

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

Interview #2 – Executive Summary

Interviewer: Barbara Nielsen

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The interviewee was a senior U.S. diplomat in Khartoum during the period August, 2000 – June, 2002. A major part of his responsibility was to orchestrate and take part in the meetings of the two Special Presidential envoys and one USAID Coordinator and their teams with Sudanese officials. He describes how his successful personal diplomacy in support of these missions gradually increased European support for them, and strengthened the IGAD peace process. At the same time, the U.S.–Sudan Counter Terrorism Dialogue for which he was responsible locally also contributed to the peace process by engaging senior Sudanese officials on another front. September 11, 2001 is described as a turning point, with the Danforth mission, which began shortly thereafter, able to profit from a Sudanese change in attitude, as Sudan sought to avoid U.S. military retaliation and to shed its pariah status through greater cooperation.

The interviewee describes the relative ease with which agreement was reached on the first three of John Danforth’s four points, as well as the difficulty encountered over the fourth requirement to have an independent, international force to ensure the cessation of bombing attacks on civilian targets in the South. Senator Danforth was eventually able to convince the President of the Sudan that this was a necessity. According to this interviewee, the Danforth period also coincided with a regeneration of the IGAD process, which resulted from an infusion of funding and technical resources, the appointment by Kenyan President Moi of General Sumbeiywo to manage the negotiations, the concerted diplomatic pressure to move forward on the part of the UN and the OAU, and a new motivation on the part of the Sudanese government to reform. This last change followed the “slap in the face” that the Sudanese received when they were passed over for the traditional rotating seat in the UN Security Council. The interviewee also credits the Egyptians with playing a positive role in these negotiations.

The interviewee notes that disunity among the Southern parties is a factor that weakens the CPA. In his view, the SPLM/A erred in ignoring the views of other Southern parties, and in not representing other ethnic groups and interests beyond those of the dominant Dinka tribe. According to this interviewee, John Garang was beginning to reach across the tribal lines outside of the SPLA when he died in a helicopter crash, a crash that, in his view, was not accidental. He voices doubt that Garang’s successor, Salva Kiir, will have the diplomatic instincts, political savvy and influence to meet the challenges he faces, particularly in the face of government withholding of promised resources and authority.

In the opinion of this interviewee, U.S. NGOs, many of them faith-based, played a singularly important role in raising consciousness about Sudan as a priority for the Bush administration. While this NGO involvement is largely positive, the 2002 Sudan Peace Act is criticized by this interviewee because it meant that we “shot every arrow in our quiver” at once, leaving us little room for nuanced escalation. Moreover, our economic sanctions hurt especially our Sudanese friends, those who depended on spare parts for machinery we had sold them in the 1980’s when the U.S. was their most important trading partner.

On balance, the interviewee remains guardedly optimistic about the future of the CPA, given the extreme war weariness on the part of all the parties. He points out, for example, that since the Danforth mission, there has been no dry season offensive. Such offensives used to kill tens of thousands of people every year. Moreover, the Nuba Mountain ceasefire appears to be holding, with no war-related deaths there in the last several years. While the idea of wealth-sharing and of power-sharing is difficult for the government in Khartoum, it presumably recognizes its long-term interest in avoiding the South’s secession and in creating a more inclusive sense of Sudanese identity in which the contribution of all ethnic and religious groups is welcome

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Q: Were you in Khartoum during the time of two presidential Special Envoys? Could you describe what your relationship was to the work of these two envoys?

A: Well, as a senior U.S. diplomat in country, my responsibility was to orchestrate all of the engagements of the Special Envoys with officials and non-officials in Khartoum during their visits, as well as liaise on their behalf in between their visits with local players. At that time, because of the security concerns in the Sudan as well, they were some of the few U.S. officials who were visiting the Sudan, at least officially coming into Khartoum. Other U.S. officials who may have visited Sudan visited the South or the Nuba Mountains without government permission, coming in through Kenya. Because we couldn't use hotels or taxis or any other kind of commercial resources to support their visits, I also hosted them in my house; I cooked their food and made sure that all of the things that they needed for their missions were accomplished by myself or my small staff.

Q: Were you generally in the meetings with them?

A: Yes. Normally we communicated in advance what kinds of things they would like to accomplish. I would work up a notional schedule for their approval in terms of who they would see, where they would go, how we would get there, what would be the security context under which we traveled. We went to some very difficult places, coordinating it with my diplomatic colleagues, particularly from England, Germany, Italy and Norway, and our UN friends who were stationed in Khartoum and Nairobi. So, yes, I had a direct involvement in all of the activities that they engaged in and I did attend meetings as rapporteur/note taker and adviser on the personalities and the situational context that their initiatives would encounter.

Q: You mentioned that many visitors came to Sudan through Kenya and were not visiting Khartoum, but were visiting other parts of the country. How were they able to do that?

A: For example, Senator Frist is a surgeon who has a long relationship doing pro bono surgeries in different parts of the world. He's had a particular interest in the Sudan through the '90s and every year he, without a visa, without advising the government, without any other kind of authorization, would enter the Sudan through Kenya in most cases and go to a location that was effectively outside of the government's effective sovereignty, often in a rebel-held area in the Nuba Mountains or in Bahr Al Ghazal or in

other parts of the southwest, and would perform surgeries over a period of time and leave through that way as well. In fact, because of the multilateral sanctions that were in place, there was a prohibition formally against official government-to-government contact with the Sudan. We were also in a security-based suspension of operations in our mission from 1996 through 2000, particularly after the bombings of the embassies in East Africa in August of '98, where no American officials were having any formal contact with their Sudanese counterparts or any other Sudanese officials, even in multilateral fora. So, Senator Brownback, Senator Wolfe, our assistant secretaries for African Affairs or any other official who wanted to engage with some of the people we were talking to in the Sudan, like John Garang or Riek Machar, the new heirs in the South, would often enter the Sudan through Kenya or meet these principals in Kenya or some other world capital.

Q: You alluded to the contacts that you had with the UK, with Norway, with Kenya, and Italy. These are the IGAD partners, so in preparation for the visit of the Special Envoys I guess you would be consulting with them. Can you describe the relationship between the mission of the Special Envoy and the ongoing negotiations in IGAD?

A: That's a complicated question because it included our European interlocutors and interface between them and the Special Envoy. I dealt with those individually and then tried to draw them together as a summary. My initial arrival as the first Chargé d'Affaires who was effectively resident in Khartoum in years was very difficult. There was a perception on the part of our European allies, including the British, but particularly the French and the Germans and Spanish, that we didn't know what we were doing and we didn't know what we were talking about. They thought the policy of putting pressure on the Government of Sudan, which the Bush administration had adopted after its policy review in its first three months, was counterproductive. I got a lot of lectures and derisive, snide comments in my first few months there from people who would suggest that the European experience with colonialism in this part of the world put them in a superior position to understand the real dynamics of the place and the young republic was just really not ready for the big time; this, effectively, is the kind of message I was getting. As we began to build a rapport with the Government of Sudan and I began to get more access and the initiatives that I was asked to carry forward were beginning to gain some traction. Our UN and European allies --who up to that point had not been able to gain any traction in terms of their policy-- changed direction. They became very supportive. They became great interlocutors and allies and strong advocates of the issues and approaches that we were bringing into play. Particularly the British, the German and the Italian ambassadors who were resident in Khartoum, became critical allies for us, as well as the UN Country Director.

