

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

Interview # 5 –Executive Summary

Interviewed by: Barbara Nielsen
Initial Interview date: April 12, 2006
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This interviewee provides a behind-the-scenes look at the work of the second Presidential Envoy, former Senator John Danforth, during the period September, 2001 – May, 2002. He describes the purpose of the Danforth mission as threefold: first, to devise a series of tests to determine whether it would be worthwhile for the President to make a long-term commitment to bring peace to the Sudan; second, to help alleviate the dire humanitarian suffering, particularly in the Nuba Mountains region; and third, to generate some momentum in the peace process which was already underway under IGAD auspices. The interviewee stresses the special envoy's desire for inclusion of all parties willing to work towards peace, in particular his aim to bring in Egyptian participation

The interviewee describes the Government of Sudan's motivations at this time as both negative – to avoid any reprisals for its support for terrorism -- and positive – to cease to be a pariah state in global isolation both economically and politically. The interviewee singles out the Sudanese intelligence chief as playing an especially helpful role in moving the negotiations forward.

According to this interviewee, the Danforth period ushered in a new U.S. attitude of impartiality, in which the U.S. did not favor John Garang and the South over the North. Danforth's style in negotiating was to be firm with both sides, on the one hand refusing to back down when the Sudanese Government tried to intimidate him before a trip to the Nuba Mountains, and on the other hand refusing to be intimidated by John Garang's criticisms of lack of progress. In the view of this interviewee, the highly-detailed Nuba Mountains Ceasefire Agreement has been one of the most successful steps toward peace thus far, and has continued to work well, in large measure because Danforth insisted on verifiable monitoring of results. The interviewee provides insights into Danforth's thinking, including his surprise to discover that "religion was not as big a part of the problem between the North and the South as it appeared to be," and that the conflict had "more to do with power, oil, territory and governance than it did with religion." He also describes some of the problems in gaining the Sudanese Government's acceptance of the idea of an Eminent Persons Report on Slavery and the exaggeration by some NGOs with respect to the slavery issue.

One of the few criticisms voiced by this interviewee concerns the communications and coordination shortcomings among USAID, the Department of State, and the NSC. One of Danforth's personal strengths in this process was managing to get

these three entities to operate “on the same wavelength.” The interviewee also mentions a degree of State Department resentment of the creation of a Special Envoy for Sudan.

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Q: When were you involved in the Sudan project along with former Senator Danforth?

A: Well, essentially from the time Senator Danforth was designated the president's special representative, which was sometime in September, 2001, around the middle of September, I can't remember the exact date, until he submitted his report in May 2002. Were you able to get a copy of the report?

Q: I was and I have read it; it's a very clear, well-written report. I've tried to adapt today's questions to what I've read in the report so that our conversation will provide a snap shot of a period during which we and many other countries were working toward a cessation of hostilities and peace in Sudan. What will hopefully come out of it are some lessons learned that other diplomats and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), press and all those who get access to the USIP (United States Institute of Peace) website will be able to profit from.

A: Good.

Q: You were working with Senator Danforth from approximately September 2001 until you submitted-

A: May 2002.

Q: - this report in May of 2002. Would you reiterate what your mandate was during this time in Sudan?

A: Well, Danforth made it very clear to the President that he would do this, but he wasn't going to do it full-time, nor was he going to do it indefinitely, but that he would make his best efforts ascertaining whether or not it would be worthwhile in his view for President Bush to make a long-term commitment to bring peace to the Sudan. And in the process, he decided against developing a full-fledged peace plan to put on the table, something that had happened in the past. Also, looking back at the history he said: "You know, there had been a number of agreements, none of which had lasted very long. So what I'm going to do is to go for some very specific, limited, precise objectives as a test for the credibility of the parties, which will give me an idea so to whether or not there's any hope

