

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

**Interview # 50 – Executive Summary**

*Interviewed by: W. Haven North*  
*Initial interview date: December 15, 2006*  
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The interviewee is with the U.S. Mission to the UN working on humanitarian assistance. Previously, he was with the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) working on humanitarian assistance to Sudan and, for a time, was based in Nairobi covering humanitarian programs in southern Sudan. His work focused on health, water and sanitation, agriculture and food security in the most conflicted and underserved areas of Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, Nuba Mountains, and southern Blue Nile regions. Some assistance was provided in the North but mostly to internally displaced southerners around Khartoum and to eastern Sudan when there was a drought.

The two sides agreed to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) negotiations, because both sides and particularly the North realized that the war was a tremendous drain on resources and it was in no position to win. The ceasefire in October 2002 was the real turning point. During the war, the Khartoum government was extremely unhelpful and blocked humanitarian assistance; some of which went in without explicit government authorization, contrary to the understandings in Operation Lifeline Sudan. The blocking was a tactic by the North to break southern support for the Southern Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA). With the signing of the CPA access opened up considerably. The opportunity to provide humanitarian assistance with Quick Impact Projects of small assistance has been helpful in bolstering the peace agreement.

For the CPA, the wealth sharing, power sharing and the status of the “three areas” were the most complicated issues to negotiate and implement. The implementation of the CPA is going well, but the recent fighting in Upper Niles shows that it is precarious as some areas are continuing to feel marginalized. Realistically, it was not possible to include every group in the negotiations. There is a wide spread understanding of the provisions of the CPA.

On Darfur, the participation of the southerners in the Government of National Unity has been disappointing in not having more of an effect. The southern Sudanese want to concentrate on recovery in the south and, thus, do not want “to go out on a limb” for Darfur, although they are sympathetic. Also it should be noted that many of the young soldiers, drafted by the North, to fight the south were from Darfur.

The Northern government clearly has a survival mentality; the clique in Khartoum does not have support outside a very small group. While there is conflict continuing in

the southern area -- pastoralists and cattle people competing for water -- they have well developed local community-based conflict management with strong traditions of reconciliation; but the addition of arms has made it more complicated. The Southern government has been offering the conflict groups in the south the opportunity to reintegrate into the SPLM structure.

The international community should keep its perspective on both the issues of Darfur and CPA implementation with humanitarian assistance continuing in the south with support for the recovery effort, particularly infrastructure. The UN is releasing a new 2007 appeal plan of \$1,220 million.

On the prospects for Sudan and the CPA, the interviewee is “relatively optimistic that it will hold.” The referendum will be a very important time; the southern Sudanese people are expected to vote for independence; the interim period has proven that the political will is not there and the hope for political integration has not become a reality. The southern leadership is aware of the implications of breaking off, particularly as the south is a land-locked area.

On lessons learned, the interviewee noted the very critical role the U.S. Government played in the forefront of the negotiations; people (staff) remained engaged over a long period at a level not seen before. The close links internally within the U.S. government between the political and humanitarian were critical. On humanitarian assistance, he noted the importance of supporting the NGOs who operated outside of the Operation Lifeline Sudan agreement; other donor governments were unwilling to do so.

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*Q: Tell me about your relation to Sudan and to the CPA.*

A: I have been working on humanitarian assistance with USAID in the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance since late 1999. I was based initially in Washington as the desk officer on Sudan, covering both Northern Sudan and Southern Sudan and then later, beginning in 2001, based in Nairobi, exclusively covering humanitarian programs for Southern Sudan. More recently, I was at the U.S. Mission to the UN, where I follow Sudan but as part of a broader humanitarian assistance portfolio.

*Q: Did you had much connection with the CPA process?*

A: I did. I was working on the assistance side, but the links between the political process and humanitarian assistance were, of course, very close. Since the conflict had been going on for so long and the humanitarian needs were so large and the assistance effort was so big with the U.S. government's humanitarian efforts, I was quite involved as it initially evolved in Kenya and then later beyond.

