

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

**Interview # 40 –Executive Summary**

*Interviewed by: Barbara Nielsen*  
*Initial interview date: October 19, 2006*  
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The interviewee was based in Kenya for the period April, 2005 – October, 2006 working on behalf of IFES; his area of responsibility included all of eastern and southern Africa, including Sudan.

In the view of this interviewee, the SPLM has performed well in moving from a military unit to a governing organization. They are bringing a “sense of governance to people who have not been governed for the better part of a generation,” and their performance is “better than expected, with a lot of room to grow.” While the SPLM’s internal disagreements were more exposed after the death of John Garang, the organization has managed to coalesce around the unifying theme of governing South Sudan in the best way possible. This interviewee stressed that despite the hardships of attracting qualified Sudanese to return, the SPLM does benefit from a strong intellectual base of individuals educated abroad who have returned to help. His evaluation of the ten new state governments in the South, whose creation was stipulated by the CPA, is that they deserve a “better than average grade” thus far in formulating local constitutions and in working together.

On the national level, the interviewee opined that the effectiveness of First Vice-President Salva Kiir has been good, “given the enormity of the task.” While he lacks the political gravitas of John Garang, he has managed to solidify his own political base within the government of South Sudan, has managed to bring back some of Garang’s most valuable people, and “has shown a great deal of political savvy and ability to adapt” in order to get results.

The interviewee expressed some concern about the pace of the on-going census, though its completion is not indispensable for the conduct of a free and fair referendum in 2009, as well as slippage in the creation of an electoral law to govern this upcoming election. Ultimately, though, the interviewee believes the Sudanese will complete it in time, because they have respect for law and want to create a sustainable, representative democracy. Creating a functioning democracy depends on a complex web of events converging, including not just elections, but also civic education, political party development, media development and the like.

In evaluating the contributions of the international donor organizations, he observed that some are too big and bureaucratic to do the work well on a village level. Those that are small and maneuverable were more effective. He recommends giving the UN Military Operations in Sudan more meaningful tasks than just observing, since they have a strong understanding of the local situation. Donors also need to provide assistance for improved governance as much as technical assistance for roads and infrastructure. The interviewee applauds the fact that donor nations were ready to engage quickly once the CPA was in place, across a broad spectrum of

areas – health care, infrastructure, governance, etc. However, he also recommends better coordination among the international donors to avoid repetition or waste of funds. Regarding the various commissions provided for in the CPA, the interviewee was critical that some of them had been stood up in name only, without the necessary means to actually function – e.g. a building, supplies, communications tools, etc.

Regarding the possible exemption of the government of South Sudan from U.S. sanctions, the interviewee recommends against that policy, since it would amount to “signing off on a two-Sudan policy.” He also laments that, serious as the Darfur situation is, it is nonetheless “distracting what limited attention the news media and the United States has for Africa.” He believes that more attention needs to be focused on the advancement of the CPA, on progress (or lack of) in Abyei and on diplomacy with Khartoum.

When asked to predict the outcome of “a free and fair” election in 2009, he believes that the result would be partition of Sudan, that the South would want to go its own way. If, on the other hand, there is a biased election, one that has been rigged by a bad census, faulty registration, improper application of the electoral law, or other irregularities, the likely outcome is a slight majority in favor of keeping the country together. Interestingly, he cites the practice of NCP members in the State governments in the South who speak of two Sudans and who “hedge their bets” by having both a Bible and a Koran on their desk, quoting from both.

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*Q: When did you return from Africa?*

A.: I just got back five days ago.

*Q: And how long were you in Kenya?*

A.: I was based out of Kenya for the previous 18 months but my work was to cover on behalf of IFES all of Eastern and Southern Africa, basically starting with a decentralization program in Djibouti and all the way down and around to an elections administration assistance program in Angola.

*Q: The SPLM (Sudan People's Liberation Movement) is the lead party in the relatively new, autonomous Government of Southern Sudan and it is also the minority partner in the Government of National Unity. Looking first at the Government of Southern Sudan, what kind of report card would you give the SPLM at this point insofar as functioning as a governing party?*

A.: If I had to give them a report card, I have never really thought of it in that sort of way. Given the tremendous challenges that they have had in front of them, I think the scale of their accomplishment would be better gauged as how they went from a military unit to a governing administrative organization and they are doing well with that. It is still very much a command, top down system but they are bringing a sense of governance to people who have not been governed for the better part of a generation. To give them a grade...

*Q: Well, you do not have to give them a letter grade.*

A.: Better than expected and a lot of room to grow.

