sadiq al-Mahdi, the Umma Party leader and then, of course, Dr. Turabi. That has been the experience of the Southern Sudanese, from about 1958.

Dr. Garang was a junior officer, during the Anyanya War in the 1960s, under the leadership of Joseph Lago, who led the Anyanya War after the British left, following which we had a peace agreement signed at Addis Ababa in 1972. Based on that experience Dr. Garang took up the leadership of the southern Sudanese. Unfortunately, the Western world policy did not support Dr. Garang's initiative, because some said he was a communist. That is why we never had support, especially from the U.S. government and some of the European countries, like the UK. But after Mengistu, the president of Ethiopia, was forced out of the country, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army SPLA/SPLM leader, Dr. Garang, had to move to Nairobi. He started changing the image of SPLA/SPLM movement in the Western world. In addition to that, the church leaders have played a big role. World leaders, especially at the United Nations, were not paying attention, because the interest in Sudan was mainly in the Khartoum government, not the people of southern Sudan. So that why it has taken a long time.

Of course, the Southern Sudanese were committed advocates, especially leaders like Bishop Taban. He visited New York on many, many occasions, to educate fellow bishops in this country about the situation of the Southern Sudanese as well as visits to the US State Department. That is why some of the Christian leaders visited southern Sudan. They have seen the situation first hand. They educated the congressional leaders in this country. Some of them became concerned; they started studying, observing and taking a lead. With the support of African countries, like Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and, of course, Nigeria, they hosted the peace talks, but the talks did not materialize. When the Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) took the lead —about seven countries, including Ethiopia and Eritrea and Sudan backed up by the U.S. Government, the Norwegian Government, the British Government and the Italian Government, the result was the CPA, which was signed January 9, 2005.

Q: What do you think was the reason the North and the South decided to come together?

A: Basically, there are a number of reasons why. The Sudanese government in the North never expected, up to now, that the people in Southern Sudan would get what they got in the CPA, especially power sharing, which was not on their agenda and to have fifty per cent of oil revenue, which is mainly coming from the South. They believed they would rule southern Sudan by the gun, then, defeat them. That was their intention. That is what they believed, but they found militarily that they could not wipe out the southern Sudanese. That encouraged some of the leadership in their system to say, "We cannot win this war as we planned. Better we negotiate, we will get the right things."

That is why Dr. Garang played a big role, to bring in some of the Northern Sudanese opposition parties with whom formerly the SPLM/SPLA had fought, like Sadiq al-Mahdi, who had been elected prime minister. During his leadership, he would not respect the right of the people of southern Sudan to put peace on the table, until he was kicked out of the leadership and people like Osman Mirghani. These are the people that the Southern Sudanese had been fighting. They could not give what the southern Sudanese demanded. When the Bashir government isolated them, they joined the SPLM movement, because militarily the SPLA was very strong and very strong politically. That gave them the upper

hand to have a role in this current regime, the Bashir government, who came to power in 1989.

Q: Are you familiar with the negotiation process, how it went and what the issues were that they had to deal with?

A: I was not at the table. I did not attend, but I have been monitoring from time to time from a distance and have some knowledge on other areas. Of course, I read some of the agreement package that they signed. From the beginning they had a big problem with the power sharing protocol, but with the pressure and time consuming, they agreed on power sharing and the oil issue, which is mainly wealth sharing. Oil is the major one: fifty percent of the oil revenue should go to Southern Sudan for the government and fifty per cent will be for the Northern Government and then two per cent should be used for the area where the oil is coming from. The second issue was the border between North and South, which should be demarcated to the 1956 limits when the British left. A commission should be formed from both sides with SPLM and the Khartoum government should be jointly. The Khartoum government had never expected that and it was surprised, although they had agreed conditionally. And then the Oil Commission was one of the protocols in the CPA package.

Q: There was a security agreement, too, wasn't there?

A: The security agreement is one of the protocols in the package. The Sudanese government should redeploy all its security forces from southern Sudan; they should deploy out and then a certain number of the troops should be relocated to the 1956 border between North and South. Those are the major points. And, of course, the assignment of the positions in ministerial areas like finance and foreign affairs is in the power sharing protocol, but, in the end, we had a problem of staffing the ministry of industry and energy, which took a long time for the Khartoum government to agree on.

