

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

Interview # 86 –Executive Summary

*Interviewed by: Barbara Nielsen
Initial interview date: May 7, 2007
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Executive Summary

The interviewee has worked in Sudan for almost ten years. Though he is based in Khartoum, the work of his organization is primarily in Southern Sudan. In his view, the peace dividend from the signing of the CPA has been enormous. He cites as evidence a huge increase in the number of children attending school (albeit in camps), the establishment of basic health care services in many villages, increased trade and investment, construction of roads, and significant numbers of displaced persons returning to their homes. In his view, there has been “a massive positive impact, not just in the South, but in most of the country, except for Darfur. In the North, for example, there is a freer press and more give and take in national discourse.

While acknowledging problems which plague the government of south Sudan, such as corruption, lack of efficiency and lack of capacity, he provides a positive evaluation of the performance of the GOSS thus far. Some of the right moves the government has made include setting up democratic structures, with a Constitution, which is highly respectful of human right. The interviewee also gives First Vice-President Salva Kiir high marks for his zero tolerance of corruption. He also commends the Government of southern Sudan’s handling of negotiations with the Lord’s Resistance Army, as well as the GOSS policy on armed militias, and observes that security has improved markedly in the last year. According to this interviewee, the GOSS has provided “a very friendly environment” for his organization to operate in.

Regarding the architecture of the CPA, the interviewee observes that the lack of “an apex body” to bring together the president, the two vice presidents, the government of National Unity and the international partners to make sure that implementation decisions get taken, has proven to be a weakness.

The cost of Darfur to the CPA is considerable. In the first instance, the situation in Darfur meant that the North did not get a number of benefits they had expected from the peace process – such as economic normalization, lifting of sanctions, Western investment in the oil sector. In his view, this has led to the erosion of influence of individuals such as Ali Ousman Taha and others who promoted engagement and compromise as the way forward. In addition, the energy of the international community which has been focused on the humanitarian crisis in Darfur has been to the detriment of the implementation of the CPA. He is optimistic that with the appointment of separate

UN/AU envoys for Darfur and a special representative of the Secretary General for the CPA, enough attention will again be paid to the CPA.

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Q: How long have you been in Sudan?

A: In the Nineties I was in Sudan for eight years, in Southern Sudan at the time, with Operation Lifeline Sudan. This time around I've been a year and a half, based in Khartoum.

Q: So you have a lot of background in the region. Are you an Arabic speaker, as well?

A: Yes, I am. My Arabic is not that good, because I left so long ago. I can understand it and I can communicate basic points and read speeches.

Q: You recently reported, I think in March of this year, that there are some positive developments in Southern Sudan. I'd like to talk about that first. You said that that should not go unrecognized, despite the conflict in Darfur, and you mentioned specifically the return of displaced families from the North. I'm wondering if you could elaborate on what you see as some of the positive consequences of the CPA that have taken place in the two years -- two years plus -- since it was signed?

A: Sure. Let me start with an anecdote. I was in a place called Yanel, in northern Bahr el Ghazal two days ago, and we were celebrating the vaccination of the two millionth Southern Sudanese child against measles. When I worked in Southern Sudan a decade ago, northern Bahr el Ghazal was a no-go area, because there was a commander then in the pay of the government of Sudan attacking SPLM areas and he was pursuing scorched earth tactics. So, essentially, he would burn any villages he came in contact with. A few years of this scorched earth tactic led to the famine of Bahr el Ghazal in 1998.

Here we were, nine years later, vaccinating the two millionth child against measles and setting up health infrastructure in one of the most rural parts of Southern Sudan which was simply inaccessible a decade before. I think all of us there, the under secretary from the Government of Southern Sudan ministry of health, the donor representative and myself, realized that this was a true peace dividend, not just that we were able to move around, a huge crowd and vehicles, but also simply that we were able to reach people with basic social services and set up health infrastructure that will benefit people in Southern Sudan beyond the measles campaign. It was just an extremely powerful and colorful day in that respect.

I think those kinds of examples are positive signs, the fact that within two years of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement we more than doubled the number of children going to school in Southern Sudan. During the war years we had between 350,000 and 450,000 children, as an estimate. We're now almost reaching a million children that are attending school. And when I say school, a lot of times it's under a tree. It's what we would call a "learning space." It's anything that will fit a couple of hundred children so that they can go through some kind of learning. Still, with very humble beginnings, it's still a million children in school that weren't in school before.