Q: What is the approximate time frame of that ?

A: That was by the end of 2000. I had changed their minds about whether I was ready for the big time or whether I could gain access to the government, because at first the government didn't want to talk to me. I was *only* a Chargé. They had been pressing for an ambassadorial level of representation for years. The previous administration, the Clinton administration, and the Bush administration had refused to offer that diplomatic

benefit and maintained a level of engagement at the level of a Chargé d’Affaires. When I had one fairly testy encounter with a Deputy Foreign Minister, who said it wasn’t worth his time talking to me because I was only the Chargé, I reminded him that I was the senior American diplomat in place and, if they wanted to communicate to the United States, that I was available and happy to perform that function, and that it was my responsibility to my government. When there was a message to be conveyed bilaterally to them, I would have no qualms whatsoever or constraint about approaching them and conveying that message. Whether they were amenable to receiving it or not, it was my function to play this role. I guess if I’d have allowed myself to be marginalized early rather than kept pushing back at their door, they would have been just as happy to have left me on the margins of things, and it would have been a kind of a fulfillment of the expectations of our European colleagues that the Americans not only had it wrong, but they had the wrong guy in place.

Q: So, you were able, by dint of forceful diplomacy

A: And personality. Personality makes it. Sudanese are very social, very gregarious. I had studied in the Sudan as a graduate student and done an archaeology project there. I had made lots of friends and some of them were still around, and I socially engaged with people who knew me. It’s a small community, relatively speaking, among the opinion leaders, and it was conveyed throughout that I was a reasonable guy. I also spent a lot of time working with our neglected FSNs who had pretty much run the embassy by themselves in the absence of a senior American official for several years. I spent a lot of time cultivating them in my first few months. Of course, those messages are conveyed out to the communities. You know, “this is a decent guy who cares about us, who is bringing us good ideas, and who is able or whatever.” So, cumulatively the impressions that were reflecting back and forth helped change things on a personal level; it took a little while longer to get it on an official level.

But also, during that first three months, our primary engagement was in the Bilateral Counterterrorism Dialogue and I was the Plenary Co-chair for the U.S. side on that. We had a team of counterterrorism specialists who engaged the Government of Sudan at the highest levels of their intelligence and internal security apparatus, with senior members of the presidential secretariat, where we would meet and discuss the issues that we had of concern regarding Sudan as a kind of a crossroads for international Islamist terrorist groups. You may know that in the ‘90s the Sudan was terrorism central. Abu Nidahl, Abu Jihad, Osama Bin Laden, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Egyptian Islamic Jihad -- all those groups were resident in Khartoum. That was one of the reasons why we’d gone into the security suspension in 1996, why we evacuated our families three or four times between ’92 and ’96, why we had moved all of our people out of a residential status after ’96, and why they were commuting in from Cairo and Nairobi and Kampala. It took a while, but, through my engagement with the Foreign Ministry and that of my diplomatic colleagues, particularly the Egyptians, we conveyed to the Sudanese the value of engaging me as the American diplomatic representative. At the Counter Terrorism Dialogue, I had face-to-face contact with senior government officials who experienced how I sought to approach resolving our mutual concerns in this very critical area. This

eventually created a bit of open space for much more positive engagement with the Sudanese officials that I had to deal with.

Q: What were our common interests in that context?

A: In the Counterterrorism Dialogue?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, at that time Sudan had become a pariah state and they wanted to be rehabilitated in the world. They were engaging in a major “charm offensive” that really wasn’t going far because everybody knew how the government had come into power by force and had invited radical Muslim and Islamist terrorist groups that actually cultivated a community and a whole ideology around the legitimacy of their particular kind of goals and objectives. By ’96, they had begun to realize that this was not to their advantage in terms of other things they wanted to accomplish as a state, and it caused them difficulties. For instance, their efforts to destabilize their neighbors resulted in a lot of push back, causing their neighbors to do dastardly things to them. It raised their profile in the context of a clash of cultures, such that after the East Africa bombings, Sudan was a victim of U.S. cruise missile strikes which it might not have been if it had not been “terrorism central” for all those years. Throughout that time also, with respect to many of the major terrorism acts that occurred and harmed U.S. interests, there was sometimes a suspicion or indication of Sudanese official involvement or major Sudanese national involvement -- the World Trade Center bombing, the East Africa bombings, Khobar Towers, the USS Cole. There are Sudanese fingerprints all over them. Quite a few of the insurgents who had been captured in the field were Sudanese. Quite a few of those captured in Afghanistan and Iraq were Sudanese. The Sudanese government periodically called on the Jihadis to volunteer to go and fight a Jihad against someone and the government would facilitate their travel to that place. They wanted to rehabilitate themselves, and so when they began to recognize that this was causing them more difficulty than they could really stand and was making them vulnerable to attack -- diplomatically, politically, and militarily -- it was in their interest to cease being “terrorism central.” It was in their interest to rescind their open invitations to a lot of these groups to come and reside in Khartoum, actually to get rid of some of them, and to arrest some of them who were wanted in other places and subject to international arrest warrants. They also wanted to get out from under the multilateral sanctions in the UN and the bilateral sanctions from the U.S., which were comprehensive and prohibited all trade and commercial engagement except in the areas of food and medicine (which had limitations, too). With Sudan’s aspirations to be an opinion leader in their region, to have diplomatic force in the Muslim world, and to lead the African continent in certain other diplomatic efforts -- they couldn’t do so as a pariah nation.

Q: So, the change in Sudanese thinking was occurring during the time that the first Special Presidential Envoy was visiting Sudan.

A: There wasn't a lot of traction, but (former Congressman) Harry Johnston did play a very important role.

Q: Can you describe that?

A: Well, the difficulty that Harry Johnston had in terms of gaining traction on these issues was the Government of Sudan was not inclined to play. Every statement of fact was viewed as a statement of criticism -- and until you removed your criticism they would not engage you on the issue. Harry Johnston found that very frustrating, and I did too, in my early stages. In the Counter Terrorism Dialogue, for example, we didn't reach a breakthrough on that for over a year. During the first third of the process, "You're lying, you're lying, you're just beating up on us because we're good Muslims and you hate us," was the kind of response that we normally got to specific agenda items that we wanted to engage them in. The second third of the process was "Well, maybe you guys have a point on some things;" because in some cases we were able to present them with the facts about internal developments that the government didn't even have in its own archives and they recognized their own vulnerabilities regarding some of these open invitations, and so we began to share information on issues that they were concerned about. So we progressed from denial to "Okay, let's share" to finally a more cooperative posture after 9/11, where we began to actually engage in more than just sharing. But cooperation on critical questions of individuals, specific acts, and specific threat matrices could not be dealt with in a way that Harry Johnston would not have liked, because we had never gotten to that point during his tenure. He ended his role when they were still in the denial mode.