in the long-term solution.” He said: “Coming from Missouri, it’s the ‘Show me State,’ I don’t want them to tell me or put things in writing, I want them to do things and so I’m going to devise some tests. Now we hope that these things will at the same time accomplish two other objectives. One is to alleviate the terrible humanitarian problem and the second one is move the process closer to a peaceful solution, generate some momentum.” So that’s what he set out to do. Now, there were people who said: “No, you have to have a full fledged plan.” “No,” he also said, he made this clear in his report -- it’s in the White House announcement of the report. “The United States is not going to come in and say ‘here we are, we’re in the lead here, everybody else is going to support us.’” He said: “I don’t want to do that, I want to as best we can mobilize others and support them, not have everybody supporting the United States.” In looking at the situation, he said: “we’re going to start with IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development),” which had been involved for a long time, “and other Africans. We also want to involve the Europeans because they’re active and interested and they have resources, political and financial, which they can bring to bear.” And he and I talked a bit and he said: “Yes, that’s right, I want to bring in the Egyptians,” which is something new. And the Africanists didn’t like that very much. They said “the Egyptians are part of the problem.” And our answer was: “Well, if you don’t deal with them you’re never going to solve the problem.”

Q: The Egyptians had their own plan at that time that they were putting forth?

A: The Egyptians, the Libyans had some kind of a plan that they were putting forth, that’s right; we want to get them to help; if their plan works, that’s fine. On the other hand, we want them to support what we’re doing, and so his first trip he took with him a letter from President Bush to President Mubarak saying: “I’d really like your support in doing this and here’s why.” “Among other things after 9/11,” he said, “this will be an example to show Arabs and Africans, Christians and Muslims can actually work together, which can have ramifications going well beyond Sudan and Egypt.” And President Mubarak said: “Okay, tell President Bush I agree; we’ll work together.” And that’s what happened. Mubarak appointed Suleiman, his Intelligence Chief, to be the chief action officer because he’s the one who’d been looking after the Sudan in various ways in the past and we had several meetings with him and he was quite cooperative. And we actually were able to get General Sumbeiywo up to Cairo where he had a long talk with the Egyptians and they began to understand each other. Sumbeiywo was the chief negotiator for IGAD and also the chief of staff for the Kenyan army, a very important player in this game and very, very constructive. So we took it from there. And the four tests that he worked out, clearly spelled out in the agreement, and the most important one was humanitarian access and a ceasefire in the Nuba Mountains; some sort of an international commission to look into the question of slavery, which had very big political ramifications here in the United States and in Europe; an effort to set up a zone of tranquility where in a particular geographic area and/or a particular period of time there would be no bombing or military action so one could deliver relief supplies freely; and finally, some sort of a system to investigate reports of attacks upon civilians. Now, I’m sure you’re going to talk to the people at the working level who were the ones most the most knowledgeable about what went on at that level.

Q: Taking it a little bit systematically, how were you able to engage the parties to talk to you about the proposal? How were you able to, I'll put it this way, build a relationship with the parties, with the leaders that you were going to be talking to so that you did achieve agreement on these four proposals?

A: Well, of course the Administration already had a very, very close relationship with Garang.

Q: That was a personal relationship based on ...?

A: No, both. Personal, yes and Garang had lots of friends in Congress and the relationship just sort of carried on. The relationship with the Government in Khartoum was very, very touchy; we had no ambassador there, we had a part-time Charge who'd come in from time to time, but the Administration had made it very clear that they were terribly distrustful of the people in Khartoum, as a result of the terrorism problem and other things, the war in the South and persecution of Christians.

Q: Exactly.

A: So that was more difficult. But Danforth called me about, maybe the 8th or 9th of September and said: "what would you think if I accepted the President's offer to be his Special Envoy for peace in the Sudan?" I said: "I think that would be a mistake because it's mission impossible." And he said: "Well I've already decided to accept. Will you help me?" I said "Yes, although I don't think it's going to go anywhere." I called him back on the 12th of September and I said: "I think there's a chance now because the whole dynamic has shifted because of 9/11, and I suspect that the Sudanese Government is going to be very, very chary if not scared to death that there's going to be some military action taken against them. Therefore, they'll be willing to give ground on the peace front as a means of easing the pressure on the terrorist front." So that was really, I think, what changed the outlook. But in addition to that, Danforth and the President, to the great surprise, I think, of General Bashir and the other people in Khartoum, played it absolutely straight and it became apparent to them after some months that the United States was not taking sides, which we had in the past, not favoring Garang and that personal relationship -- not too much with President Bashir, because he kept himself apart; we had two or three meetings with him, and they were fairly formal, but with people around him, it became clear that we were playing it straight. Danforth was a man of tremendous credibility and access to the President, and so they were impressed. I think they saw that over time there was an opportunity for them as well as a means of averting difficulty; they could do something positive.