Anywhere you go now in Southern Sudan you have roads. They're made of packed earth and they do get destroyed during the rains. It's nothing permanent, but you can still get around. You see market goods coming in from Kenya and Uganda, but also from the north of Sudan, that are penetrating different towns and the rural areas. Again, all this evidence of trade and movement would not have happened without the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Q: That's very impressive. Obviously they did not start from a high level of development, so the infrastructure wasn't there at any time, but it sounds like you can clearly point to an absence of strife which allows all these activities that you're enumerating, and which would be very positive.

A: Very much so. I think Southern Sudan is unique. I think the only other place that would compare might be parts of Democratic Republic of the Congo. Southern Sudan is an area a third the size of Western Europe and there's not a single stitch of infrastructure. It's not just twenty years of conflict. It's also a hundred years of underdevelopment and willful neglect. There's been virtually no investment. You're not starting from scratch but you're almost starting from scratch, in terms of infrastructure and social infrastructure, in particular.

People always feel like not enough is being done but there is a lot happening. Roads, schools being built, water points being established, and people returning. I think we had 30,000 formerly displaced who are now returning, this is through the formal process, and thousands more are coming, making their own arrangements to return.

Q: And when they return, do you get involved in actual resettlement efforts or would that be other NGO's?

A: My organization is involved in several different ways. Having said that there are some very positive things going on, we still have vast areas with very little infrastructure. So there are challenges for people returning, but returning they are. We're involved first in what's called the Sudan Information Campaign for Return and essentially this is providing people with information on what they're going to find when they get back home and we are the coordinating agency for this aspect of the return process. So we provide basic information on the revisit conditions on the ground. These are people that may not have been back in Southern Sudan for over twenty years and so we provide

information on malaria, meningitis, yellow fever, a lot of the conditions that they may have on the ground, information about mines and risks of mines, information about the infrastructure, so they don't expect a certain level of development and find something completely different. The point being that people returning home should do so knowing full well what to expect, and it should be a free choice.

Once they are informed, there's a process of arranging transport. That's usually done by an organization called the IOM, the International Organization for Migration, and they bring people into the main towns in Southern Sudan. And then there's kind of a secondary transportation network that gets them to their primary homes.

Where we come in is in terms of setting up the infrastructure on the ground. If I can use northern Bahr el Ghazal as an example, we're trying to drill. As we speak, we're trying to hurry up before the rainy season to establish an additional forty water points in villages that are known to be areas of high return, so that there will at least be clean water in those villages. The same process is going on with the construction of schools and the rehabilitation of health centers. So we will work on those issues in order to create an environment where the returnees can find some basic social services. Other organizations are doing the same, the nongovernmental organizations and UN agencies.

Q: I'm trying to imagine the returnees that you mentioned, and all the information that you give them. You said some of them are returning from the North but it sounds as if some are also returning from other countries where they wouldn't have been able to monitor very closely what's been going on in Sudan.

A: Exactly. If you're in Khartoum or you've been in the Central African Republic or Uganda or Kenya you have some information and some understanding of what home looks like but twenty years, in some cases longer, is a long time. So the idea of the information campaign is to provide information so that you make that choice knowingly, prepare in terms of disease and protecting yourself from disease but also in terms of what to expect in terms of education, your access to water, access to health services.

Q: Sounds like a tremendously important undertaking which I imagine has had success with people who are on the fence, trying to decide whether they should take this big leap of faith to come back.

Moving to another topic, I'd like to ask you for your assessment of how well the SPLM has made the transition from being a fighting force to being the governing party of South Sudan and also a member of the unity government. How well have they done?

A: If you consider that the government has been in place less than two years, I think they've actually achieved a lot. We recently had a Sudan consortium, which brought together all of Sudan's development partners; the first day was in Khartoum, the second day was in Juba and I think the tone in Juba was very positive. Of course, one can always say more can be done, things can be happening faster. There have been issues with corruption, with efficiency, with getting cash and payments from the center to the

states and from the states to the people who should be getting the payments, like teachers and health workers, soldiers also.

But at the same time a lot has been achieved, and I think the SPLM has set up democratic structures. They set up a constitution which recognizes human rights and is highly respectful of human rights. There is a clear division of labor between the executive, the judiciary and the legislative branches. The president of the Government of Southern Sudan has taken a strong stance against corruption and indicated no one is above the law and that there will be zero tolerance for corruption. There has been a free press. We find when we discuss children's issues that we have an interlocutor that is willing to listen and is actually appreciative of the support that could be offered.