In the post 9/11 environment -- it was very funny. I had developed a good rapport by then and Mr. Danforth was identified as the Special Envoy only the week or a couple of weeks before. He had yet to visit Sudan. He had yet to come up with a strategy or make the four proposals that he eventually did come up with. A lot of my Sudanese interlocutors were very afraid after 9/11 that we were going to bomb them again. I developed a silly little story about an insurance salesman, a banker and a bank robber. They all lived in the same neighborhood and they all were customers at the same bank. Everybody thought the bank robber was an insurance salesman, but he was really a bank robber. One day the police put on a major investigation to find the bank robber. The point of that story was that the insurance salesman and the banker who lived on the same block slept very well, but the guy who people thought to be an insurance salesman, but who was in fact a bank robber, didn't sleep well at all. So, the question is: "Are you an insurance salesman, a banker or a bank robber?" If you were an insurance salesman or a banker you didn't have to worry about being bombed. If you were a bank robber, you were justified in your concerns about somebody coming to get you, or potentially coming to get you. That story really made the rounds with the Sudanese with whom I engaged. It's just an off-the-cuff kind of a story I told in a social situation with some editors and some other people. It was just a kind of jocular thing to say. But the analogy was apt. If the Sudanese were not involved in 9/11, if the Sudanese had no fingerprints on any of that activity and our engagement with them right now was on a positive upswing, they really didn't have anything to worry about. But, if they were involved and if they weren't

cooperative in the initiatives that were coming down, like the sharing of information on individuals and groups, joint law enforcement activities and the whole range of things that came in the post 9/11 period, then the money laundering and passing of money to terrorist organizations through their banks would be looked at differently. John Danforth came in, in that atmosphere, when there was a positive drive on their part to want to be rehabilitated; and a negative push to go beyond what you normally would be inclined to do because we had a new world in the post 9/11 context.

Q: So, they seemed drastically changed.

A: Yes. The atmospherics changed dramatically.

Q: That helped the Danforth mission?

A: Absolutely. Danforth had another advantage. Danforth is a “*personage*.” He carries gravitas. When he walks in a room he affects people just by being there. He doesn’t talk a lot in the official context, but when he does talk, it’s meaningful. There was no doubt that he represented the President. He was carrying the President’s water in this case. So, when Mr. Danforth wanted to see the President of Sudan, he got appointments. Harry Johnston didn’t always get appointments. I never got an appointment until Danforth arrived. I’d gotten close to the Foreign Minister. He was my designated “go to” guy by the Government of Sudan, but I never succeeded on my own initiative in getting a meeting with the Vice-President or the President one-on-one. I did see them in various events, and they did approach me in some other special events because it was to their advantage to have their picture taken with me, “the American,” in their proximity. It wasn’t until Danforth’s first visit that I actually attended a formal meeting with the Vice-President or the President.

Q: That speaks to the efficacy of the Special Envoy mechanism, which is criticized sometimes.

A: It was criticized in the Clinton years because some analysts believe it was overused. We were creating Special Envoys for all kinds of things. Special Envoys for Canadian baby seals; you know, that over trivializes it. But there were a large number. I can’t remember the precise number; I read it at one point, but my guess it was more than 40 Special Envoys. They’re quite expensive. It costs a lot of money to operate them. When the Bush administration came in, in its first term after the inauguration in January of ’01, they went through their strategic policy review. One of the efficiencies, as they saw it, was to remove or disestablish a lot of these Special Envoys. One of the few that remained was a Special Envoy for the peace process in the Sudan.

Q: So you observed that it functioned well, in some measure due to the personal gravitas....

A: In terms of breaking the ice. The day-to-day negotiation required hard-nosed diplomats. The team did a fantastic job in our first bilateral engagement on the four

points and how to come to a general agreement. That was in November of 2001, and Danforth had presented his four points during his first visit there, which was in September or October. We began to have the practical negotiations with our Sudanese counterparts on how we would do these things and we did reach general consensus on three of them, but not the fourth -- the international monitoring mechanism to ensure that official military aircraft were not attacking civilians. These were independent, mobile monitors with helicopters that could go to the site of an alleged attack on civilians and report from the ground. The Sudanese didn't like the idea of an independent international mobile force with a military element inside of their country looking at anything.

Q: How was the team able to persuade them that it was alright to agree to that?

A: We didn't get agreement until March, at Danforth's second visit. He convinced the President of Sudan that this was something that would have to be done because, in Danforth's view, there were scores of peace agreements in the past, over the period of the civil war, which always failed for lack of trust between the parties. They didn't have a monitoring mechanism and didn't have international involvement that would help create some breathing space in the confidence-building aspect between the domestic parties. Danforth insisted because, though the Sudanese claimed that they were not attacking civilians, civilians and NGOs were making that allegation and hospitals and clinics had the bodies to show for it. So to remove the doubt and to add veracity to either of the claims, including those of the Sudanese government, a non-involved international observer group would serve the interests of both parties.

Q: Could you comment on some of the particular Sudanese personalities who were in those meetings? Perhaps they all spoke with one voice or perhaps it was the President who made the decision, but perhaps certain advisors played more critical roles than others. Were you able to observe some of that?

A: First, I will say that is a highly stratified hierarchical government with only a few people making decisions. The rest are bit and role players. They are in support roles, not roles with initiative. We worked with the Foreign Minister as first point of entrée and presented the dialogue points through him to the Government of the Sudan. It was obvious to them quickly that this had raised the ante to a significant extent. We had Presidential fingerprints all over it and we were quickly moved into a meeting with a senior member of the original Revolutionary Command Council, who was one of the remaining unpurged senior leaders in this group, who quickly moved us to Vice President Taha, who then handed us off to the President. The people in the room with us in most cases -- their negotiating team -- was a mix of people from internal security, ministry of foreign affairs, ministry of interior, and ministry of defense. My guess is, no matter what our particular agenda or talking points were, that the internal security person -- who *never* talked in the meetings -- was the one who really did have veto authority over anything said by their delegation, and that his marching orders came from the Vice President or President.

Q: I had heard that the intelligence chief also was often present and was actually very helpful, played a very helpful role.

A: Yes. A power. He was a real power.

Q: You outlined your cooperation on the intelligence side in its own right, but did you observe something similar with respect to his role in the peace negotiation?

A: This is the point that I just made about the internal security chief.

Q: Okay, we're talking about the same guy.

A: The intelligence, internal security person who was on the delegation was the Deputy to the Chief of Intelligence. The Chief of Intelligence was on the Board on the bilateral Counterterrorism Dialogue, and he was the primary liaison for the counterterrorism team that was in place. I visited him at least once a month, mostly in a schmooze role to just let him get comfortable with me and get to know me. There were issues that I could discuss with him and I spent more time talking about his family and his school just to build trust and a personal rapport. He was one of the participants in the revolutionary coup that occurred in '89, which was led by the general who became President. But, you know that Hassan al-Turabi was the ideological force behind the movement that resulted in that coup.

There was a group of young men, mostly American and Canadian-trained who were actually called "Turabi's American boys," who were key players in the revolution of '89, were members of the initial Revolutionary Command Council and, through the multiple purges that occurred through the '90s, remained at the top strata of this government. The Vice President and the Chief of Security were two of Turabi's boys. They had jettisoned Turabi by this time.

Q: That's what I was going to ask.

A: Turabi was under house arrest, but the Intelligence Chief and Vice President Taha, who were two of Turabi's "American boys" were still senior powers in this revolutionary group. They did jettison Turabi because he was evolving in his political ideology where he wanted to open up the dispensation for political participation by other groups, other established parties, and found a lot of resistance among the central core of the governing group. He really fractured his relationship with that group when he proposed that governors be directly elected rather than being appointed by the President, which would have diluted the President's direct authority over interior administration and political developments. That's when Turabi really got isolated and alienated from the command group. But I guess the last straw was when he met with representatives of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement and suggested it was time for a rapprochement. He was arrested.