Q: Something positive in economic terms, in terms of assistance?

A: No, the desire to develop their oil industry was obviously there and to unlock some of those riches. But also to get back in the good graces of the world, starting with the

United States, because isolation, in addition to the economic losses, the isolation hurts and so they were very, very keen on that. And there were several different players on the government of Sudan side. You had Ghazi, who was the so-called Negotiator for Sudan, who had been involved in these things going back forever. You had the Foreign Minister, you had, although they weren't very much in evidence, you had the military leadership, the Minister of Defense and his people, and you had the Intelligence Chief, a man named Babakar, who became very, very helpful as this went on. We had already developed some access to him through the counter-terrorist issues which were being discussed with him, but we found him to be quite useful. We were able to help push along the counter-terrorist side, but above all we found him to be a quite straightforward, honest broker with a lot of long-term vision as to where this thing might go. So he, in some ways, was more helpful than the others as we went along and he attended all the meetings with President Bashir, sort of sitting off to the side as a fly on the wall but, nevertheless, you could see he had some influence. It was sort of hard to figure out exactly who had how much influence in this cabal, if you will, in Khartoum.

But we had a series of trips. There was the Danforth mission, November 11 to 20, with visits to the region. A State Department colleague and I went out first to prepare for his visit. And after the initial contact on the Nuba Mountains, we worked up a proposal on Nuba Mountains about how things were going to unroll. We made that, frankly, the most important of the four tests.

Q: And you made that the most important because it would have the greatest impact?

A: It had a tremendous amount of humanitarian impact and political impact here at home because the Nuba Mountains people were in bad shape. They'd been cut off from the rest of the world. Relief supplies couldn't get in except for an occasional surreptitious clandestine flight. Mr. Natsios had done his best to get into the Nuba Mountains but had been rebuffed at the last moment; he had not been allowed to go in. There had been no U.S. Government officials allowed in, so we thought that it would be important to get in, symbolically as well as in terms of what we could do to help the situation, for Danforth to go. And so we said, before we even got there, we said: "one of the things we want to do is to have both delivery of humanitarian supplies, air drops without threatening to shoot them down, and we want to have a visit by Danforth to the Nuba Mountains." And they really waffled on that. They said "Yes," but it was quite clear they didn't like it. And so the night before the trip was scheduled, some mysterious person or persons shelled the airfield. So Danforth went to see the Minister of Defense and said: "Look, if you think you're going to intimidate the personal representative of the President of the United States you're wrong, because we're taking off as scheduled and we're going to land on schedule, and we trust that nobody is going to shell the airfield or in any other way threaten to take action against the President's Special Representative while he's here." That sort of took them aback and Danforth did not ask the State Department for permission. He feared that the security people would say: "Oh, it's too dangerous, don't go." He said: "I'm going to go," so we went. We were allowed to land and we witnessed some air drops of food while we were there and had a good meeting with the local people. We came back with a plan to take it a step further, which was to be a

survey of the needs of the people of Nuba Mountains on both sides of the line, both the rebel side and the government side. And USAID was put in charge of that, and assembled a team which included the United Nations, and conducted a survey and began delivering supplies to both sides in order to nail this thing down.

Then there was a long negotiation that took place in Switzerland. An idea that I think another colleague came up with, though maybe I helped him. I don't know, but we thought that we could pin down the details on how to administer a ceasefire, including joint teams and things of this kind that would be not only a lot of progress toward successfully meeting one of the major tests, but also a precedent as to how one could work a ceasefire for the South as a whole. And the Swiss wanted something to do and they offered to host people. We said: "that's a great idea, we'll have it in Switzerland. They won't stay too long, they'll be so cold." So we set up a whole process of teams on both sides, observers moving around and joint Southern Sudanese, Northern Sudanese teams, a lot of details which you probably have; some of it's in this Nuba Mountains document.

Q: Who was the leader of the Government of Sudan's team for the Swiss meeting?