They want to make sure that we know that they're a government now, and they're in charge, and that we are there to support them. And I think that's correct, and that is exactly what the situation is. But we acknowledge that and then they're very appreciative of the support that we can provide. Again, it's been a very friendly environment to operate in.

There are issues, again, with getting finances in. There's an issue with the level of financing, because oil prices have fluctuated and that's the main source of revenue. And there are issues of capacity, specifically outside of the central government, the Government of Southern Sudan, at the state level and the local level, there are some real issues when it comes to capacity and when it comes to being able to manage. But I would say that the Government of Southern Sudan, the SPLM in forming the Government of Southern Sudan, is off to a good start.

I think also they're tackling the issue with the Lord's Resistance Army, which was destabilizing a big part of the South, and their willingness to act as peace brokers between the government of Uganda and the LRA, so far is a successful process. I think that has been also an essential part of having relative stability in the South.

I think they've also made the right choices early on in their tenure, indicating that people that are part of either what is known as the Sudanese Armed Forces, which is the armed forces of the then government of Sudan, or the SPLM, can continue to maintain arms until there's a disarmament process, but no other forces can bear arms in Southern Sudan. I think lessons from other transitions show that this is very important to do early on in the process. If you allow people to keep their weapons, then sooner or later you're going to have internal strife. So I think they're making the right moves and they're trying to do the right thing in terms of investments in infrastructure and prioritizing basic social services for populations that are expecting a peace dividend.

Q: You've touched on a lot of important themes there. The theme of capacity to implement these ambitious goals is one of them.

I'd like to relate this to how the CPA established the various oversight commissions, that play a role in making sure things were being implemented. Is one of the reasons for

delays in implementation the lack of capacity, or do they stem from a fundamental oversight in the CPA itself? Did the CPA need to be more rigorous, to provide for more experts from the outside to make sure that oil payments were correctly transferred, for example, or salary payments correctly transferred? How do you view that?

A: I think several things. One is there is a problem with capacity and that's there. But I also think that within Southern Sudan, the Government of Southern Sudan has done quite well under the circumstances. I do think the architecture of the CPA has limitations. I think first and foremost the death of John Garang removed one of the key people who probably really believed in trying to make unity attractive and trying to make the CPA work within the context of one country. I think that GOSS President Kiir, First Vice President of the Government of National Unity Salva Kiir, is an excellent leader and someone who has a very high degree of integrity. He's not going to be a "big man."

Q: In the African sense.

A: In the African sense and fall prey to all those temptations. I truly believe he's a very decent, honorable person. But he's someone who's deeply suspicious of the North and at the same time, because of Darfur and because of the lack of a resolution, because the North did not get the peace dividend they expected, Second Vice President Taha is also to an extent not as influential as he used to be. So the key architects of making unity attractive, they're not there, and frankly there's no one really trying to work to make unity attractive in a systematic manner.

We have had breakthroughs, we have dialogue, we have certain issues that are moving forward but it's not done in a systematic manner. I think that the CPA as it was set up did not have an apex body bringing together the presidency, the president, the two vice presidents, of the Government of National Unity plus the international partners, in one forum where everyone puts things on the table and says, "All right, let's resolve it."

So the AEC Commission, the different bodies that are set up, are kind of in parallel, they're advisory, but ultimately the presidency says, "Okay, we'll subsume this in this presidency and we'll make a decision," but a decision is not made. That's true about the 1956 border, that's true about Abyei, that's true about oil revenue, that's true about a number of things.

Having said all that, there does seem recently to have been movement on a couple of key dossiers. There seems to be some way forward on Abyei, on some of the commissions, but it's delayed, it's behind schedule. There was some agreement reached on the census and how to count Southerners that may still be in the North as part of the census. There was a reiteration by both parties that they wanted to stay on track and on schedule with the census and the elections.

So there's been, I would say, in the last sixty days or so, some movement. But there isn't one apex body that brings everyone together in order to resolve things more systematically and it's left really to the presidency, the president and the first vice

president at the federal level, in particular, to negotiate solutions and it has taken long on some of these dossiers even to make the relatively limited movement we've had in the last sixty days.

Q: This is the first I've heard anyone actually say something about positive movement in the case of Abyei, which really seems like one of the intractable issues. To what degree are the parties, in particular the government in the North, purposely dragging their feet on many of these issues? They signed the agreement; at the time they saw their interests served by it, but as time has gone on do you see a change in the attitude of the Khartoum government?

A: A couple of things. First, on Abyei, it's limited movement. It's not on the bigger issue, defining the boundary or the administration, but there does seem to be some agreement about how they would go about having a local administration. That's what's at least being looked into. We look at any positive sign or any glimmer of hope as a positive sign.