Q: When was that?

A: That would have been, I think, January 2002. No, earlier than that. It was 2001. It was after the 2000 elections. It was between January and February of 2001.

Q: A little too far ahead of his time.

A: He was evolving in his thoughts, but his party was not. They were in the process of going into the bunker and consolidating their authority. Let me tell a joke about his former supporters. The joke makes the point that even Jesus of Nazareth had a traitor who turned his back on his mentor. Judas, however, had the good moral sense not to take the money and to hang himself. In Sudanese joke terms, it means that Taha and the other “American boys” after they arrested Turabi didn’t have the same good moral sense that Judas did, because they took the money and the top jobs.

Q: The Sudanese tell this joke about themselves?

A: Yes. The Sudanese tell a lot of jokes about themselves. The Sudanese are very jocular people. They are very gregarious, very social. The Sudanese, I remember when I was there in ’79, I was told that they are poor, they have nothing, but they will give you all of it.

Q: Sure. Well, it made it a little bit human apparently.

A: The Sudanese are some of the best people. Their politics are nasty, but socially and on a personal level, and in the way they relate in their extended family networks, are some of the most hospitable, generous and gregarious people you’ll see anywhere on the planet.

Q: Would it be fair to say that the Special Envoy during the Danforth period breathed life into the IGAD process?

A: Yes, because IGAD was moribund.

Q: Okay, how did this unfold?

A: First of all, by the friends of IGAD investing in the infrastructure of IGAD and assigning handlers to help with process and funding to support the moveable negotiations gave IGAD’s organic legitimacy a resource-based push. The Secretary General of IGAD at the time was Sudanese-born, but from the period in which we were their best friends. He was a senior official in the Nimeiri regime. We still maintained good relationships inside the Sudan, but not all that good with the government of the Sudan, but he was able to bridge a lot of that because of his role as an independent player in IGAD. IGAD didn’t have the wherewithal in terms of personnel, the acumen, a lot of staying power to carry these negotiations forward on their own, and initially, two people they presented to lead the negotiations weren’t acceptable to either of the parties. It wasn’t until General Sumbeiywo was selected by Daniel Arap Moi in Kenya that the process really began to

move. General Sumbeiywo had been involved in the '70s in North-South conflict with the Addis Ababa agreement. He had a track record and some trust with the people in the South and he'd done other things in emergency management and response in the East Africa zone that the central Government of Sudan was aware of. This made them more inclined to accept him as the point person for managing the negotiations. It was the pressure from a unified NATO diplomatic corps, reinforced by the Secretary General of the UN and a limited amount of pressure from the OAU urging the Government of Sudan to do something proactive on peace because of the negative spillover effects among all of its neighbors: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Chad and Uganda, Kenya, Central African Republic. The Sudanese problems were spilling over and affecting all of these countries. Sudan was also running into difficulty continentally.

When I was there, in the normal rotation for non-permanent representation on the U.N. Security Council, it was Sudan's turn. Tom Thabane, who was Foreign Minister in Lesotho was a good personal friend of mine. He was chairing the applicable group on the consideration of whether they would allow Sudan in its normal rotation to be Africa's representative on the Security Council. We demarched African capitals with a very strong "no" message. And Thabane visited Khartoum; he didn't know I was in Khartoum and we ran into each other at an official reception. We spent the next two days talking a lot. We had a good rapport when I was in Lesotho. I was able to convey our point of view to him in a really unexpurgated way. I'm not sure that my successor in Lesotho was doing so, but I was in Khartoum, so I was on point and I had a broader sense of what the issues were and how we spun them. Thabane wound up pressing the Sudanese, and eventually they did not get that Security Council seat, and this was maybe the first time that Africa did not follow the normal rotation. Thabane explained it to them, that the egregious issues inside Sudan and the spillovers into the neighboring region had really alienated a lot of people and caused their major benefactors to really press them about Sudan. If Sudan wanted to free itself from this kind of scrutiny, it needed to show some forward movement on the issues that were a concern to their neighbors, the continent, and others. That slap in the face was very difficult because they expected the historical pattern, "No matter how yucky you are, when it is your turn, you will sit on the Security Council." And they didn't. That was a real shock to them.

Q: It woke them up.

A: Yes, but a lot of things have happened since August of '98. This was just another in a series of hard blows.

Q: The Egyptians were also active?

A: Yes, the Egyptians were extremely active. I had an extremely good rapport with the Egyptian ambassador, who had absolute high-level access at any time he wanted. In fact, whenever I had a problem that I couldn't solve as it regarded the internal process of the Government of Sudan, I would ask my Egyptian counterpart to go weigh in, not on my behalf, but on behalf of removing that blockage, that obstacle, that log jam. He would.

The Egyptians have a special relationship with Sudan. In fact, on one level, the Egyptians haven't outgrown their sense of ownership of Sudan.

Q: Anglo-Egyptian Sudan?

A: Exactly right, but even more significant is "Mother Nile." Mother Nile is survival and Mother Nile flows through Sudan, the Blue and the White. The Egyptians will not let anybody build a dam or reservoir or any water control system without their authority anywhere on the Nile. The Ethiopians discussed building a dam below Lake Tana. The Egyptians told them that, if they did, they would blow it up. They'd send in F-16s to destroy it. The Egyptians have a very special rapport. The exiled Sudanese politicians, parties, and many of the Southerners are in Cairo, in Alexandria, in Port Said. They're in Egypt. The Egyptians have a lot of access and leverage on the Government of the Sudan, and so my Egyptian counterpart was a major asset and ally in getting the Sudanese to listen to points that they found difficult to hear.

Q: Going back to the Danforth four points and the negotiations that went on about the Nuba Mountains cease-fire, you haven't talked very much about the Southern Sudanese. We've talked about the government. What were the obstacles to agreement from the point of view of the SPLA, John Garang and his people?

A: First and foremost was that they did not trust the Northerners. The Northerners operated from an Islamist formula that it was no sin to lie to an infidel. Throughout the history of this conflict, which actually runs back to the 1920s, became hot in the late '40s, became a formal civil war at the point of independence in 1955, and has sustained itself up until last year's signing, whenever Southerners reached agreement with the Khartoum elite, the Khartoum elite always reneged. Always reneged! The period when I was in Sudan in '79, they were still under the "no hot war" interregnum of the Addis Ababa Agreement from '73. But in '82, Nimeiri rescinded it by his own initiative and it was completely contrary to the document that he had negotiated a decade before that brought Southerners into the government. There was no war for a decade. It was before a full peace, but it was "no war" for a decade, and they rescinded it without discussion and without appeal. The lack of trust question was foremost. Second was the cultural divergence question. Though the Southerners in some cases were Muslims; they were not Islamist Muslims like this coterie of conspirators that had taken over the government in central Khartoum. There is a racist cultural stream in central riverine Sudan that really looks down on the Southerners and the Westerners, who from the period of the pharaohs were objects of predation for slavery. Still today there is cultural antipathy. Third, they were in a significant position of disadvantage and were not convinced that the negotiating context would be such that they could operate on a level of equals in the negotiating sense.