A: I can't tell you who the leader was...

Q: John Garang would have been there representing the Southern Sudanese?

A: Garang's people were there, that's right. Now, Garang was very interested because Garang was taken aback by Danforth because Garang had thought, I believe, "I got a tremendous amount of support from the Clinton Administration almost to the point of delivering these arms so I could continue my activities against the North, and the Republican core leadership, including Evangelical Christians, should be more supportive of my cause than the previous Administration." So he was quite taken aback when Danforth laid forth his ideas. And when, at the first meeting between Danforth and Garang in Rumbek, I guess, Garang said "Look, you've made no progress whatsoever, on this issue, that issue, that other issue. I don't see anything in there that I would call favorable. And I just think that you're not able to do the job." Danforth said: "Well, I'm glad to hear that. That means I'm just going to turn around and go right back home. I'll forget about all this stuff and I'll tell the President that you said I'm unsuitable and we'll call off the entire effort for peace." That really shook up Garang.

Q: Called his bluff, in other words.

A: Totally. Same way we'd done earlier at the Nuba Mountains trip with the people in Khartoum. But, for the Southerners, we held meetings with Garang and his emissaries. We tried meeting with the various other Southern groups who were there, other Southern tribal groups, but we decided to meet only with Garang. And so time went on and we sent out a technical team after Danforth's first visit. Eventually, the Nuba Mountains ceasefire agreement was worked out in detail and everything went off as planned, and it's worked well.

Q: Is the Nuba Mountains ceasefire still in effect today?

A: So far as I know. You know, I've been out of this thing so I'm not following it in any detail.

Q: And were you surprised that it ended up so expeditiously?

A: Well, you're always hopeful. There's a lot of suspicion, but you sit them down and get them talking to each other on the basic principles that had been accepted earlier on.

Q: The basic principles that "yes, we should have a ceasefire, yes, there should be access to the people?"

A: Yes, monitoring mechanisms and things of this kind.

Q: I know in the Danforth report, monitoring is one of the key points that he stressed, that it was going to be very important to have international monitors.

A: As he said, "Show me. Everything we do has to be verifiable and verified." All the way through this was a very, very important point for him to make sure that whatever we had could be verified.

Q: But wouldn't that have been a hard sell then for the Sudanese, because they recognized that heretofore they'd been able to make all these agreements with no verification, and so they did what they wanted?

A: You know, I felt with Sudan, basically felt they wanted to give us a chance so they could get in the good graces of the United States, and also, I think some people actually were happy with peace. You know, it's not all that pleasant to keep on fighting.

Q: You and I would agree on that, but it seems difficult to get the parties to stop attacking civilians, and the mindset that would allow indiscriminate shelling of civilians and feeding centers and so on is not an easy one to comprehend.

A: Oh, I think it's their form of warfare. You know, World War I, we had poison gas. World War II we had atomic weapons, fire bombing of Tokyo, all the nasty things that take place. This is their way of waging war. You just have to understand that and do what you can do get around it.

Q: On some moral level they must have realized that it was not an acceptable tactic, because they had in their mind that, " We're going to cease, or we're going to try to cease, being an international outcast, and one way to do that would be to behave in a way that is acceptable to the rest of the world." Is that-?

A: Well often, you know, we used the Norwegians, the British, the Italians, the European Community, others to put their shoulders to the wheel and help push, together with the Africans and the Egyptians, so everybody was sort of pushing in the same direction, and we kept everybody informed. You know, again, I'm off to the side here. Danforth makes a periodic appearance, and I'm working sort of independently. You have the machinery of the State Department, everybody else handling most of the details. One point I think we need to make is that the communication and coordination between AID, the State Department, and the National Security Council left a lot to be desired.

Q: That's a good point to talk about a little bit because it's fundamental. You've mentioned the machinery of the State Department, and I guess it didn't all work like clockwork.