*Q: Okay. Have they managed to overcome, for example, the internal divisions that existed? If it is a large organization, a lot of interests are represented. Is that one of the areas that they have managed to pull together pretty well on?*

A.: I am not an expert on the SPLM/SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army) but I have met with and read a fair amount of their internal and external critiques. Like any organization there are always going to be forces which pull in one direction or the other. I think that these forces were exposed more than they had been in the past after the death of John Garang. He was really the focal point and the driving force for the entire organization and he was somebody who everyone rallied around. And I do not see it as being a negative thing of having differing

opinions within an organization, specifically a political party. If it is going to represent as many people as it possibly can, it needs to have differing voices within it as long as there is a unifying theme. The Government of South Sudan, the SPLM, has a unifying theme of South Sudan and everybody within the SPLM is in agreement that they have the interest of South Sudan at heart.

*Q: Many people say that making this transition from a military rebel group to a governing party of course requires a certain amount of skill, political skill, and even background in terms of education and experience. To what extent is that a problem for the SPLM, getting the right people with the right capabilities?*

A.: It is not much of a problem. Southern Sudanese are very intelligent, very well educated, very modern and savvy people when it comes to understanding politics and understanding communications and putting out a message. Converting themselves from a military unity to a political party, the tricky part of it is allowing, if you want to keep it in military terms, allowing dissent from within the ranks without trying to court martial people for insubordination, allowing there to be communication and differing opinion, and they are doing that. But at the same time it is still a command driven organization, the same that you see in political parties all around the world.

The chairmen of political parties make more decisions than the rank and file members do, and the rank and file members are supposed to follow, much like you have in a military. The quality of the people within the SPLM benefits from the fact that during the war many people were outside of the country getting highly educated, people such as Dr. Garang. There were others who were inside fighting in the bush and there were some who were doing both. So they have a strong intellectual base from which to work. One of their biggest problems is the fact that a lot of the most learned Southern Sudanese people live overseas; they live in London, they live in Washington, they live in Nairobi. And when the call comes out for these people to return to their homeland, they go back or they get reports from their family and they find out that there are less than a handful of buildings in the former capital, that there is no tarmac, that there is no education, health care or even sewage system to speak of in the cities where they are being asked to return, and they look around them in London, in New York and they say: "why would I want to bring my children to a lesser situation?" So it is difficult to attract them where there is only patriotism to pay them with, being asked to leave well salaried jobs in order to serve their people. Some are, but it is a tough sell; so I think the Southern Sudanese are missing out on a lot of intelligent, vibrant people because of the status of their own infrastructure.

*Q: Sure. That has to be a problem.*

A.: I am not saying that every Sudanese who has an education is staying away from South Sudan. Many of them are going there but few of them are deciding to pick up their families and move them there.

*Q: Now if an educated Southerner returns, having made the decision to sacrifice material comforts, is it feasible or easy for those individuals to be placed in a job that provides rewards enough to keep them interested?*

A.: I am not sure what would reward -- I mean, are they being paid?

*Q: Well, that is not the only kind of reward, but that would be one.*

A.: Oh no, absolutely not.

*Q: But if they had the sense that "I have been given a meaningful task, I can see accomplishments," that would be quite an incentive, I would think, to keep at it. If, on the other hand, they come back and they are surrounded by so much chaos that they do not feel they can make a contribution, then they are going to get discouraged and leave.*

A.: Yes, there is a lot of chaos but there is also a lot that needs to be done and it is a matter of finding -- I am speaking in a very broad sense and of course cannot speak for every Sudanese returnee -- but I can imagine that a lot of them are finding it rewarding to go home and greet this massive chaos with directed efforts to improve it. And my suggestion to them would be to scale back their expectations and realize that this is going to be a matter of small advances that need to build on one another instead of trying to fix everything at once; it is too big of a problem. You could move in almost every international NGO (Non-Government Organization) in the world there and have them working in every city and it still would not be enough because it is just so immense, and repetition should not be a problem because there is a lot to be done everywhere. Redundancy is not necessarily a problem because it is going to take a lot of effort to make the developments sustainable. So people moving back, yes, they should find things to be rewarding, but if they think that they are going to go in and set Sudan straight in a year and a half, well they are just deluding themselves and they need to understand that it is going to take moment by moment, one small victory at a time in order for South Sudan to right itself and to become a self sustaining vibrant part of the African community again.

*Q: When was the last time in its history that it could claim to have been self sustaining?*

A.: I believe they may have been loyal to the Queen at that point.

*Q: It has been a long time.*

A.: That is probably the better part of 50 years.

*Q: So the memory of it is not in most peoples' minds.*

A.: Something you could say about pretty much every African country, at least that I have been in. They have very long memories and it is not necessarily a sense of being bitter, but they always want to be able to refer in their history to something better, something worse. They are always trying to compare and either get back to the glory days or move on from the bad old days.