Q: What is your understanding of what worked or what did not work in trying to bring about these negotiations and getting an agreement? Were there some important figures involved or were there important processes that were used? We are trying to learn from this.

A: The major thing that resulted in the CPA being signed was this: the U.S. Government passed the Sudan Peace Act. That was a major source that made the peace being signed, because the U.S. Congress obliged the Khartoum government to negotiate in good faith. If not, they would be in position to support the movement of Dr. Garang, the SPLM. And then also, they would impose financial sanctions on the Khartoum government, which made the Khartoum government move to sign the peace agreement. They believed, if the SPLA/SPLM's capability became stronger, it would be more dangerous for them; they would lose. It is better for them to sit at the table. When they sit at the table, they can get something from the negotiation. So that made the peace to be successful.

And, of course, the African countries were there to pressure the Khartoum government. That is what led to the peace agreement (CPA).

More important, in addition, was for the Southern Sudanese to be united; that was a major, a major achievement, because Khartoum had been taking advantage of the southern Sudanese to displace them. For example, Dr. Riek Machar and Dr. Lam Akol, those two leaders used to be with the SPLM mainstream, but they differed with some policy among the SPLM in 1997, but they had to come and signed the peace agreement. Those are the things, which have weakened the SPLA/SPLM and why they had not achieved peace or victory militarily earlier. Once those southern Sudanese like Riek Machar, Kerbein Akwan and Lam Akol, these people realized that the Khartoum government was not serious in seeking peace and just wanted to divide them. That has become a problem for the Bashir government. It lost all credibility with some southern Sudanese.

Q: There are differing views about the inclusiveness of the negotiations and the CPA, inclusiveness of various interested parties in the South and the North; some people say it would not have worked if they had included them. What is your understanding of that?

A: Since we have more than ten sanctioned groups, it would be difficult to bring everybody to the table with his views. I personally support the idea to invite the major groups to come and sit at the table, to present their views on behalf of the southern Sudanese people. And secondly, of course was to have consultations with the other groups, although their views will not be fully implemented at that that time. That is the first forward step that has been taken.

Q: Were there consultations with the other groups?

A: Yes.

Q: For example?

A: For example, with Dr. Riek Machar and Dr. Lam Akol. At that time, they were not fully yet with the SPLA/SPLM, with Dr. John Garang. The Equatoria Defense Force was not fully integrated with the main SPLA/SPLM group. So that gave the SPLA/SPLM the upper hand to represent those groups, because they supported peace. Their differences with Dr. Garang were on certain policies. They did not disagree with the main aim of addressing the issues. They differed on some of the policies of the leadership of the SPLA/SPLM. So before coming to the peace talks, they all contributed their ideas to the SPLA/SPLM. That is something good.

And this is one thing I was going to say, for example in Darfur, right now the same thing, the Khartoum government is taking an advantage by dividing the groups over there, signing peace agreements with some groups, neglecting some other groups. But if those people were all to understand, to give their views, choose one of them to represent them, I think that is the good way to go.

Without doing that there would not have been a CPA. Now, after applying that modality, we have the CPA. All those groups that used to be with the Khartoum government, now they are all integrated with the SPLA/SPLM. Regardless of whether they were at the table at that time or not, right now they have put their guns aside; they have joined their brothers. They are now in the government. Like Riek Machar, who is now the vice president of Southern Sudan and Dr. Lam Akol has become the foreign minister in the Government of National Unity.

Q: So the consequence of not including all the parties was what?

A: The consequences of not including all of them are right now is that their views are not represented, and they still have no rights, they have no valid representation. That is the consequence. Of course, for example, Paulino Matiep, who was not in that movement [i.e., not in the SPLM], but he was with the Khartoum government at that time but he was consulted, he was given some access to Dr. Garang. Although he was with the Khartoum government, he contributed. After the peace was signed, he has been able to join the government in Southern Sudan right now.

Q: Let us turn to the implementation of the CPA. What is your understanding of this?

A: There are negative things and positive things related to that. The implementation of the CPA is very disturbing and especially the border issues, the oil issues and the Oil Commission issues.

Q: What is happening with those?