A: Well, they set up the special office to sort of back-stop this thing. You can get more from other people, but AID is much more tilted toward Garang. The Africa Bureau, I think, resented a bit the idea that someone came in from the outside, a Special Envoy, and resented me in particular because I knew somewhat about what was going on in the State Department. And NSC and State Department on Africa issues weren't really talking to each other. And the CIA had their counter-terrorism role. So you had different strains within the U.S. Government which had different objectives. The CIA became very supportive because they saw that Danforth was in to help on the counter-terrorist side, to raise this in various meetings because you need to, you know, need to cooperate. And while he was there, everybody else cooperated too. He was able to get AID and the State Department and NSC all on the same wavelength. This wasn't, didn't happen automatically and it didn't happen all of the time. When he wasn't there to sort of pull people together, they tended to go their own ways a bit, because AID was basically very distrustful of Khartoum and felt that this might be a mistake. On the other hand, when they saw the advantages of things like the Nuba Mountains, bringing help to the people of the South, that was a positive attraction. And with the contacts that my AID colleague in particular had with the Southerners, it was very, very important to have him there saying: "I support this issue, we should go along with it." That helped the credibility of the Danforth mission I think.

Q: How was AID able to operate throughout this period? Obviously many of the regions where AID wanted to be active were not stable or peaceful.

A: That's right. The agreements they would negotiate with Danforth made it easier for AID to deliver supplies, and AID's leadership, to its credit, understood very early on that what could happen, in terms of what AID could deliver, if planned properly could be a boost for the long-term peace between the South and the North, which they wanted. So AID became very much of a team player. These various things were set up including a rudimentary monitoring mechanism for attacks on civilians. There wasn't enough money to do all the things one wanted to do. That was quite clear. But there was enough to get things started: with contributions from other countries as you could get them, some from the United States.

Q: Money ?

A: If you want to set up a monitoring mechanism, it takes money, people, planes, all sorts of stuff. It was eventually done and it wasn't a huge, big operation but it was enough to-

Q: And it was internationally funded?

A: Yes. There was enough to minimize the bombings and things. But the Sudanese, you know, they'd been using the equivalent of the Janjaweed, which you find in Darfur against the Southerners. For them it was a way of doing things which had some slight plausible deniability, and also it didn't involve their having to send their army.

Q: And they had been using that tactic in the Nuba Mountains region?

A: They had been using it everywhere, especially in the oil fields, to keep rebels out of the oil fields.

Q: What was Danforth's view regarding the possibility of secession for the South?

A: Well, Danforth's discussions with Garang and with various others made clear that he was not speaking for the United States Government, but that he personally thought that unity rather than partition would be a better outcome. This outraged them. They didn't like that at all. But he said: "I'm just giving you my personal views, having talked to the various African chiefs of states around Khartoum, having looked at all sides, I think you all would be better off staying together, but that's a personal view, it's not the one that is necessarily going to be that of the government of the United States." That upset them because that's the first time they'd heard this sort of viewpoint. They were distressed because they had expected more from the Bush administration. Now, President Bush never wavered. He wanted to do what he could for peace in the Sudan, he trusted Danforth, he supported Danforth. A lot of people say: "Oh, well, you know, when push comes to shove, members of Congress who were behind the Sudan Peace Act and who were very, very close to Garang will intervene and the President will back away from Danforth." But it never happened.

Q: Did the Sudan Peace Act make a positive contribution?

A: Well, in a sense it was a sword of Damocles hanging there which made it a positive contribution. Danforth went up and talked to all the people on the Hill and again, they respected him as a man of principle, they knew him.

Q: They knew him, of course.

A: They also realized he had the support of the President. So they weren't really troublesome. They were not happy, but they were not troublesome. Danforth also mobilized as best he could the churches. He had a long talk with the rector of El Azar University in Khartoum; he was one of the leading Islamic scholars. He met with the

Archbishop of Canterbury, the Secretary of State of the Vatican, to try to enlist their support behind this project.

Q: And did they lend their support?

A: Yes, they lent their support, yes. One of the interesting anecdotes was that he met separately with Christian religious leaders in Khartoum and with the Islamic leaders, and they all had nasty things to say about each other. Then he asked them to meet him together at the Embassy, which they did, and each one was very suspicious of the other. Well, he left feeling the meeting was a terrible failure. There was a reception that night, and they came, and representatives from both sides came up to him and said: "Look, you know, this is the first time we ever met together. We're beginning to have some understanding of the other one's viewpoints, but never before have we ever met and talked about these things together."