*Q: The CPA (Comprehensive Peace Agreement) stipulated that there were to be 10 new state governments in the South. From your observation how has that process played out thus far?*

A.: Quite well. Some of the governors are working better than others, as happens pretty much with governors in states all around the world. There are good efforts being put together to formulate local constitutions for these states and they are working together to make sure that their constitutions not only represent the people of that individual state and their concerns, whether it be agrarian or mining or extraction, but they are making sure that they work well

together. So they are putting their country together in an intelligent way and the CPA is helping direct that. I would give them a better than average passing grade on that, that is for sure.

*Q: Another challenge that they face in the South is integrating the other armed groups into the SPLA and I guess this process of integration has challenges that are quite basic, such as making sure the troops are paid and the civil servants are paid and making, of course, the force as professional as it can be. There too, have you observed how the process of consolidating the peace has been moving?*

A.: With the military, no, I have not really seen that. My interaction has been more with the peacekeeping forces, the international peacekeeping forces, and a little bit with UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) and their efforts to repatriate children soldiers but I have not really seen the inner workings of the SPLA and some of the other armed groups; I could not comment on that.

*Q: The child soldiers coming from -- I am thinking about Uganda but that is not what you are referring to here.*

A.: No.

*Q: Sudanese child soldiers.*

A.: Sudanese children soldiers as well and there is a strong effort by UNICEF to move the children soldiers back to their villages -- well first of all to identify the children, make a connection with their home village and then get them back to that home village.

*Q: And that is a daunting task.*

A.: Oh, absolutely, yes.

*Q: But I guess if it is peaceful in their area they can begin to go back.*

A.: Well mostly I think the problem, and this is just from chatting to people in a casual manner who are working in that area, it is mostly a transportation issue. Do they have the trucks? Can they get the helicopters? Are the roads going to be there?

*Q: And does their village still exist? I do not know, to what extent, some people have left the villages.*

A.: Absolutely. From what I have heard they are not having as much of a problem identifying who the children are and where their families are and I am sure, well I would hope, that they are all going to be well received back into their village but as you mentioned with Uganda there are a lot of problems in the North and a lot of efforts being made for the former combatants to be received back to their old villages because of the atrocities that may have occurred. But that is Uganda.

*Q: Another issue except that I gather the Lord's Resistance Army has been operating in Sudan.*

A.: It does not recognize borders, no.

*Q: Yes, maybe the borders are pretty fluid in that area.*

A.: Oh, absolutely, it is all just, you know, open land or forest. If you are just wandering around and you did not have a GPS (global positioning system) with you, you probably could not tell which country you are in at any given moment.

*Q: Looking at the national level of governance there, First Vice President Salva Kiir has obviously occupied an important role in the Government of National Unity and he was thrust into it, of course, with the death of John Garang, and I guess he has grown into the job, but how would you evaluate how effective he has been?*

A.: His effectiveness has been good given the enormity of the task, and it is a task that I think he and Garang together would have a difficult time fully accomplishing. Of course he does not have the political gravitas that John Garang had, he has had to work hard to fill the shoes and I do not think he received as much respect from Khartoum as Garang did so he has got to fight that battle as well. But he has been doing well. I think after trying to solidify his own political base within the Government of South Sudan he has managed to bring some of Garang's people back in, realizing their value, and has shown a great deal of political savvy and an ability to adapt for the betterment of his efforts.

*Q: And has Khartoum, has he risen in the esteem of the Northern thoughts?*

A.: I would never ever presume to speak for Khartoum.

*Q: No, you would not be able to speak for them but I guess you might have an inkling of how they are -- they treat him with more respect than they used to.*

A.: I would say they probably treat him with a bit more respect but that is a very low sliding scale.

*Q: It sounds like a good opening to ask about the dynamics, again in the Government of National Unity, between those Southerners who have- who now occupy some ministerial posts and the Northerners, the NCP (National Congress Party) members. Have they managed to proceed within the Government of National Unity, how unity-minded are they?*

A.: Depends. It has always been interesting to have the discussions about one Sudan versus two or three or even four. Sometimes you hear people speak of there being a unified Sudan being run by the SPLM. Other people believe that Khartoum can hold onto all of the country. It really depends on the emotions and the events of the moment. Personally I cannot see how the country stays together. And then you look at the geopolitical and the economic forces and you wonder how the country would allow itself to be split apart.

*Q: In other words economically they are more viable if they remain together.*

A.: If they remain together, yes. But the differences between the peoples and the government are so tremendous that you wonder how could they ever all be loyal to the same flag. But there are

plenty of countries where there are disparate communities that manage to see past their differences in order for a unified nationalism that is not usually as stark as you find in Sudan but time will tell. Some days I am more pessimistic about it and other days I wonder why be pessimistic at all; this is the way it should be. I am glad that I do not get to vote in that election, actually. It is not a decision I would want to partake on my own. But I would definitely want to make sure that the people of Sudan are better informed and have a better system in which they can make this decision for themselves.