Clearly there's been a huge overhang from Darfur. We cannot underestimate the cost of Darfur to the CPA, and frankly it continues to be an area of concern, because if the CPA falls apart, Darfur is going to be a sideshow of a much bigger problem. Essentially the North, if you will, for lack of a better word, expected that they would get a number of benefits from the peace process that did not materialize because Darfur erupted at a time when the CPA was being signed. So they did not get economic normalization, they did not get the lifting of sanctions, they did not get Western investment in the oil economy, they did not get a number of things that would have added to growth of the economy or normalization of Sudan's situation internationally.

As a result, those within government that said, "We told you so. They keep asking for more and every time you give in," are making that point. And those that said, "Engagement and compromise are the way forward for us and our cause," are no longer in a dominant position, at least not for now. I think that's key.

And let me return to children and perhaps give an example of something that's extremely important. We recently had a meningitis outbreak in Southern Sudan and this illustrates how it takes two to tango, if you will. We had a meningitis outbreak. On the one hand the Government of Southern Sudan doesn't want to necessarily deal with the federal authorities, didn't really share information in a timely manner or say, "This is what's going on, we need your help."

So my organization, which had had the foresight to pre-position 500,000 doses of vaccine for the country as a whole, was making efforts to get the two governments to speak to each other, in order to secure the release of vaccines to go to Southern Sudan to help people where the outbreak first started. So the South wasn't necessarily, the ministry of health of Southern Sudan wasn't reporting or saying, "We have an outbreak. We need support. Urgent assistance is needed." And the federal level was saying, "There are

outbreaks elsewhere. We're not getting accurate information. We're not willing to release the vaccines."

It took an extra week or so of this back and forth, with us kind of doing shuttle diplomacy to resolve this, and that should not be happening. So we are also very strongly pushing for more dialogue and more contact, within the context of one country, two systems, to smooth over and agree on a division of labor as much as possible, so these kinds of issues don't occur and we don't have these kinds of delays when we have a disease outbreak.

Q: That's a very good example of what's happening. It reminds me that when you were talking about Salva Kiir, the efforts he's making and the fact that he's not tolerating corruption within his government, I wanted to ask about the unity within the SPLM and Salva Kiir's success in uniting the many factions within the SPLM. I'm thinking that's one problem that would undermine the efforts to govern.

A: It does, it does and there are fault lines within Southern Sudan, we should not forget, and he's got to proceed very carefully. So far there's been very strong unity within Southern Sudan but one also has to always be careful and keep in mind that there are many different ethnic groups in Southern Sudan. So even if there were consensus and agreement vis-a-vis what to do with the North, there are still a lot of issues within Southern Sudan that need to be resolved and there's a balance of influence and access to services and participation in government that needs to be maintained.

Q: Let me go back to the Lord's Resistance Army that you mentioned earlier as well. I have a hard time understanding why the SPLA, which was a guerilla force for so long, an effective military force, if you will, is not able to secure its territory from the LRA, given that, again, under the CPA they were able to keep their arms. Maybe you can enlighten me how this happened.

A: I think a couple of things, very quickly. One is that the LRA is first of all a very capable guerilla force in its own right. They have rear bases in DR Congo and in Central African Republic and they received support from a number of people that were interested in destabilizing the area.

Q: Such as the North?

A: Prior to the CPA, such as the North. I wouldn't comment on since the CPA but, yes, prior to the CPA. The Ugandan military has obviously not been able to defeat them militarily and I don't actually think there is a military solution to defeating them, primarily because there is always this escape valve of going into DR Congo and going into the CAR if need be.

Having said that, I think the LRA has come to the conclusion that they also cannot win militarily and that their options are closing down. So I think they have an interest in coming to the table. I really think that the Government of Southern Sudan has done

exactly the right thing, which is to encourage the peace process and bring them to the table, under conditions that are reasonable.

It really has had a profound impact. My first six months, when we returned to Sudan, we were still severely destabilized by the LRA. And in the last year it's been a remarkable change. There have been a couple of incidents attributed to the LRA, that seems subsequently not to have been correct. It does not seem to have been a sanctioned incident, in the sense that if there's been an incident, it's been an individual group not necessarily acting under any kind of instruction. So it's been a lot quieter in the last year than it was previously.

Q: So the trend is moving in the right direction?

A: There's still a long way to go, but so far so good.