Q: Kind of a classic catalytic role of the diplomat, I guess.

A: That's right.

Q: It's amazing that they'd never met together at all.

A: I know. We were amazed too.

Q: So we brought them together and while they didn't agree, at least they were talking.

A: They began to think, that's right. Danforth had an idea that he tried out also at the United Nations, which didn't work, of setting up a commission analogous to our Civil Rights Commission, which would not have any power but be able to look into complaints and publish a report. He found that the Sudanese Islamic leadership said: "We'll go along with that," the Christians said: "No, no, we won't go along with that. We don't trust these people at all, they want to impose Shari'a law upon us. We think this would work to our disadvantage. We don't want to hear any part of it."

Q: And what was the response to that?

A: Danforth just said: "I'm a little disappointed." This was going to be a commission of outsiders, a representative appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, somebody appointed by the Rector of El Azar, somebody appointed by the Vatican, not the Sudanese., but, in any event, one of his ideas, because he's a deeply religious man and he found in some ways that he had been surprised because religion was not as big a part of the problem between the North and the South as it appeared to be; much more a question of power, oil, territory, governance, much less on the religious side.

Q: And the religious leaders who didn't care for his idea, were these the leaders of the Sudanese Anglican Church or of different local churches?

A: They had a number of religious NGOs; they had set up their own organizations, you know, sort of religious NGOs.

Q: International religious NGOs?

A: Sudanese NGOs. There were a number of church groups involved in this. In any event, we got agreement on not attacking civilians. And then we went on to the periods of tranquility.

Q: Right. And that apparently had some coordination problems in the implementation?

A: Always.

Q: You'd expect that.

A: Sure. And finally, shortly after Danforth had submitted his report, they got the final report from the International Eminent Person's Group on Slavery.

Q: Right. And that's obviously another subject of great interest to the U.S. public.

A: That's right.

Q: Was that a difficult sell as well?

A: Oh yes. You know, the Sudanese Government said: "We're not buying this." Actually, it was trickier than it seems because, if you look at the history of the Sudan, slavery has always been there and the more favored slaves had slaves of their own.

Q: Sure.

A: So slavery in the Sudanese context is not as terrible a thing as it is from the U.S. point of view.

Q: And I guess it's outlawed officially?

A: That's right.

Q: So they claim it doesn't exist but.

A: I guess you could ask what's the difference between a migrant worker and a slave?

Q: Yes. Sometimes it's hard to tell. and some slaves are actually well treated.

A: That's right.

Q: And perhaps live a decent life in the Sudanese context?

A: That's right. You know, that's something that had to be looked into because it was so sensitive here. And these people did a very good job.

Q: I read that there was an effort to promote reconciliation between the Dinkas and the slave raiders, who were from other tribes.

A: That's right, that's another part of the problem, the tribal differences; we didn't get into that; we're not going to get into this. Except talking to Garang, (and this upset him), Danforth said: "look, you know, if you look around the world, individuals in your situation, who lead insurrection and then come to power, sometimes lose because the only source of power and authority and support is as a war-time leader. They haven't built up a political base which can extend beyond the end of hostilities, and they're in bad shape. You are the person who has been leading the military resistance against the North, but you don't seem to have much of an organization, and you don't seem to have reached out much to others. Therefore, when hostilities end, what are you going to have?" And, he continued: "Build upon all the things that are going on. There are all sorts of projects sponsored by different governments and by different NGOs throughout the South, and if you begin to knit them together so that you have a rudimentary governmental health ministry and education ministry and things of this sort, put it all together on a technical basis, that will give you some more support." It was suggestions of this kind that AID was working on, this was their area, but we just tried to point out to him some of the political realities.

Q: How did he react to that, since he was a politically savvy person?

A: You know, he saw it and wasn't happy we were sort of challenging his governance approach, but, on the other hand, he is a very savvy political man .

Q: So he figured that was reasonable advice and he might even want to pay attention to it. Did he have much influence in terms of the slavery issue?

A: Well, one of the things that came out in all this of course was that there had been a lot of exaggeration with respect to slavery. In some cases people had been paid to show up and say: "We're slaves."

Q: Okay.

A: Which is very embarrassing to some of these NGOs whose raison d'etre was really the fight against slavery.