They also had a major problem in that the government had played "divide and rule" among the Southern parties throughout the '90s, such that there was great angst between the Nuba, the Dinka dominated SPLA, the Nuer, the Shilluk, and the Zande, to the point that the government was able to use different groups as cat's paws whom they would

arm. The inter-tribal rivalries in the South resulted in a significant number of the deaths that were stimulated by the government's arming of John Garang's rivals and letting the fighting take place between the various Southern groups. When you're talking to the SPLA, you're not talking to a lot of other groups who have control over other geographical spaces in the South that are not Dinka. It was not sure within the SPLA, and definitely opposed by other groups, that the SPLA should be the unique interlocutor for the South. From their point of view, although the SPLA claimed to represent the South, many Southerners did not agree that the SPLA was their representative.

Q: So, in the negotiations under the Special Envoy, the South was represented by the SPLA only?

A: The SPLM, the SPLA only. I discussed this with some of the senior officers there, including Dr. Garang in some informal settings. We met with them often in Kenya and several times in Rumbek and in the Nuba Mountains over this period, but I had a concern. When you look at their manifesto and their strategic plan they only make reference to themselves as an organization, themselves as a political party, themselves as a leadership group, themselves as a drafter and administrators of the Constitution, and they don't make any reference to any of the other Southern groups. When you look at the events that have occurred over the last 18 months, one of the great difficulties in the implementation of this CPA are those schisms among the Southern players, showing great trepidation about tying their interest to the Dinka or the SPLA.

Q: When you brought that to their attention, what happened?

A: Well, you know, they were the dominant player. They had the Jeffersonian approach -- that they'll write the Constitution, at least the first draft, and in that way influence the events. Now, on one level, many of their ideas had broad appeal. But in terms of the expectations for those who would lead and who would sit in the warm chairs, I really did think it would be the them, and that's how it's working out.

Q: Senator Danforth would have, I'm sure, understood that point as well.

A: Yes, he did.

Q: What was his reaction?

A: I suspect that Mr. Danforth viewed these as breakthroughs that would evolve over time, expanding dispensation as it went, which is still possible. The SPLM right now is flush with success, receiving a lot of attention from various donor groups and multilateral players. They're in the catbird seat. They have the Vice Presidency; they have the Presidency of Southern Sudan. Their cabinet really is a Dinka cabinet, unfortunately overwhelmingly at this stage. It will have to be an act of generosity on the part of the SPLM maybe, from their point of view, from my point of view "real politik," to expand the dispensation and participation of many of the other groups, some who went over to the "other side" and some who remained autonomous in the South -- the other side

meaning that they joined forces with the government in Khartoum, and quite a few did in the '90s. They split off from the SPLM and became actually Khartoum-based junior cabinet members or other senior government officials or military leaders and the like. They had limited authority and that authority was always constrained and boxed, but they were not crawling through the bush and able to feed their families. This was a major improvement on an individual basis, but not necessarily in terms of Southern politics. So, I think Mr. Danforth hoped to see an ever broadening of the dispensation that would bring in those disparate cultural and political forces in the South to work in common cause with the SPLM, which had the advantage of being in at the beginning of these developments. I don't think Mr. Danforth would have thought of this as exclusively for all time an SPLA prerogative.

Q: You touched on some moral values such as generosity and trustworthiness, and of course the idea of "real politik." If the operating mindset of the Khartoum government is that it is okay to lie to the infidels and to break your agreements because you're agreeing with parties that don't merit your trust, how can that cycle be broken by cultural values?

A: It hasn't been broken yet. In fact, the death of John Garang only opened this question broader. I'm no longer on the beat, but I still have my ear to the ground, and friends of mine in the region immediately suspected foul play in the death of John Garang. It is known that, in the '90s and in the early part of this century, overly-aggressive, too-popular leaders, even on the government side, who became at variance with the immediate goals of the President tended to die in an airplane or a helicopter crash. Between '94 and 2002, I think there may have been at least six or seven incidents in which senior challengers or very popular political types who caused disturbance in the cohesion of the senior leadership group died in an aviation incident. So, when Garang, months after signing -- the next month he was going to go to Khartoum as the Vice President of the Sudan and President of the South -- died in a helicopter crash in a zone where insurgent forces armed by the government have historically shot down other aircraft, this incident raised some real trust issues and doubts about the story. Many were calling on the government to allow an international investigation of this incident because they wouldn't have trusted the government's incident report about it. This trust issue is deep and it's ancient. The memories are ancient.

The earliest reference to the Sudan in historical terms are from the old kings of Egypt showing Southerners, black Africans, on their knees, bound, with their heads bowed in a bondage situation. Throughout the history of that region after the Egyptians, the Nubians, then the Black Sultans of Darfur, to the present, the South has been a labor sink for the acquisition of slaves. When I was studying at the University of Khartoum, a young Shilluk prince told me that "God only made one mistake and it was probably a genuine mistake, but that was to make an Arab who had been stealing our mothers for 1,000 years, more than 1,000 years." That memory, as a cultural memory, is still very, very firm in the minds of the contemporary generations. The racial divergence between the North and the South is still extant in contemporary norms and ways of relating. The displaced Southerners who were living in the Sudan were not allowed to get jobs or enroll in university in this last decade and a half and were relegated to the grunt work in

Khartoum: the hod carriers, the sand movers, the street sweepers, the house cleaners and the ladies who make tea on the street. They arrest all these people for not having local residency papers. They were refugees from a war zone and trying to survive in the capital. The women who made the traditional beer were often arrested by the Islamist morality police for creating alcohol and thrown in jail and treated pretty badly.

Q: So, there really is a second class citizenship for Southerners.

A: For Southerners. Many Northerners really don't think of them as Sudanese or even the same people.

Q: So the government of National Unity is really....

A: Is a difficult idea.

Q: To what degree do you think the peace accords led to or made the civil war in Darfur heat up?

A: Led to -- is not an inapt association in my opinion. Remember that, before it was clear that this peace treaty was going to be successful for the South, Garang's relationship with the rebel factions in the West had been a part of their strategy from the middle '90s to spread the war and create a multi-front war for the central government. They had been transferring arms, resources and advisors to the West. In the East, not only did they transfer arms and advisors, but they also sent troops for several incidents in '96, '98, 2001. So, the peace treaty negotiations between the North and the South caused sympathetic repercussions throughout the political space of the Sudan. It became evident to the Northerners and the Westerners and the Easterners that they needed to fight like the Southerners did. It was in the interest of the Southerners to also generate those kinds of pressures on the central government. It really had no constituency outside of the military or the police, which are beholden to them because they have recruited them over the '90s and got rid of the professionals. They purged themselves, the army and the police so many times in the '90s that all that is left is an Islamist core. They have even expelled many of their revolutionary partners, so that only about 11 of the original coup plotters are still in power. Quite a few of them are in jail or dead -- not all by natural causes. The example of a military initiative in the South receiving political and diplomatic positive consequences is a clear message to the other neglected quarters of the country that your concerns will receive no attention as long as you are not "in their face."

Q: You mentioned that the SPLA were some of the fighters extending their mandate to other parts of the country.