Q: It's good to have this more nuanced perspective from you, which I hadn't got elsewhere.

Moving to Darfur, a question I want to ask, to relate this to the CPA initially, is whether you think that the negotiations for the CPA in any way contributed to the outbreak of fighting in Darfur, because of the absence of Darfurians from the CPA negotiations?

A: That's an interesting way to put it. There are definitely different linkages. I think firstly, of course the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, as people have pointed out, involved two primary parties and did not bring everyone around one table. Now, perhaps that would not have been practical in any event and so it is what it is. Obviously part of what happened also is other disadvantaged or marginalized parts of Sudan saw what the SPLM was able to get out of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and wanted a similar arrangement, which also caused tension, because the SPLM on the one hand was supportive of, especially with John Garang's vision of New Sudan, of anyone marginalized having a chance to be represented and strive in a New Sudan, multicultural, plural society.

For their own political purposes the SPLM actually supported guerilla movements in different parts of the country. But at the same time the SPLM does not want to dilute the CPA, in the sense that they don't want a third vice president, or a fourth vice president, if you include the east. And so the SPLM also has a low water mark and a high water mark and on the low water mark they're supportive of the rebel movement in Darfur and their desire to have one Darfur and greater representation and a greater share of the wealth.

On the other hand, they also have a high water mark, which is they don't see the Darfur conflict in effect endangering the structure of the CPA. In that respect, too, there are also linkages between the CPA and the DPA, with even the SPLM saying there's only so far the government can bend in terms of meeting the requirements of the Darfur movement. And then, of course, there's the fact that when the SPLM was involved in its own civil

war with the then government of Sudan, there's the fact that the SPLM supported the SLM in Darfur.

Q: In terms of where you're able to do your work, your program is nationwide?

A: It is. We have a structure that reflects the CPA, one country, two systems and we operate in 20 of the 25 states, the other five states being the states where child rights indicators are relatively better off and therefore they don't need us as much there. I think we've been an essential part of the response in Darfur, specifically focusing on water, education, health, and child protection. It's been a successful response.

Q: Before the CPA you also of course had a great many projects ongoing, so what I'm going to ask about is security then versus now. You touched on this earlier, that you're able to move about and get access to children much more readily in the South than you could before the signing of the CPA. In the other regions of Sudan, has there also been a CPA effect?

A: I think there's been a positive aspect everywhere except Darfur. We also have to recognize, and credit has to be given to both the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan, that this is much more open, there's a freer press, there's more freedom of movement, there's more give and take in national discourse, as a result of the CPA and not just in Southern Sudan, in North Sudan, too. We can move around.

Again, outside of Darfur, there's been a positive impact all around. Both governments have invested more in social infrastructure. I think the Government of National Unity has gone from three to five per cent in what's called pro-poor spending in the last year alone, three to five per cent of GDP. The average recommended in the region is eight per cent but they're nudging in that direction.

Again, we cannot underestimate, there's been a great positive impact of the CPA. We tend to focus on what doesn't work and naturally so, because that's where the threat to the CPA is: Abyei, the '56 border, the oil revenue, the integration of the civil service and so on and so forth. But there's been a massive positive impact and not just in the South. It's been most of the country, except for Darfur.

Q: That suggests that we should talk about the elections that are in view for 2008 and you alluded I think to that earlier as well. With this change in the climate, does that portend well for actually organizing free and fair elections in 2008?

A: It's not really my area of expertise, so I can't really comment on it. I know that there are big hurdles in terms of putting together the census and that's where we would be involved, along with a number of other organizations, in trying to put together a census on time so that elections can proceed on time and that's really what we're focusing on now, making sure that there is a census, first.

Q: How did you get involved in that?

A: Well, several ways. For one, within our system, we have what's known as program communication expertise, which is basically different kinds of communication tools that reach people with messages and behavior change communications. So we would put that kind of expertise at the disposal of the census. We also have one of the more extensive presence and infrastructure outside of the main cities, meaning Juba and Khartoum and that would be available. We have the experience of having conducted our own national campaigns. We've done a polio campaign and a measles campaign and know the infrastructure of how that's done, in quite a lot of detail.

And finally we did something very exciting. Right after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, we brought together the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan to conduct the first nationwide survey on basic indicators related to children. And so for the first time since the 1980's we put together one data frame that included all of the basic social indicators: undersized mortality rate, maternal mortality rate, vaccination rate and so on and so forth. And so for the first time since the 1980's we had data for all 25 states plus Abyei and both governments have agreed to the methodology and to the data.