Q: Who would have paid them to do that?

A: In some cases some of these NGOs did.

Q: The NGOs themselves?.

A: Or Sudanese intermediaries who were helping them.

Q: Just the fact that you and the Danforth mission were looking at this, brought to light some facts that were important for people to understand?

A: Yes, but that's really about the sum and substance of my involvement. When Danforth presented his report to the President he said to me: "You've got to be there." I said: "No, it's your report. It's not my report." The President turned to Danforth and said: "Okay, if you're convinced that it's worth continuing this effort, even though it's going to be very, very difficult and it's not certain, but, nonetheless, if you can do it, I want you to continue." Danforth had said: "I'll do this for a period of time. I'll give you my report and that's it, I'm finished. That's my job; after that I'll turn it over to the Administration to carry it forward. We don't need any special emissaries." And of course, the State Department didn't like the idea of the special emissaries in any event; Powell was against it in principle.

Q: Well, it did create those resentments that you mentioned.

A: That's right. It happens.

Q: But Danforth presented his report and then-

A: Right, and that was that. And then he called me up and said: "The President asked me if we would continue doing this and I'm going to do it. Why don't you do it with me?" I said: "No, I didn't sign up for that. If you want to continue doing it and Secretary Powell said we don't need anybody from outside, we can give Danforth all the support he needs from within the State Department." And Powell and I were very good friends, and I said: "I understand that. It's not my intention. No matter what Danforth says about wanting me to stay on, I don't want to do that. So from then on-

Q: You were out of the picture?

A: That's right.

Q: Okay. You've given a very good picture of that time period there and provided some interesting insights to the various personalities. When Garang disappeared from the scene, what consequence do you think that brought, even though you weren't involved at that point?

A: Well, I think it made it more difficult. And I suspect, to answer your question about Darfur, that Garang would have had much more influence on Darfur than his successor did. Garang would have had more influence in dealing with the government of the Sudan and the people of Khartoum than his successor did. But the Darfur issue, just like that of other potentially autonomous groups, was literally off the table. We said: "Let's get this done; then. Let's take up the rest of the country. But we recognize that the rest of the

country has populations that feel they're not getting their due from Khartoum, and they're correct about that, but we can't do everything all at once so let's focus upon this part of it."

Q: It seems reasonable to limit your objectives.

A: Then move on to others. But the slowness of the Sudanese, and I mean the North and South negotiating process, though the U.S. gave it several pushes. In other words, Powell arrived in Nairobi and said: "Oh, you've got to have an agreement by the end of the year, and this and that." But they have their own tempo.

Q: Sure.

A: And while things were going slowly in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the temperature was building up in Darfur, in part because the rebels in Darfur said: "Look, here's this Agreement being negotiated, and we're totally left out." But I think that had one been able to accelerate the coming to agreement, it might have helped the situation in Darfur.

Q: Why would that have been?

A: Because the tensions wouldn't have been able to build to such a high level. But I also think, and I don't know why this is, I don't have any idea, though others could tell you, there had been a terrible breakdown in communications between the Government in Khartoum and this Administration. The mistrust is back to where it was before Danforth started his mission.

Q: Now, why is that?

A: I don't know.

Q: What I thought would be a good final question, because you mentioned very favorably the Intelligence Chief who was in on the early meetings, Mr. -

A: Babakar.

Q: Exactly. And that he was a very helpful individual. Of course, we don't intuitively expect that, but what were some of the reasons you think that he was able to be so forward looking, so visionary, to see the interests of Sudan in such a clear way?

A: Well, I think, you know, it's just a question of the individual. He just happened to be a remarkably, I think, farsighted individual, and as time went on he was given more and more trust; he actually became this sort of special representative for Sudan, Sudanese peace, as well as head of intelligence. Bashir appreciated what he'd done.

Q: Did he have a military background?

A: I think so. You know, frequently for better or for worse, Intelligence Chiefs become instruments of policy and a channel for policy communications between the U.S. and other governments. I've seen it in lots of different places; sometimes it's not good, in this particular case it turned out to be a benefit.

Q: Alright. Well, we've covered a lot of ground, and I thank you very much.

A: You're welcome.