*Q: Give me a characterization of the situation in Sudan when you were working on the humanitarian program from 1999 on. How do you characterize that?*

A: We had a very large assistance program. It was the largest portfolio of humanitarian assistance within the U.S. government. The conflict was going at that stage, so it was focusing on conflict-affected areas, which were many at the time. Some areas of Southern Sudan at that stage, though, had not had active conflict for quite a number of years and were beginning to move into more of a development-recovery mode. But our office was focusing on health, water and sanitation, agriculture and food security projects in the most conflict-affected and typically underserved areas. It was the primarily Northern Bahr el Ghazal area and Upper Nile, as well as, beginning in about 2001, the Nuba Mountains, which had been really under a blockade by the government of Sudan and also the Southern Blue Nile area, on the border with Ethiopia, which is outside the historic area of Southern Sudan but was an SPLA-controlled area.

*Q: And what were the humanitarian needs particularly?*

A: They were pretty extensive. The war had been going at that stage for over 15 years, so there was almost a complete breakdown of most traditional systems. It is a pastoralist area, primarily, in those Northern zones of Southern Sudan. So there were a lot of needs. There was a large food aid distribution. There were basic medical needs. There were essentially no medical services being provided outside the relief agencies that we and other donors were supporting. Another key need was water and sanitation, obviously linked to health. So there was quite an effort to drill boreholes and ensure that those provided safe drinking water.

*Q: This was all in the Southern Sudan area, or was there a Northern part?*

A: It was primarily in Southern Sudan. We provided some humanitarian assistance to the Northern areas, but mostly there to internally displaced Southerners who had resettled around Khartoum. There are very large camps of internally displaced, primarily Southern, Sudanese, but at the time, some from Darfur, as well, around Khartoum and in some other areas. Then, periodically, we provided assistance to eastern Sudan, the area near the Red Sea, when there was drought in that area, which tends to happen every few years.

*Q: Do you have a rough approximation of the scale of resources that were used for this humanitarian effort?*

A: At the time I think our budget was between thirty and forty million dollars a year. That is for the non-food piece of it. For the food aid, the numbers are dramatically higher, because there is a significant in-kind food contribution by the U.S. government that is then sometimes translated back to dollars for the sake of recapturing overall assistance, but that was a different part of the effort.

*Q: How large a staff was working on this? Were you working through NGOs?*

A: We were. We worked through Non-Governmental Organizations and UN agencies: the World Food Program, UNICEF. We had about 35 NGOs and UN agencies providing the humanitarian services. We would give grants to them and then monitor the programs and evaluate the programs and ensure that the projects were being implemented correctly.

*Q: Now to the CPA: do you have an understanding of what brought about the beginnings of the CPA; why the two sides really wanted to negotiate?*

A: I do, in a general sense. My feeling is that the government in Khartoum realized that the war had been going on for a long time at a relatively low level conflict and with neither side gaining much ground. Both sides realized, but especially the regime in Khartoum, that they were not; it was a tremendous use of resources and they were not necessarily in a position to win.

*Q: This was before they realized the revenues from oil?*

A: Yes. They began large-scale extraction of oil in the western Upper Nile area and that, of course, provided a major source of revenue, much of which was directed towards the war. But even with that large amount of revenue, they realized that it is a vast area for them to hold; throughout the war the government held Southern towns and supplied those towns by air. But to hold the region of Southern Sudan when the population was not in favor of the regime in Khartoum and the SPLA had become quite strong and well organized, it just was not a very realistic prospect. Both sides came to the negotiating table with that in mind.

*Q: Was the government helpful or not helpful in the humanitarian effort?*

A: Extremely unhelpful, through the years. They essentially did everything they could to block humanitarian assistance. Most of the relief into Southern Sudan went through Kenya, through Northern Kenya into the SPLA-controlled zone, so it went in without the explicit authorization, or some went in without the explicit authorization of the government of Sudan, which of course they objected to. For the UN and the efforts going on within the framework of Operation Lifeline Sudan, which was established as a tripartite agreement between the SPLA, the government of Sudan, and the United Nations, that required the approval of both the SPLA and the Government of Sudan. The Government of Sudan on numerous occasions blocked access to certain areas, which were clearly linked to their strategic interests and otherwise tried to make the delivery of humanitarian assistance difficult to the areas of Southern Sudan that they were fighting against.