So in putting that exercise together, there are a lot of precedents set and a lot of agreements reached that can be useful to the census, whether it's agreement on where the data is going to be collected, where it will be analyzed and how it will be cleaned up and reconciled, or how much individual enumerators in the field will receive as daily compensation and will it vary from state to state. A lot of those precedents have been set and are useful to the census.

Q: That would provide a lot of basic techniques and tools for the kind of exercise they're going to do in first conducting a census, and then organizing an election. Sudanese have told us that they don't expect the government will want to go through with the election in 2008, but you're suggesting that that's not how they're behaving.

A: Again, it's not my area of expertise. They may very well be right. I'm actually not commenting on that. What I'm saying is that we're focusing on, as humanitarian agencies as opposed to political actors in Sudan, the census, and that's our contribution to the broader process. You have to have the census before you have the election. At least, that's the way it's set up here.

Q: In Darfur you are quite active as well, but how would you describe how you're able to go about your work, given the difficult security situation?

A: It varies. We went from a very bad start in 2004; our high water mark was really July of 2005 and then it started deteriorating again. And I think we had very poor access in the period of December 2006 through March of 2007. We still have difficulty with access but it's gotten slightly better since March of 2007. We're not based outside the main state capital, so we operate from the state capital. We operate by traveling by vehicle or helicopter and basically in and out of different locations. It continues to be a

very difficult situation, but the majority of the population has been displaced. So at least where we can access the camps we can get to a good number of children.

The results of this massive humanitarian effort are that while it's not a sustainable situation, it's not a positive situation, you've had 250,000 persons displaced since last June, specifically June of 2006, the fact is we've had a profound impact. Malnutrition levels are down, mortality rates are below the emergency threshold, access to water and education are probably better now than before the conflict. Not in a sustainable manner and not in a manner which is positive, because you're essentially talking about people living in camps but still, the point I'm making is the humanitarian operation has been able to stabilize the situation.

The way we put it is we're holding the line under very difficult circumstances. There have been twelve humanitarian workers killed in the last nine months. We've had colleagues abducted, colleagues raped and so it is an extremely difficult environment, but we've held the line. The point we're making is we're not going to be able to hold the line indefinitely and there needs to be a political solution.

A lot of effort and attention have been given to the type of peacekeeping force that should be in place and that's important. There needs to be a well organized, well managed peacekeeping force. But no peacekeeping force, no matter what its size, is going actually make a difference if there isn't a peace to keep and for there to be a peace to keep there has to be a political agreement. So we're very much hoping that the efforts of Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim Salim, who are respectively the envoys of the UN and the AU, to try to foster further agreement on the political front will actually bear fruit quickly.

Q: Indeed, and I'm wondering to what degree this imperils the CPA. I think you alluded to the fact that it certainly does represent a danger for the CPA. Is there anything else that you're encountering that is a grave danger for the CPA?

A: I think the situation in Darfur has clearly been an overhang on the CPA, in several ways. First of all, the political and administrative attention from all of us, the UN, starting with the leadership of the UN, the SG, the special representative of the Secretary General, the individual agencies that have been focused on Darfur would have been focused exclusively on the North-South peace process. And so there's been a cost. Also, in financial terms, I think the peace dividend, in terms of investment in Sudan, would have been higher, both in the North and in the "three areas" and the South, had there not been a Darfur.

So in many ways there's been a lot of energy - for understandable reasons, this is the premier humanitarian crisis in the world - focused on Darfur. But it has had an impact on the CPA and I think the decision taken recently, for example, to have separate UN/AU envoys for Darfur and separately a special representative of the Secretary General for the CPA and for the rest of Sudan, I think is correct. It basically recognizes that you need fulltime talent and staff dedicated to Darfur to advance a resolution of that conflict and at the same time you'll have a separate structure which will continue to focus on the CPA

and the rest of Sudan - there's also the eastern Sudan peace agreement, one must not forget - to make sure the rest of Sudan is stable and that the peace agreements are being implemented.

I think that is the correct structure and that is certainly the direction we're moving in now. I'm hoping that will not result in not robbing Peter to pay Paul but rather enough attention to the Darfur political resolution as well as enough attention to the CPA, in parallel.

Q: Is there a stronger role that the U.S. should take in this effort, to bring peace to Darfur and to buttress implementation of the CPA?

A: Nothing that comes to mind.

Q: I really appreciate your time, because you've definitely broadened the perspective of what I've heard before. It's very helpful to have your views and we appreciate that quite a bit. Again, thank you for participating.

A: Thank you.