*Q: Given the history of elections in Sudan, in other words, in the recent past, the Government has been accused of interfering in the elections, rigging the elections, intimidating the candidates, harassing the candidates. This is not a picture that would allow for free and fair elections, which of course is the business that you all deal in. So what mechanisms has the CPA established that would lead one to believe that you could have free and fair elections come 2009?*

A.: The CPA is laying the foundation and the building blocks towards the referendum on national unity, beginning with the census and the necessary legislation and organizations that need to be put in place to administer and oversee the elections. There is of course a timeline. Keeping the timeline is going to be the most important part of it. At this moment they are working on a national census in order to find out quite literally how many people live there and where they are and what they do and it is a, sort of a standard international census. There is some dispute as to how it is going to be administered and what is going to happen to the information, it can be vital information but the elections should not be contingent upon this step being successfully finished. You can have elections without there being a census; it happens all the time. Elections can happen far more easily if there is a census and I think we should do everything in order to make sure that the census in Sudan assists. IFES is looking into ways that we can provide assistance for this census, whether it be through civic education or public information efforts so people in Sudan know that this is happening and know the role that it is going to play and understand the cornerstone that a census can lay when it comes to building a democratic society. But if that does not come to fruition it should not abandon the idea of there being representational democracy through elections in Sudan.

*Q: Now, the census is ongoing at the moment?*

A.: Yes.

*Q: And they have until 2009 to be ready for the first set of elections?*

A.: No. The census, I believe the census was supposed to be finished by late 2007.

*Q: Okay.*

A.: And the election law was supposed to have come into effect at the beginning of this year and the commission shortly thereafter, and the general elections in mid-2009, with the census in between. There is a little bit of wiggle room as far as the dates are concerned but I am afraid that they are already losing that wiggle room.

*Q: Sure. You could expect it will take longer than anybody would hope.*



A.: And the CPA had an idea that things could slide and I believe they built in 18 months. But at this point I think they might be looking at closer to sliding two years or even 30 months. I am not sure if the Sudanese, whether that be the North or the South, are willing to accept that much of a slide and still believe that the CPA can hold firm.

*Q: Just in terms of the census?*

A.: In general.

*Q: Sliding that long?*

A.: The census as well as the underlying legislation for the various organizations, whether it be the electoral commission or the human rights commissions. There are any number of commissions that are supposed to be brought into operation under the CPA, as well as the state governments, the power sharing and the revenue sharing are also defined under the CPA and it is all very much in flux. There is debate between the South and the North on how much oil revenue is actually coming in and is it being properly shared. I am not an accountant, I am not an oil person, I could not say but I know that they are certainly arguing with one another about the amount of money that is coming in and who is getting how much.

*Q: I actually met with someone who walked me through the National Petroleum Commission and how it was operating and that some of the problems were not as dire as initially perceived.*

A.: That is good to know.

*Q: Obviously much work remains to be done to make it a transparent and accountable operation but things were looking better than we thought.*

*Going back to electoral law and the electoral commission, obviously they needed a new one, a new law, and I am assuming they had some help maybe drafting that, but is the process on track at this point?*

A.: No. Yes they have help. There is international assistance, which is not there to write the legislation for them, but to help them focus and write the legislation that is best representative. But the national assembly itself is not advancing as quickly as we all would hope. So since the legislation needs to come out of them with coordination from the executive, things get slowed down and they are writing a new election law and they seem to be building it upon existing election law so it has an internationally accepted standard. I have not seen a copy of it yet. We always hear rumors about a new media law, a new election law, a new political party registration law but actually getting copies of them seems to be difficult.

*Q: Why is that? Is it a technical issue? They do not have a lot of means to make copies? They are trying to be secretive? They do not want to share it?*

A.: Yes, all of the above. It could be as simple as that they do not have a copy machine. Or it could be more along the lines of they do not feel that it is the right time to share it publicly with

another international organization. Or it could just be a sense of ownership and they feel that it is theirs and they are going to hold on to it until it becomes a public document.

Sudan is a difficult place and when the rains start nothing happens anymore. You are dealing with a city that is mostly dirt roads, and when the rains come heavy they wash out what little roads there are and nobody does anything because it is almost impossible to walk anywhere, let alone drive.

*Q: There are no paved roads and easy drainage to speak of?*

A.: In Rumbek, there are no paved roads; full stop. In Juba, there are more paved roads but fewer. The main thoroughfares are paved; a lot of the side roads are dirt tracks and when the heavy rains come they become mud bogs, which is when an ox is a far better mode of transportation than any 4 X 4.

*Q: Well, that is a real issue, obviously, and you have to take that into account. So work stops when the rains come.*

A.: Yes. Rains come and work stops but planting begins.