A: Oh, absolutely, because there were alliances established between the various opposition groups to be mutual support alliances in various contexts. Some of those tied the Northern and Eastern parties to the Southern parties, and the SPLA was the only one that had an operating army. They had insurgents and guys who didn't have a lot of training, but they also had battle-hardened, field-tested, long-serving fighters. The other

guys were living up in Cairo denouncing the Government of the Sudan on television. The SPLA was fighting.

Q: You said that the Khartoum army had been purged?

A: The professional leadership, many of them U.S. or British-trained, are all retired. The police and the morality police were religious police who received a lot of training in the early '90s from Iranians and Iraqis.

Q: Were they able to get weapons as well?

A: The Sudanese government?

Q: The Sudanese government.

A: Easily with oil. Their traditional sources of weapons, the former Soviet Union and Soviet bloc countries, continued to supply them. They were also invested with China to build what was technically supposed to be a light trucks facility, but it also produced armored personnel carriers and small mobile guns. They had no difficulty getting light arms and assault weapons from China, from India, from Ukraine, from Poland, from the Czech Republic, and from Russia. The Russians upgraded their MIGs (fighter aircraft) and the Chinese sold them helicopter gunships. They had no difficulty. With oil they were able to upgrade their military purchases in a way that historically they never were able to. Now, they didn't do a good job in leading or training or really formally equipping their line troops. Elite units did get additional equipment, but a lot of times they would require high school graduates to come to a military base to get their diplomas and grades and they would put them in a truck and take them off to a camp even before they advised their parents that the army had taken the boys and conscripted them into the military. After six weeks of training, if you put a boy who was not inclined to be a soldier, has no motivation or inclination to be a soldier, on the front line with these hardened, battle-worn SPLA fighters, such boys died in large numbers out in the bush. When that became politically difficult for the army in the late '90s or early part of this century, when it had become a really untenable pattern to continue, they began to depend on these militias, such as the Janjaweed and various groups who were allowed to effectively engage in land piracy. The government often took advantage of an existing conflict or tension between, let's say, agriculturists and sedentary farmers and pastoralists -- that is nomadic herdsman -- competing over the same scarce forage and water. Those tensions already existed and they were ancient. But you increase their mobility by giving them horses and four-wheel drives, increase their lethality by giving them automatic weapons and suddenly the militias and the Janjaweed are the more powerful, lethal forces. Their ethnic cleansing activities result in the displacing of groups that the government is sure are not loyal to them.

Q: I may shift gears a little bit to talk about the NGOs and the religious groups who have, I imagine, a very significant role to play.

A: Excellent point.

Q: At least influencing U.S. policy.

A: And partnering in the implementation of it.

Q: Exactly, so what did you observe as the role of various NGOs?

A: The NGOs were very important players in a lot of what we did. First of all, many of them operated in parts of the country where it was difficult for us to get to. They represented an excellent source of information -- on the ground intelligence -- about what was actually happening. Second of all, you had groups that we had contractual relationships with through particular kinds of development, outreach or humanitarian relief activities such as Save the Children or Catholic Relief Services. Most of that was managed out of our USAID operations in Kenya, but many of those groups also had offices in Khartoum because they were operating somewhere in the Sudan. A major partner in the NGO world was the Carter Center, because one of the Danforth four points was “the days of tranquility” to do the polio and the rinderpest eradication activities.

Q: And Guinea worm.

A: Guinea worm and rinderpest were Carter strategic interests, priority interests of theirs. We had a very good relationship. I believe from my personal involvement and analysis after that, it was because of the faith-based NGOs in the United States, which represent a significant portion of the core constituencies of President Bush, that Sudan rose to its status as a priority country in Africa in the first place. The President’s policy initiative to allow for faith-based organizations to receive federal funds to carry out specific scopes of work on a contract basis to U.S. government in partnership with our embassies would not have taken place if that relationship between his core constituency and the President were not in place -- did not exist. It became evident in a lot of the things that I did, in the partnerships that I managed, that a lot of the NGOs that were involved in support of what we were trying to accomplish were faith-based U.S. ecumenically-oriented organizations.

Q: On balance they were a positive influence?

A: Yes, in most cases.

Q: I had also heard that in some instances there were NGOs who distorted the truth, I guess for their own interests, particularly about slavery, and that people were paid to say they were slaves. To what degree did you find any lack of transparency with respect to the operations of the NGOs?

A: I would phrase it a little differently than you did. People come to these complex questions often with their own baggage, their perspective and perception of what is in front of them. If you’re talking about the groups that used to go, for example, to “redeem slaves,” that is pay for their manumission, many of these people were acting in good

faith. They were sincere in their intentions, but they brought their own template that they tried to overlay onto a complex local socio-cultural space that often skewed their interpretation of what was actually taking place, which allowed them to be hoodwinked in some cases. A person would take the money for being manumitted and then he would be manumitted three or four more times, over and over, because of the gullible do-gooders who were paying a guy who was not a slave owner for a guy who was not a slave. That kind of stuff took place in the 19th Century American antebellum south.

Q: A human failing we would expect anywhere?

A: Exactly. So, we put together a group to go investigate the question. I'd been looking at this for many years personally and I have my own opinions about what is and what is not happening there. You must recall first of all that the international conventions against slavery from 1926 through 1938 were drafted based on the situation in the Sudan at that time. When Assistant Secretary Rice visited the South in November, 2000 and asked me what I thought, "was it slavery or not?" My answer to her was, "Look, it doesn't matter what you call it, if you call it indenture, if you call it slavery, if you call it abduction, to the person who is suffering the situation it is a distinction without a difference." They have been taken by force from their homes. The menfolk have been killed. Their animals have been stolen. They are force-marched days and hundreds of miles from their home places. They are forced into sexual thralldom and are required to work without compensation. If they try to leave they'll be physically harmed. I don't care what you call that; it's a distinction without a difference. The Eminent Persons Group we convoked did determine that, under the terms and definitions of the international conventions, the circumstances they saw were equivalent to a slavery-like situation.

Q: Was there follow-up to that investigation?

A: It opened up a lot of scrutiny and it made it a lot more difficult. The government was saying this was not slavery and bondage. It was "abduction," rather like girl stealing. Girl stealing goes way back with the Dinkas. I argued "This is onesies, twosies, this girl-stealing. A man wants a wife. A girl wants a husband. She goes and hangs out on the margins of the village where she shouldn't be, pretending to be unaware that there's someone in the bush. He grabs her and run off and she becomes his wife and he treats her with the respect with which one treats a wife." That was happening all over the world. The people in Mongolia do it, people in parts of Southern Africa do it, people in the Amazon do it. But when you bring in 30 guys on horseback with AK47s and four-wheel drive vehicles, you kill all the men in the village above the age of 15, you take all of the women and all of the animals and force-march them, you know, 300 miles, for 12 days to a place where they're not from, and you share them out among the households in the village that you have brought them to, and they put them to work and rape the women, take possession of the offspring, and if the women complain, they can be beaten or killed -- that's not girl stealing. These women are not treated with the honor and respect of a wife. They are not wives. They're sexual thralls and housekeepers and washers and water carriers, you know? The government says: "Okay, you just don't understand." I responded, "My Dad taught me that, if it's okay over here, it must be

okay over there. So, if it's okay to go down to Abyei and steal all these girls and their kids and their mothers and march them North, it must be okay for the Dinka to go up into Abyei and kill all the men and take the women and animals." They say: "No! That can't be right." Well, that was my point. If it's not right there, it can't be right here.