A: The border issues and the Oil Commission protocol are not being honored by the Khartoum government, as was agreed. And, of course, when they were forming the Government of National Unity, the Ministry of Energy position was supposed to go to the Government of South Sudan, to the SPLA/SPLM. The people in southern Sudan took that as a minor issue, although it was an obstacle. The border issues and oil and Abyei, for example, right now, are not under any internal administration.

Q: Do you understand why it is not being administered?

A: Khartoum wants Abyei to be part of Northern Sudan, because that is the area where there is oil, but it has been part of southern Sudan from the time when the British left in 1956.

Q: Is there any effort being made to push the implementation of the CPA by the North and the South?

A: There are efforts being made to a certain degree. One is to form the government in southern Sudan. That is one of the CPA results. Without the CPA, the government was not going to be formed. The constitution for Southern Sudan is being drafted and that is,

of course, because of the CPA. Of course, the Government of South Sudan is able to address some of its affairs without a confrontation in Khartoum; that is a result of the CPA. To have an office here in Washington, D.C., that is the result of the CPA.

But of course we are still concerned.

Q: There is to be a census. Is that happening?

A: Right, there is supposed to be a census and elections. A couple of weeks ago, I was in Washington and I had a meeting with Andrew Natsios, the president's envoy to Sudan, where I emphasized that. By 2008, we are supposed to have elections. There is no census being taken right now.

Q: There's nothing being done to prepare for it?

A: No and secondly, the repatriation of Internally Displaced People (IDP), the Southern Sudanese in Khartoum, what is their prospect for participating in elections in 2008 without repatriating them back home? What about refugees in countries like Kenya and Uganda and Congo? How will those people vote under host country jurisdiction? Those are all concerns that we have. Those are the obstacles for the CPA. And partly, I blame the United Nations (UN), especially for the repatriation issue. It should have been the UN responsibility. By now, repatriation should have started, people should be back home and the census should be taken with the census underway to get ready for the elections. That is a big challenge and that will be a failure for the CPA, a big failure, because the CPA's future depends on elections, the coming elections. Either the south Sudanese want a united Sudan or they are going to be an independent country. This is a major, major, major one.

Q: What do you see as the likelihood of how the referendum will come out?

A: The referendum, of course: although there is no question of the outcome given what the people have experienced which is really enough. Even if you go to a village, for example, when Dr. Garang died, the people's reaction in Khartoum, the people's reaction in Juba, the people's reaction in Malakal are a clear indication for the world of what the result of the referendum is going to be. There's no doubt of that.

Q: But is there something more that international groups can do to move this process along and encourage the CPA's implementation?

A: There are a number of things the international community can do. First of all, Khartoum is making things hard for the Government of South Sudan, so that the southern Sudanese community complains and Khartoum tells them to take their complaints to Juba. Now, two years after the CPA was signed, there are no proper services for the southern Sudanese and the IDPs are not being repatriated. This is one area which we want the international community to support the government in southern Sudan, in human

resources. We need people with skills to support the government or institutions, to support the government in South Sudan, to implement services to the community.

Secondly, we want the international community to support the Sudanese in the diaspora and the Government of South Sudan in the upcoming elections. Especially this country, the U.S., can play a big role. We have a good number of Southern Sudanese over here, although I cannot come up with a figure right now. This is what we want. We need the community over here, the leaders among themselves, to lead our community, to educate them, with elections coming up. Like what happened in Afghanistan, what happened in Iraq, their elections were publicized in the newspapers, on TV. In Southern Sudan, there is nothing. You do not even see anything in the newspaper. We want those sorts of people to be with us, to lead us, to educate our community. This is a country that fought for 22 years. All the educated people... and there are not any newly educated people.

So those are the things I appeal to the international community to work with us on, to make sure there are really tools for the CPA to be implemented.

Q: Do you have any sense of what you think the outcome of a referendum might be?

A: The outcome of the referendum I have no doubt. Whether we educate our people or do not, still we do not want to give the upper hand to the Khartoum government. We want our community to vote and I am sure they are going to vote in a positive way, although they are going to be going through a lot of discouraging years. The result will be how people want it. The people want to be independent, to have their own country, to address their own affairs without any obstacle from the Khartoum government.

Q: What is your understanding of the capacity of the Southern government to govern this area?