*Q: What was their motivation behind this position?*

A: It was to put more pressure on the population of Southern Sudan and to essentially use it as a tactic, use the delivery of assistance and especially food aid as a tactic to try to break the support of the SPLA. One of the most well known famines in Southern Sudan, in Bahr el Ghazal in 1998, was largely the result of government of Sudan blockades on international access to that area of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, both for the delivery as well as for monitoring staff. The international community was very late in realizing what was happening there, largely because the government had blocked access to it. So it was both a problem of being aware of the situation as well as being able to respond.

*Q: How did the international community work around the government blocks, or did they?*

A: They did. What developed and what we were very supportive of, was a group of Non-Governmental Organizations that were working outside this Operation Lifeline Sudan framework. They would travel into Southern Sudan from Northern Uganda and Northern Kenya without the authorization of the Sudanese government and these became known as the "Non-OLS NGOs." We supported them and were one of the main donors to the NGOs outside the OLS framework. They could operate in a lot of areas where the UN agencies and the NGOs working under Operation Lifeline Sudan were not able to because of government restriction. That was an alternative means of delivery, which

became very important at times when the restrictions... there were some all-out flight bans on Southern Sudan at different periods that completely stopped access to the entire region. It was only these non-OLS NGOs that were able to enter the area.

*Q: Then with the beginnings of the CPA, the conflict situation changed quite a bit?*

A: It did. The ceasefire in October 2002; the cessation of hostilities agreement is for us what was the real turning point. That was the time when the government... security-wise; it became much safer to travel into Southern Sudan once the government had signed the cessation of hostilities agreement, they became more open, or less restrictive of international organizations going into the areas. It became less of a tactic on their part to try to block assistance. So that some of those problems that had been such an issue in the late nineties and 2000, 2001 and much of 2002 were resolved.

*Q: Do you recall the specific understandings of the peace agreement at the beginning of the CPA at that time —provisions between the North and South that caused the ceasefire?*

A: Obviously the wealth sharing was a major stumbling block with oil being such an issue. The oil fields are primarily in what is historically known as Southern Sudan, even though the government has redrawn some of those lines; they are very close to the border, so there are some disputes there. But wealth sharing and power sharing were really the main issues that — everybody would have said from the beginning — were the most complicated issues and, in fact, they did take the longest to work out. Issues of the status of what were called the “three areas” or the transition zones, the Nuba Mountains, Southern Blue Nile and Abyei, were also incredibly complex and remain maybe one of the more complicated issues even now with the implementation. The status of those areas was some of the most difficult to negotiate, because they clearly reflected a marginalization from the ruling regime in Khartoum that was broader than the region of Southern Sudan. Those areas are in the North.

*Q: There were some specific provisions on the security side between the two governments; do you recall what those were in terms of reducing the conflicts?*

A: No, not particularly. The ceasefire itself: there was a lot of talk about whether there was a cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire, and there were provisions in that agreement about defending positions when there were flare-ups in violation of the cessation of hostilities. Of course, both sides claimed to be defending positions, and there was a lot of back and forth and finger pointing when it would come up as to which side attacked which side. But the provisions were essentially to... not to disarm at that stage but to stop the conflict; it largely held to many people’s surprise, or at least to my surprise to some extent at the beginning. Especially given the complexities of the Southern Sudanese militias that had been for years supported by the Sudanese government and continue to be supported by the Sudanese government; they were particularly threatened by the cessation of hostilities. Specifically, some militia leaders who I think saw the evolving peace process as a real threat to their power, because their role was entirely a product of this proxy war that the government was fighting. They would not necessarily have a role

in a post-peace process government in the North, nor would they have a role in the Southern Sudanese administration necessarily, because they had taken up arms against the SPLA.