Q: They would understand that?

A: When you talk to people on an individual basis, outside of a political, official "tete a tete," you get a completely different kind of argument. I spent a lot of time with the government's official think tank that was run by another one of Turabi's "American boys." It used to be a torture facility, but they cleaned up all the blood and they built themselves a nice little facility. I would have lunch with him once every two months or so and spend several hours just arguing the intellectual value of these points. Not with any policy initiative in mind necessarily, but trying to win an intellectual argument on different issues that we just happened to be discussing at the time. I used that argument -- the "if it's not okay this way, it can't be okay that way" argument-- with them in one of our encounters in late 2000.

Q: At the time that you were there, the U.S. Congress was debating the Sudan Peace Act.

A: Yes.

Q: The act was eventually passed. Do you see that as a positive thing? What was the impact of that act?

A: It angered the Sudanese. The Sudanese kept saying, "Look, we keep giving you what you ask for and we're getting nothing in return. The sanctions haven't been removed. We're still on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and we got rid of all of those bad guys and we turned over a large number of them to different people, including you. We've cooperated with you on the money transfer issue. We cooperated with you on the 'days of tranquility.' We opened up the Nuba Mountains that had been closed for 15 years to humanitarian assistance. We let you go in and do the polio and rinderpest and guinea worm intervention and every time we give you something else, your Congress, or your President, or a Presidential constituency hits us with something new." Now, it was because of the movement towards the Sudan Peace Act by Congress that pressure was put on the Canadians to withdraw from the consortium that extracted and marketed oil, but it only opened the door for the Indians to come in to replace the Canadians and join the Chinese who were the dominant member of the consortium. But then again, remember, a lot of other players in the world were not very assiduous about meeting the terms and conditions of the multilateral sanctions out of the UN, which we did lift after they signed the Comprehensive Peace Treaty. None of our NATO partners are too apt or concerned to fulfill the conditions of our bilateral sanctions and agreements. So, in spite of the fact that we had multiple, comprehensive bilateral sanctions and were active participants and advocates of stringent multilateral sanctions against the Sudan, the British, the Italians, the Germans, the Argentines, the Greeks, the French, the Russians, the Turks, the Egyptians, the Japanese, the Australians, the Indians, and the Chinese were all involved

in the oil industry in the Sudan. We found the oil, but we left it in '83 and walked away from it when the war resumed because Nimeiri lied and rescinded the agreement that he had with the South. We never exploited the oil that we had been looking for from the '50s, and the other reservoirs of oil and gas that we believed to exist in the Darfur region and other parts of the South and the Red Sea littoral.

Regarding your Abyei question, oil is the key to the answer. The Sudanese government was of the view that, no matter what they did for us, they got nothing from us from it. The passing of the Sudan Peace Act was another example. It always pushed things back when the Congress would intervene. Remember, there are members of the Congress who were of the view that this government was too evil to engage, that we shouldn't do anything with them except try to overthrow them. There were members of Congress who wanted a "no fly" zone. There were members of Congress that wanted assassinations. There were all kinds of noises coming out of Congress and I always had to remind the Sudanese that, until the President signs a bill, it is not the law of the United States. A Congressman can say anything he wants, even though a no fly zone is too expensive. Where are we going to base these aircraft from? Off an aircraft carrier and fly over Somalia? Forget it! Practically speaking, it is too difficult. Every word that came off the Hill that was critical of the Sudan, and there was no shortage of them, whether it was the Black Caucus, the core members of the Republican right, or the long-standing members on the Foreign Affairs Committees in the House and the Senate. You see, in a society that's a police state, that controls what goes into the newspapers and on the radio and the television and all of the members of parliament have a hand up their back making their mouths move, when they see newspapers and your think tanks and your Congress criticizing them, they think that's the US government criticizing them.

Q: The Sudanese don't understand how that works, but the Act was eventually passed and so the government did speak.

A: Yes and they didn't like it at all.

Q: They didn't like it and you didn't have the pleasure of explaining it to them?

A: We were discussing it as it was moving its way through the process over the previous year.

Q: I guess, in your own view it wasn't particularly helpful.

A: No, because here's my point of view on that, and I conveyed this officially in a cable that got me in some trouble. Through our sanctions regime, we had gone and shot every arrow in our quiver, threw the quiver and the bow, and were left standing there in a loincloth! That was my point of view. We had nothing else to throw at it. Remember, we once were the Sudanese's most important friend, trading partner, investor source before 1989. So all those big plantations and all those factories and all of the infrastructure and the trucks and the tractors and the agricultural combines -- they were all American. When we put these sanctions regimes on, suddenly all of our traditional

friends and allies had depreciating equipment falling into disrepair with no possibility of replacements. The British and the Germans and the Italians and the Japanese and the Indians were very happy to fill the gap. Our Sudanese friends, our natural allies, were being hurt. Then when you look at the calibration of our diplomatic engagement, how you want to escalate things up the ladder from dialogue to confrontation, you find if you throw all your weapons at them at the front end, you're standing there saying, "Hey, we'll just make faces." You don't have anything else to do.

Q: There's no nuance to that.

A: No, so if you throw everything from comprehensive, multilateral, bilateral, financial, economic, commercial, all these other sanctions, and you stopped selling the military equipment in '89. and you have on the books that you can't do direct bilateral official development assistance because a democratic government was overthrown by non-democratic means, you have nothing else. Your leverage has been thrown at them already. The argument that I was trying to make was that we had to begin engaging in not only making offers of positive benefit to them, but delivering incrementally positive benefits to them in order to cement their commitment to the process. Otherwise all they would have to say is, "Heard that before, got nothing out of it."

Q: It doesn't solve the lack of trust issue. Going back to the fact that the Sudanese had been only too willing to renege on their agreements, were they going to apply a different standard to us? They would like us to make an agreement with rewards that we would indeed honor, but on their side we couldn't expect to hold them to an agreement?

A: We never made it a "quid pro quo:" you do this, we do that. We did indicate in the Danforth phase that positive acts of behavior and cooperation would bring a change in our posture without specifying what that change would be. We never said, "If you accept the four points we will lift the bilateral sanctions." We never said, "If you sign this peace treaty we will take you off of the State Sponsors of Terrorism list." We did indicate that, the more Sudan became a normal member of the international community and behaved as a state worthy of respect and trust in that context and submitted itself to the same rules and standards that all other states are expected to conform to, then we would not treat them like a pariah. We would behave toward them as if they were any other honorable member of the international community in good standing. This implies that a lot of the negative sanctions and other activities that we had in place would be modified or lifted. But there was never in my tenure a firmly expressed "quid pro quo." The Sudanese would always project this or interpret it that way, but none of the formulations that I or Danforth or the other primary interlocutors at the time ever conveyed this as a specific "quid pro quo." We specifically discussed that at one point, and did not discuss those things in term of a "quid pro quo."

Q: Now, in hindsight, do you think it would have been better to have a "quid pro quo" built in?

A: No, because you couldn't always move the Congress. You didn't want to be in a position where you promised something and you couldn't deliver. If they changed their behavior and changed the atmosphere, it could conceivably lead to an argument to change the relationship.

Q: It would be logical.

A: It doesn't always follow.