A: That is what I was saying a few minutes ago. We need human resources from around the world. The government is not capable right now in managing a lot of stuff.

Q: This is the Southern government?

A: The Southern government, yes... We need support from the international community. We need support from private institutions. We need a lot of things to educate the people to solve them, i.e., the challenges facing the new government. This is something we wanted. Although we have southern Sudanese outside in the Western world, yes, but the need is huge at the moment.

Q: How is it progressing, though? Is something being done now?

A: There is really nothing much being done because we have had internal issues also, especially when this government was being formed. The people who fought for all these years in the bush, they, the commanders, believed that they were the government. And some of the Southern Sudanese who are in the diaspora, who had the potential

knowledge, who had the experience, to provide for Southern Sudan, for one full year plus some months they have been a target because when they got there they believe they were coming to take their positions. Those are some of the internal problems that we are facing.

They have no plan. For example, last year, the budget for one year was not spelled out. The money was left there. There are no services and there is nothing, because they do not have a plan. The people in the leadership do not have a vision; they do not have a plan, even when they have money. How can you be holding money in your account or in your hand without using it? Meanwhile, the people are suffering. They need water; they need schools; they need health centers, they need roads. So we need people with vision, with a plan. So those are the challenges right now that our leaders are having in Juba.

Q: I have heard that within the Southern area there are a lot of different parties who are still somewhat at odds with each other. Is that right?

A: Not really. Those are the allegations. The Khartoum government is using some weak people. In general, there is a government, which is part of them; everybody is fighting right now to participate, to have decent representation in the government. That is what I see now.

Q: How has the Darfur situation affected all this?

A: The Darfur situation is a disaster. That is a tactic of the Khartoum government, to make it like that, because they knew they were being pressure by the world to conclude peace in Southern Sudan and to implement that peace. They created that situation in Darfur to take the attention of the international community, so instead of building southern Sudan, they created that situation to take the attention of the international community; all the humanitarian agencies flew over there. I think the world also is making a mistake advocating only for that particular area alone, forgetting that if the CPA cannot be implemented, how do we expect the Darfur situation will be resolved by the Khartoum government? That is a challenge for the Western world and leaders around the world. So I believe the Darfur situation really pinned down development in Southern Sudan. Not much attention is being paid there. Yes, we need the situation in Darfur to be resolved and in order to resolve that situation, world leaders must work with the people in southern Sudan in order for them to play a major role to resolve that one. That is what most of the activists and the leaders have not seen in that way.

Khartoum, that is, the leadership in Khartoum, does not want the Sudanese people coming together. That did not start with the Bashir government. It started a long time ago. It is a threat to them. They want to rule by division. That is what I strongly sense.

Q: What is it you advocate?

A: I advocate that people address these issues together, not to separate Darfur's suffering and South Sudan's suffering, because they are the same thing; they have the same roots.

Q: Is it the same with the eastern rebels?

A: It is the same for the eastern rebels and the Beja group.

Q: Is there any international or national group that is advocating a vision of a united Sudan, bringing everybody together?

A: The world is struggling to unite us, but the Sudanese people have a different view. The Sudanese people, Southern Sudanese, they want to keep the fellow colors together... and Darfur particularly. They are fighting for themselves; they are fighting for their country; they are fighting so that eventually they will be given a chance to vote whether to be with the people of Southern Sudan. That is what the Darfurian people want, but very few people around the world, either internationally or locally, are advocating that. I personally have been speaking at many events, to many people on this issue and most people agree with me, bring all these groups together, let them come up with mechanisms, how they want their issues to be resolved, the Beja group, Southern Sudan and the people in the Darfur area.

Q: What is your understanding of the people in the Northern area, apart from the government? What is their view?

A: These people in the Northern area have been, some of them have been left in the dark. Some of them, all those years, have been enjoying privileges in the northern part of Sudan, with any government that came in, despite that some of them have had a bad experience with this current regime. But believe me or not, if tomorrow we vote for a united Sudan, all one country, tomorrow Bashir will not be in the power; but any other man who comes into power will take the rest of the Sudanese the same way. Nothing is going to be different. They only want to protect their own interests. In respect to that, this is a bad day for them but once Bashir is not there, it is going to be a blessing for them. That is how I see it and that is exactly what has been the case all these years, including Dr. Turabi, including Dr. Mahdi, Sadiq al-Mahdi, including the rest of the opposition leaders in northern Sudan. Right now, yes, it is a black day for them because the policy of Bashir is not the policy that they wanted.