*Q: Then on balance would you describe yourself as mildly optimistic that they will get their mechanism in place when they need it for their elections?*

A.: Yes. Yes, they know that it has to be done. Not just because external organizations say so, but they themselves have deemed it important enough within the CPA that it has to be done. The Sudanese respect law and they want things to happen properly in order for them to be respected and for them to have sustainability. At the same time it is worth noting that elections and representational democracy is never a strict chain of events where one leads to another. It is a web of different events that all lead towards a better operating election and representational system of government, whether it be providing assistance for civic education or voter education or political party development, all these things can happen exclusive of one another and eventually in tandem. In addition you have a media that understands the role that the electoral commission plays as well as what political parties can and cannot do as well as the role of observers, and how a ballot box is as important to the overall system as an electoral commissioner is. And representation is a single vote, not family voting. There is a myriad of different things that need to be understood and waiting for the first domino to fall in order to knock the rest of them down. If that first domino is glued to the floor, you have got to find another way of knocking the other dominos down and they have to happen in congress, not in sequence.

*Q: You mentioned the media and public education, obviously some important facets because you can have the best law in the world, but if people do not really get it, it is not going to be implemented and will not really produce a democracy.*

A.: There is plenty of opportunity for there to be fair elections that are not free and sometimes you have free elections that are not fair. And then really getting the election to work as a unit, through the many disparate parts, is what allows both free and fair elections to happen.

*Q: So does the CPA also envisage some of these public education campaigns or instruction as well as developing media that is focused on educating people in preparation?*

A.: In and of itself the CPA does not mention things this specific, but it does certainly empower the players, the necessary players, whether it be civil society, the media, local government, electoral commission, to play their necessary role in order to allow and empower one another to have a meaningful role within the elections and within the representation.

*Q: Let me ask you a little bit about the role of the international community and international organizations, and NGOs. Obviously they played a big part in getting the CPA done to begin with and now there are those who would critique the maybe inaction would be the right word of some countries and donor countries. From what you have observed, would you say that the international community is working at about the right level to help the CPA process?*

A.: You are right. Only the Sudanese can guarantee the CPA functions, and we have got to give them full credit, because the Naivasha Accords, while facilitated by international organizations, international pressures, was about the Sudanese doing it themselves. To address your question, some of the international organizations are too big and bureaucratic to do the work that needs to be done on a village level. Others are doing a great job because of the fact that they are small and maneuverable.

*Q: Which are those that are too big?*

A.: I am not going to say. The ones that can build their own camps tend to be building their own camps instead of helping the Sudanese people build their own future. But I understand the necessity for the size. As I said before, there is no way to be redundant there because the problems are huge. The need to focus on the problem at hand instead of the administration to address the problem, I think, is probably a larger difficulty, a larger problem in Sudan. I was told when I was in Rumbek that there is a landing strip right next to one of the camps, and right at that landing strip are warehouses for food. The planes keep coming in, delivering more food, and they put it in the warehouse. And it sits in the warehouse because they do not need the food anymore but the administration of this large international donor cannot quite get the message back to headquarters to stop the food already.

*Q: Oh my, yes.*

A.: It may actually have just been somebody trying to point out a small problem making it larger but I did see a lot of warehouses with a lot of piles of food that, you know, did not look like they were getting out any time soon.

*Q: And it was not that they were needed but there was no means to get them the next step?*

A.: The next step. Yes. And there are the international military there, which are begging to do something more than just observe, and they have got a strong understanding of the local situation.

*Q: The international military?*

A.: The UN Military Operations in Sudan.

*Q: Oh yes. I guess I immediately thought of the African Union.*

A.: That would be Darfur, right.

*Q: But they are on the other side.*

A.: That is a whole different kettle of fish. But there are large organizations, international donors and diplomatic representation there that are doing both large scale and small scale, and doing it effectively. I think there is a lot that needs to be done and it needs to be done with an understanding of who the client is and what the politics are. It is incredibly difficult politically to work there. The personalities are large and a lot of them are bullheaded. I am talking about the Sudanese as well as the internationals as well as the politicians and civil society.

*Q: I would think everywhere you do have to understand the clients and the political features. Are the Sudanese especially either stubborn or uncooperative?*

A.: No. No, they are very cooperative; they are very cordial, very welcoming people. But there has been so much attention there that you could be sitting down having a meeting with a minister talking about one specific program of assistance that you want to provide and if he does not like it he can say thank you very much for your time, there is the front door, knowing that there are 19 other guys waiting out in the lobby waiting to give him a pitch on the same program. So they can pick and choose. And they do have money.