Q: It was a fair assumption.

A: Yes, exactly. They drew their own conclusions about whether there was a "quid pro quo" hidden.

Q: Just to draw our discussion to a close here, I suspect you have some views about the final CPA in terms of what might have been done better. Would you like to offer some comments on that?

A: The real big problem is the trust question and the resources question. I think those were the two biggest problems.

Q: Those are big ones.

A: The government promised a lot and signed on the line committing to quite a few things that they have so far not done. Remember, during the long war years they uprooted and destroyed the infrastructure of the South. Remember in the movie, Field of Dreams, "...If you build it they will come?"

Q: Yes.

A: In the Sudanese context it was stood on its head, "If you build it they will bomb." I remember talking to Mr. Danforth on our first flight south to Rumbek and he said, "Oh, it's pretty bad out there." I said, "Yes, sir. When you hear that the Southern Sudan has no infrastructure, you think minimal, you think limited. You don't think 'none.'" Where there were roads, they were bombed. Where there were schools and hospitals, they were bombed. In fact, the worst part of the Southern war for the Southerners was when a tank force had pushed deep into the South, had taken Rumbek, taken the best school in the Southern Sudan, the Rumbek secondary school, made it their headquarters, dug their tanks in and dead tank husks are still in the middle of the playground and in the middle of the school's courtyard. They used that place as their launchpoint for warring on the South. There are no hospitals, clinics, schools, or paved roads. There are no water distribution systems. There is no river traffic. There are major rivers, but no jetties, no wharves, nothing. Where there were once buildings or churches, there is just a wall or two left because they've been bombed. Thatched huts and small houses that people live in have become objects of bombing. Humanitarian relief sites have been bombed, killing civilians waiting to receive handouts. To ask the Southerners -- who are displaced as

refugees in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and the Central African Republic -- to return home, and many of them are returning in large numbers, they're returning to a place that can't sustain them. There are no farms; there's no irrigation; there are no schools; there are no clinics; there is no housing; there are no roads; there's no market; there's no distribution system; there's no electricity; there's nothing. So, to begin to establish a government presence where you can only communicate as far as you can walk or your car can drive today, across an area that's twice as big as Texas, is a very difficult constraint.

The loss of John Garang is important because John Garang was beginning to reach across the tribal lines outside of SPLA. Salva Kiir, his former deputy and now his successor, is a bright guy. He's a war fighter. He's shown to me that he may have the diplomatic instincts to carry this off, but I'm not sure to what extent, with the old guard of the SPLM, with his having been a subordinate in terms of a war-fighting role and now being President only because he inherited it at the death of Garang, rather than having built a constituency to elevate him to that position. I'm not sure, in the political sense, that he'll be able to deal with the demands of the various other constituencies, the lack of institutional infrastructure and human capacity and acumen to deal with this complexity, particularly if the government reneges on the deal. So far, they have not transferred the resources. They've not given the kind of assets and support that they promised, and they really haven't given him any authority in Khartoum as should be the case of a senior Vice President.

Q: So, the international community needs to keep pressure on?

A: Yes, I agree with that.

Q: I imagine the IGAD partners....

A: The IGAD partners have no leverage in that regard. Their leverage is residual through the multilateral community.

Q: It would be unfair to ask you if you're optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the accords, but....

A: I'm more optimistic than I am pessimistic about the prospects for the CPA. First of all, I think that war weariness is affecting all of the players. The government's effort to portray those lost as martyrs is beginning to wear thin, when families had more than one son not come home from war, and they call their countrymen enemies. Between 1982 and 2001, every year there was a dry season offensive. That dry season offensive would kill tens-to-scores of thousands of people every year and displace multiples of that. Every year! It was causing environmental degradation. It was limiting any kind of developmental impetus. Wildlife was being eaten because the farms had failed. Elephants and giraffes became food sources and the wildlife and biodiversity of the Southern Sudan has been significantly denuded. Since the Danforth mission there has been no dry season offensive.

Q: That's a real change.

A: Already scores of thousands of people who would have otherwise died in war have not. The Nuba Mountains conflict, no one has died there since after January 2001. The Nuba Mountains was a killing field in the mid- to late '90s. Many of the Nuba elites were just being assassinated. There was an ethnic cleansing campaign going on to move the Arabicized Muslims into the zone of the Nubas because of its proximity to the oil fields, and the oil pipeline traveled through the Nuba Mountains. There have been no systematic patterns of war-related deaths in the last several years in the Nuba Mountains.

Q: Remarkable.

A: It's remarkable. If the "habit of not warring" sets in and the war weariness is great enough for people to think beyond conflict to other possibilities, and as long as the various opposition groups are being forced into coalition to learn from each other and work together, I think that has a positive potential for the future of a broader political reconciliation, because each quarter of the country can't go into insurgency just to get attention from their neglect. Eventually, you'll reach a threshold of awareness and learning and these coalitions will be able to leverage their successes to insist that this minority regime does something different. I don't think that they're going to do it voluntarily. They're going to have to be pressed. They're not going to give up the oil. They think it's theirs. The wealth-sharing idea is frightening to them. The power-sharing idea is even more frightening to them because they have shared power with no one. They are forcing the South into a consideration of separation. When the referendum occurs, if conditions don't improve very much in the next three years, the South is going to go for secession, and not just the Dinka. Then, that's when the potential flashpoint of a larger crisis will occur. The Government of Sudan will not let it go voluntarily, because the wealth of the country is in the South. The oil, the hardwoods, the sources of the water, the fisheries, the potential new agricultural zones, that's all in the South.

Q: They should work hard to make the power-sharing and the oil-sharing work.

A: Except that I think among the Northern Khartoum elite, there are interests there that can't agree that they should give anything to "those black slaves." They think they should kill them. I'm sure there are interest groups in Khartoum that have that attitude. Unless someone who has more vision comes up to argue within the circles of the Khartoum leadership elite that it's in their interest to define the identity of the Sudanese, of who is Sudanese, broader than their own Islamic circle, they're going to have perpetual conflict for as long as we can see into the future.

Q: Remember though, you said you were optimistic.

A: I said I'm more optimistic than I was pessimistic, but I recognize that the Sudanese's real problem is "a question of identity." Who is Sudanese? What is a Sudanese? If only Arabicized Muslim, Arabic-speaking Islamists are Sudanese, no wonder they're going after Darfur. No wonder they're going after the Dinka. No wonder they're going after

the Baggara and the Nubians. No wonder. If the Sudan is defined as all of the peoples who have equal cultural contributions to make to the diversity of the society and its politics, you'll have a completely different dynamic, with many people ready to step forward and play positive roles. But if you maintain the status of the last 16 years, then maybe they'll say: "I ain't an Islamist, I don't want to be an Islamist and I will fight to my death not to be an Islamist."

Q: Hence the real possibility of separation?

A: Yes, exactly.

Q: Well, I thank you for sharing your insights. You've obviously invested a lot of intellectual power and your own time and energy into the Sudan. I appreciate your sharing it.

A: I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with you and be a part of your project.

End of interview

Interviewee's Postscript:

I neglected to mention that there was another presidential Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs during my tenure in Khartoum for whom I played a similar role as I did for Johnston and Danforth. That was Andrew Natsios, who was then USAID Administrator. I provided support for both Natsios and his deputy.