Q: What have you been particularly advocating? I gather you have been doing some advocacy work.

A: First of all, I have a foundation. I was advocating, as I mentioned earlier, before the CPA was signed, to let the American community and the U.S. government know what the needs are there in Southern Sudan. I am glad through some of my activities the CPA was signed and many people stood up to advocate what is happening. My advocacy right now is for elections. That is what I want. We need support for the upcoming elections. We need for the media to cover them, to expose the situation to the American people, to expose to the world, those are the things I want. And Sudanese voices also must be exposed, so that their voices will be heard. We need to represent ourselves. Opportunities

should be given us. What we need, what we can do, what we cannot do, what we need support in. We need to air our condition, our needs. That is what I am advocating.

As I mentioned earlier, Afghanistan, when the Taliban government was being kicked out: the new leadership came in, the elections were on TV. Everybody was watching what was happening on a daily basis. The Afghan community in this country was actively in support. Those are the things I am strongly now advocating. I want to make sure that happens for Sudan.

I am advocating to the U.S. government to lift sanctions from Southern Sudan. I know that the Darfur Peace Accountability bill was passed last year; it is only been left for the president to sign it. In the Darfur Peace Accountability Act, there are some parts, southern Sudan and Nuba Mountains and the marginalized areas, which should be exempted from the sanctions which the U.S. government imposed on Sudan, I believe since 1985 or 1986.

I want American business people to invest in Southern Sudan and other marginalized areas of Sudan. If you sign a peace but you do not provide services, believe me, no one is going to say that there is peace over there. People took a gun to fight for services that were lacking. Now you have brought peace and the people expect the services to be there, such as clean water, such as hospitals, roads and other services that human beings need.

I am advocating that sanctions must be lifted immediately; U.S. companies must heavily invest in Southern Sudan. Those are the two things I strongly want and am advocating for.

Q: To what degree do you think that the people in the South and in the North understand the CPA and the plans for elections? How much do the people really understand what is going on?

A: The people in Southern Sudan really understand CPA, the meaning of the CPA, they have seen the fruit in this short time, but yet the Khartoum government is making things harder for them. They understand, but they want to make sure. They will have to see what they fought for all these years.

But what people in northern Sudan understand: some understand, some do not understand, because they have not been educated about the importance of the CPA. The government has misled the northern people, all these years. They have not been educated about the dangers of the CPA and the benefits of the CPA. There are very few elites who follow politics from time to time, who really know exactly what the results of the CPA are going to be, in northern Sudan. The policy of the Khartoum government is not to educate people about the CPA. Only a very few elites, like I said, those who are affiliated with politics, monitor developments from time to time. But the community overall, believe me, they do not know much about it.

Q: Is there anything that we have not touched on that you believe is important, or something that you want to reemphasize?

A: At the moment the most important thing is that I want the media to cover our election, the upcoming election; and they also must see the importance for the investors to be in Southern Sudan and also to empower the government in Southern Sudan. Those are the three major things I am advocating. And the fourth thing is Darfur. People must really work hard; march for peace in Darfur. The people in Darfur must be protected and the Khartoum government must allow the UN peacekeeping forces, they must be in Darfur as soon as possible.

Q: Is there anything that the outside world can do to get the Khartoum government to move or change its position?

A: What the world can do is to pressure countries like China, who are doing a billion dollars in the oil industry with the Khartoum government, which is blocking the UN peacekeeping forces; those who are doing business with China and have interests with them should let the Chinese government know that this is not going to happen. People have to boycott the Olympics. Those are the things I strongly advocate.

Q: Let us look back over your whole experience. One of the interests of the U.S. Institute of Peace is to identify the lessons learned from your experience. Do you have any thoughts about what has been learned about what should or should not have been done by the various parties?