*Q: Money is not their problem.*

A.: Money is not their problem; it is somewhat like Angola, you know, they have got enough money to have a lot of these programs and fund them themselves. So when an international organization or a diplomatic mission comes in and tries to tell them how to do this, they say well it is our own money and we should spend it the way we see fit, which they have a right to do. At the same time, if they are going to accept the international assistance they have to understand that there are regulations, it is not all, as the Chinese example is showing, merely we buy your goods and help you build roads and we are not going to tell you how to run your government. Somebody has to administer those roads. And if you are going to have confidence in the proper administration of those roads you should have confidence in the government. So providing them assistance for a better representational government should go along with helping with the infrastructure and helping with the societal infrastructure as well as government infrastructure.

*Q: You gave a nice example of the food that was coming in and apparently not going out, and therefore this was not an efficient or effective use of aid. Are there some other examples along those lines that occur to you where the problem is being administered or the administration is working well but that is not really addressing the right problem?*

A.: That would be the most obvious one to me. There are a lot of efforts being made to provide assistance to one organization or one group of organizations that runs into the typical problems of this field where some organizations want to be part of it and others do not. In such a case the donor feels that everybody should be involved, but you cannot convince everyone to be involved

because some people just do not, some organizations feel that they are well situated already, something where it is a waste of resources or talent. No, I have not really seen very much of that going on there. It is not like fields of farm equipment being unused or communications equipment being unused. It is pretty effective there.

One thing that shocked or surprised me the most was working with the office here and doing all the preparations for the logistics and getting simply enough from Nairobi to Rumbek turned out to be just booking one flight and going down and booking a room with one of the organizations that run a camp there and then finding out that I could buy a Ugandan SIM chip to put into my cell phone and that worked fine. Everyone was panicked about, you know, you must have your sat phone with you and it has all the credits. It was like, no, when I get there I can just change my SIM cards in my cell phone and you can call me that way. And it worked better than when I was in Nairobi. So there are things that are advancing and probably because there is an economic concern and there is money to be made by one company or another there that is making it happen. Radio stations are cropping up, there are regulations and licenses that need to be obtained, possibly more difficult than one might expect but they are coming along.

*Q: And these are traditional broadcast radio?*

A.: Juba-FM and you know, Radio Juba and commercial radio stations, yes, for entertainment, as well as public outreach and public education.

*Q: And in that part of the world where people do not have electricity, I suppose there is still...*

A.: Crank radios. There was a very large and effective program of distributing, I think, maybe as many as 100,000, quarter of a million crank radios and they are used. Yes.

*Q: I have read about those in other contexts and they are great, apparently.*

A.: Yes. It is a wonderful invention; it has really revolutionized distribution of information throughout Africa.

*Q: With respect to the foreign component, how do the local authorities react to their presence and suggestions?*

A.: Critical. And that is not to say people should not be critical because I think of anything we have the right to criticize our government. It is the government's job to listen. The South Sudanese commissions have had a difficult time putting things together and I think they may have raised expectations a little bit higher than most, more than should have been necessary, by forming these commissions and assigning people to them without having put the underlying infrastructure in place for the commissions actually to work. Because as soon as you have the name and you have the commissioners and you have the principle officers named, people are going to expect them to start doing something. And then when you have to say wait a minute, no, they do not have a building, they do not have paper, they do not have a place to do anything, people will lose confidence. I am glad that they have them in place, it would be nice if organizations were able to reach a lot of these commissioners. And maybe the situation has changed since I have been there but cart before the horse, so I guess I am being critical on my own.

*Q: Yes, you said you were going to check your list of commissions. How many are there in fact? I know there are many more, well, some are more important than others but just off hand?*

A.: Right. Let us see, I am trying to remember if there are 22 commissions. It is going to be 14.

*Q: Okay.*

A.: Fourteen established commissions that have commissioners named to them, and this was as of June this year.

*Q: Since then they may have made some progress but I do not know the specifics of it and I guess when you were there did not particularly bubble to the surface which commissions were doing what?*

A.: No. Fortunately and unfortunately the day that I arrived there with our assessment mission, it was myself and a colleague who went in, the day that we got there the large diplomatic mission to the United States was departing. So we conducted most of our meetings with the upper level South Sudanese Government officials at the VIP departure lounge at the airport, which was convenient because we managed to meet with most of the ministers all in one place at one time, then they were gone. And with them went a lot of the information about the commissions and the ministries.

*Q: I see. And they were off to the U.S. then?*

A.: Yes, this was the meeting between Salva Kiir and President Bush in July.

*Q: Speaking of the U.S. and the U.S. Congress, some have suggested that it would be a good thing if we exempted the Government of South Sudan from the sanctions that we have placed on Sudan in general, the anti-terror sanctions. Would you think that is a good idea or is that not really?*

A.: I would love to see the people of South Sudan be provided with a better hand up in order to rebuild what is a decimated part of their country. But if we were to provide assistance to the South of the country while keeping the moratorium on the North, that would be redefining foreign policy and that would be signing off on two Sudan system. It is not our place; we do not decide that; it is the Sudanese people to decide that. I would like to see more openness from the North and shortly after 9/11, in 2001, they were providing us with some entrée to their country to effectively look for higher ups within terrorist organizations, but that stopped.

*Q: That has stopped?*

A.: Bashir has not been very welcoming. I do not know of any Americans getting visas to go to Khartoum these days. I may be wrong. I know that my own application was stalled at the embassy ad nauseum. I know that there are French and German and South Africans who are not allowed into Khartoum; some Brits are. I would much rather there be an opening of Khartoum in order to assist the entirety of Sudan than the State Department choosing to support half the country and keep a moratorium on another half.

*Q: It is an important viewpoint and I have had people argue that it would be helpful to our interests to loosen the sanctions. The devil is in the details, and you would have to say well, exactly what do you mean and what sanctions and in what way?*

A.: Right way yes, we are looking at sanctions for North Korea, which everybody seems to be on board with. Myself, I am not and it is my own personal point of view is that I do not know if sanctions have ever worked. You know, people say in South Africa, they have, in Cuba they have not. You know, Cuba does not have Nelson Mandela so who is to say if the sanctions actually worked?

*Q: It is not clear whether sanctions work and you will get people on both sides, definitely. So that is why we like to ask, to see what different views come forth.*

*One of the other crucial issues addressed in the CPA is the situation in Abyei and the Abyei Boundary Commission Report has been duly delivered and the Government in Khartoum rejected it. Has there been any movement with respect to the president appointing the local executive council for Abyei? Has there been any change in his position that would allow him to do that?*

A.: No.

*Q: And address what is still a very kind of an urgent issue.*

A.: Yes, the issue is urgent and sadly as an urgent issue I have not been keeping abreast of it.

*Q: Well fortunately maybe, while it is an urgent issue in the sense that there is the potential for renewed conflict, at least it has not happened. We can be thankful for that.*

A.: The fact that Darfur attracts a lot of attention does a disservice to Abyei and to the South. And as I alluded to earlier in this conversation there is a possibility of there being four different Sudans. People forget that the North and the South could easily cleave apart. Darfur could basically be cut off and lost. I do not really see there being a lot of interest in either the North or the South wanting it and Abyei itself, if it really went in a harsh manner, could be cleaved off as well. That is a farfetched point of view but there are four distinct areas. The Darfur question seems to be getting toward what some say is genocide. I would tend to agree with them, it gets a lot of attention, as it should, but it is also distracting what limited amount of attention the news media, internationally and the United States has for Africa, and right now if you asked anyone about, name the number one story out of Africa right now, they would say Madonna adopting a baby in Malawi.

We have a limited amount of attention that we can pay to an under populated, large land mass that has more natural resources than almost anywhere else in the world, and yet we cannot dedicate enough time to focus on anything other than a genocide in the middle of the continent when there are a tremendous amount of other things happening right in that same country, whether it is the advancement or stagnation of the CPA or the Abyei matter or Khartoum being intractable towards diplomatic outreach from the West. You know, there is a lot going on in one country and yet the focus is Darfur, Darfur, Darfur. I would never downplay Darfur itself but there is more to the country than just that.

*Q: Indeed. And you sketched a scenario whereby Darfur would become a separate entity. Yet the Government of Khartoum has made great efforts not to fight rebels in Darfur, and if Khartoum were interested in getting rid of Darfur, benign neglect might have brought that about. So to me it does not seem like they would like that.*

A.: No but I have had a difficult time truly even understanding what motivates the conflict in Darfur. Maybe I have not studied it closely enough. Why are they doing this? They seem to want to hold on to Darfur for some unknown reason, at the same time doing everything they can to exclude it.

*Q: And it does provide a very unwanted, from our point of view, distraction to the CPA, to what needs to be going on in the rest of the country.*

A.: Yes.

*Q: Yes, it does not make a lot of sense. Yes, I think there is a consensus that our attention needs to be focused on the CPA. Of course, you cannot ignore genocide in Darfur but let us not lose sight of everything.*

*It seems there is a growing disenchantment with the CPA, at least from the Southerners' point of view. They may feel that things are not progressing as they had hoped, as quickly as they had hoped. You alluded to some of the wealth sharing concerns that were in the news. At this point, how likely would you characterize the vote for independence just for the South when they have the referendum? It is not until 2011, but if you had to guess, what do you think would be the likelihood of a vote for independence?*

A.: In a free and fair election?