A: The U.S. government had a very excellent experience with the CPA. But what they are not doing, they are not following up. We need follow-up. We support the idea of President Bush's appointment of Andrew Natsios as his envoy to Sudan. But Andrew Natsios, as part time job and without staff expertise, is not enough. He cannot do the whole thing. Sudan is a very complex situation: the South and the peace effort in western Sudan and the Darfur area. We need the Bush Administration to increase the budget, so that Andrew Natsios has full support from his staff. Those are the things; like what John Danforth did. He was full time. He had an expert staff and not only of American nationality but from the southern Sudanese; the Sudanese must be involved in policy making, because they know some of the inner dynamics that the outsiders would not know. So I strongly advise the U.S government to involve the Sudanese in addressing the situation in Sudan.

Q: Is there anything in the past, in terms of the CPA and its negotiation, that suggests lessons learned about something that might have worked better than what was done or that worked very well?

A: There are a number of things. The U.S. government, when they addressed the CPA issues, they involved the African countries. They involved IGAD: the African countries. They involved the civil service. So to address the situation in Darfur the U.S. government should also involve the African countries. Although the African Union is there on the

ground, that is only in the military area. We need people with knowledge, like IGAD, to be there and lead the political dialogue. Military force alone is not going to solve the problem. We need a political dialogue and Khartoum must not be given a chance to avoid implementing the CPA. But now the international community are giving Khartoum government lot of chances.

When the CPA was being negotiated, there was no debate between the Bashir government and the U.S. government. But now, with the Darfur situation, Khartoum is helping the U.S. government with information on terrorists, which is contradicting U.S. aim as to what they really want to address in Darfur. Those are things that need to be handled separately. And it is very important for the Bush Administration to know that. You want Bashir to give information on terrorists and you also want to help the Khartoum government provide security for the Darfur people. It is not going to work. It was not the strategy we followed in pursuing the CPA and I believe we should rely on that one.

Implementing the CPA has become weaker, because the U.S. Government has taken a lead now in negotiating with the Bashir government, providing information, flying some of their officials to Washington. Those are a bad signal. They should not do that kind of thing. Instead they should use some other countries to fight the terrorists separately.

Q: Are there any other lessons that occur to you, as you look back over the period of your involvement?

A: There is nothing more than what I have mentioned. Involve the neighbor countries in the situation in Darfur and provide Andrew Natsios with a full time staff. We want our U.S. Government to do it. And then the U.S. Government also has to bring all the opposition parties in Darfur to work together, to bring them to understand what are their differences, using third parties to reconcile them, to bring them to the table. Now I do not see the leadership in Darfur coming to this country, addressing what they need. They had been neglecting the SPLA; but when they opened the door, they started educating them, they came to realize the importance of it. They should provide a window for the leadership of Darfur.

Q: What is your understanding of the leaders in Darfur? Are there leaders who are capable of coming together?

A: I have never had close contact with them, have never met some of them, but I believe everything is possible. Once the initiative is there, of course they will attend, because they need people to support them, to address their issues. They cannot address their issues alone. You need someone to help you; you need to listen to someone. Right now there is no one to work with them, to reconcile them. But I am glad President Salva Kiir of Southern Sudan attempted to go over there; he is trying to bring them to understand what they had gone through, trying to be a consultant to them, to advise them. That is a good move. I believe if somebody would be over there like Kenya, like South Africa, with some other African countries, to have this kind of meeting to let them know. Even

Lazarus Sumbeiywo, the former IGAD chairman, who hosted the CPA, should be involved in this, because of the experience he had. It should be taken advantage of. So those are the things I see that are not happening and those are the things I recommended should be done to make a difference.

And the Khartoum government, when they see people are there, educating these people, bringing them together, it is a big threat to the Khartoum government. The Khartoum government wants them to be isolated, so that they do not get external support.

Q: This interview has been very comprehensive. You said you are trying to develop...

A: ...a TV station. We want to be like al-Jazeera, so that our community, the whole world can see what is happening. I am looking for the experts who can help us in those areas.

Q: This is for Southern Sudan?

A: ...for Southern Sudan, yes. We need a TV station to educate our community and to educate the world, like al-Jazeera: one of those kinds of TV stations.

Q: And when you say "we" who are you speaking of, specifically?

A: The Southern Sudanese. We have our committee already and we are looking for expertise from the U.S. that can pull our ideas together, because we are not the experts. We are looking for experts who can help us.

Q: This is help with information?

A: Help with information, even putting information together for the TV station.

Q: Thank you for the interview.