*Q: Well, let us start with that scenario, free and fair.*

A.: Starting with a free and fair election, I would give it an 80/20, based on the fact that information and studies in the North that the ruling party in Khartoum could not even win a free election in the North at this time. So if there were a free and fair election throughout the country, I am not saying that it would be an 80/20 vote to cleave the country in half, I am saying there is an 80 percent chance of there being an election. Let me put this into better focus. If there is a free and fair election and everything operates on an even basis, we would end up with two Sudans. I think the people in the South are strong enough willed to go their own way. There is the outside idea that they are strong enough willed to think that they can control the whole country but I do not think that that is enough of a political concept to carry the day. If there is a biased election, one that has been rigged by a bad census, a bad registration, improper application of the election law, media bias, what have you, anything that can go into making an election unfair and unfree, I think you are probably looking at a slight majority for keeping the country together.

*Q: And if people are allowed to vote their conscience honestly and freely, then the sentiment seems to be the Southerners would want their own country. You mentioned their being a strong*



*willed is part of their equation, obviously emotions play a big role but if they are able to make a more calculating analysis, would that change their mind, an analysis based on economics?*

A.: They know that they are sitting on a lot of oil. They may not know that they are not sitting on any ability to refine nor transport that oil. So I think if you started extrapolating the argument it may actually come down to an idea that unity could be better. But they could also at the same time say unity would not mean anything if they could build their infrastructure and their ability to use their natural wealth. And I do have to put the caveat on this that my views on how such a vote would pan out comes from my only being in the South; I have not gone to the North. I have not spoken with the Northerners. I hear, read what the Government from Khartoum has to say but that is not fully representational of your average Northern Sudanese. I do not know if it is the same harsh us against them, Islamic versus Christian line that Khartoum tends to try to draw. I would hope not. I would like there to be more of an understanding among Sudanese, North and South, at a village level than there is at the capital level.

*Q: Are there not some Northerners represented in these state governments in the South?*

A.: Yes, there are, there are some NCP members in the South and they speak of religious differences and at the same time they also speak of two Sudans.

*Q: As a forgone conclusion?*

A.: Since I am not naming any names, I would say that they are hedging their bets.

*Q: Okay. It makes it easier for them to work.*

A.: It makes it possible to stay in the South if in fact the South is its own country, while it also makes it possible to continue working with the North.

*Q: I was wondering what folks would be able to be effective as a Northerner in one of these Southern state government positions.*

A.: Indicative of it, every NCP official that I met in the South had a Koran and a Bible on their desk.

*Q: Is that right?*

A.: One of which was always far better read than the other. And they would make reference to one and quote the one over the other, you know. Not always the same book, given the official at the time.

*Q: Oh I see, different officials had different quotes.*

A.: Yes.

*Q: Sure. But they were, well, they had the political symbolism down.*

A.: Absolutely. These are very savvy, very politically astute people. Since I have only been back in the country under a week and I am already sick and tired of all the political ads, I would love to have a few Sudanese over here to, you know, have real political ads. They would understand the system here perfectly.

*Q: Is that right?*

A.: Yes. Possibly to their detriment.

*One of the key hopes of the project is to extract lessons learned. You have made some points that would lead us in that direction about successes and relative successes of the CPA thus far. Let me give you a chance to round off what you have been saying. Are there any successes in general that you would like to emphasize or key failures that we should be aware of in future, should there be another CPA kind of agreement?*

A.: Well I hope that there is not need for another CPA.

*Q: I do not mean in Sudan, I mean simply in this kind of process to resolve another conflict.*

A.: Right. This conflict I do not think is resolved yet. They are months away from giving up on the CPA at any given moment or months away from fully dedicating themselves to it. I think that is truly undecided. The lessons learned as far as positives are the fact that the international community did not waste any time engaging, and this benefits specifically the Sudanese contacts by the fact that a lot of them are already in Nairobi waiting. They knew that it was going to be a fast action response that was needed. And when they did get in there they looked across the broad spectrum of health care, of infrastructure, of governance, of gender and family issues.

One of the failures is the fact that there is an over focus on specific issues at times, for example in governance to assist political parties, or the census, without seeing where this is all leading. One needs to understand that it is a web of activities, not a sequence, and the need for there to be civic education and to start engaging the citizens of Sudan now, instead of waiting for the political parties to be better developed. Educate the citizens now so when the political parties do engage they can become fair and honest brokers within the system, and respond to the demands of the educated Sudanese people so they know how to ask intelligent questions and receive or demand intelligent responses.

Let's say you're given a limited amount of money for a given project, and you look at the huge amounts of money going into Sudan. You think oh, there has got to be enough for everyone. Well, it is still a small budget internationally, and it would be nice if there were better coordination amongst the international donors to make sure that there is not repetition or waste of a lot of funds.

*Q: I want to thank you for sharing your insights. Really, it has been informative for me as always.*

A.: Thank you. It is always nice to reflect on it. I mean, my job, I have got to look at so many different countries and it is nice to be able to spend the better part of an hour actually thinking about just one.