*Q: With the signing of the CPA, were there dramatic changes in the ability to provide humanitarian assistance?*

A: Definitely. As I said, the access opened up considerably. Humanitarian assistance and our strategy in providing it took on a new component. We able to go to some areas where we had previously not been able to go, both to assess the situation more fully as well as provide assistance. This idea of a peace dividend emerged, showing the communities in Southern Sudan what the peace agreement means to them, since so many of these areas had seen very, very little international assistance over the years. Even those areas that had had large assistance efforts, the level of development was very, very low because the conflict had been going on for so long.

*Q: Well let us turn to the implementation of the CPA. Do you have any view on how that is progressing?*

A: Again, I worked mostly on the humanitarian side, but we saw that as a very key element, the implementation, both as the CPA provided much expanded access to areas that had long been blocked, but also in being able to being able to bolster the peace process at the community level through assistance projects and we undertook some specific activities. A project that we called the Quick Impact Project was a large grant that the U.S. government gave to UNICEF to administer as smaller sub-grants to NGOs, including Sudanese NGOs and community organizations.

*Q: What was it called?*

A: It was generally called the Quick Impact Project and the idea was to do many but relatively small-scale assistance projects to communities, like rehabilitating a school or a health clinic, to demonstrate the benefits of peace to the communities to solidify support for the CPA at the community level.

*Q: This was all in the South?*

A: Yes, this was entirely in the South and the Nuba Mountains, Southern Blue Nile and Abyei. Access to those areas opened up dramatically after the cessation of hostilities. The Nuba Mountains was particularly difficult and dangerous to access. It was only accessible by air. The SPLA-controlled area was only accessible by air from Kenya and it was a very long flight. The agencies outside Operation Lifeline Sudan would fly in there and land, but planes were shelled often by government of Sudan artillery that was held back by the SPLA but was within range of the airstrips. So there were some very close calls there and at one point the Nuba Mountains before the ceasefire was essentially under complete blockade. All the airstrips there were within firing range of the

government. So the assistance had ground to a halt, so that the ceasefire had a very dramatic impact there in terms of opening access.

There were a lot of areas of Southern Sudan that the government could not control, so ceasefire or no ceasefire, you could access them, if you wanted to, from Kenya. But the Nuba Mountains and some of these areas were virtually impossible to access without some sort of agreement.

*Q: How do you assess the CPA's implementation? Is it being implemented?*

A: Yes, I think it is generally going well. I do not follow the implementation as closely as I should from New York, because it is part of a much broader range of issues that I cover; but many people continue to be surprised at how well it has held. This recent fighting in Upper Nile does show that it is quite precarious. These are some of the elements that had been funded by the government of Sudan to fight against the SPLA during the conflict. So the fact that they are continuing to feel marginalized now by the Government of Southern Sudan is not surprising; it really shows that there is a lot to be done, especially at the local level, in terms of implementing the CPA. Also, you could say that for other areas but particularly in Upper Nile.

*Q: The Darfur situation entered the picture almost at the same time the CPA came into effect. How has that affected the CPA and the humanitarian effort?*

A: A couple of things. People, including those of us working on Sudan issues in the U.S. government, are disappointed that the Southern Sudanese participation in the Government of National Unity has not had more of an effect on addressing the conflict in Darfur. The clear hope was that the agreement that solved the North-South conflict would bring the Southern Sudanese into a role in Khartoum and they would obviously be more sympathetic to some of the grievances that were being expressed by the people of Darfur and were the roots of that conflict. That has unfortunately not been true and the Southern Sudanese continue to be marginalized within the Government of National Unity. There are multiple points of blame for that. The regime in Khartoum has not welcomed the South, in the power sharing arrangement, as openly as they could have.

Also the Southern Sudanese, now that they do have a peace agreement, have understandably wanted to concentrate on the recovery of Southern Sudan and they see the conflict in Darfur as unfortunate. They sympathize with the Darfurians to a large degree; but they are not willing to go too far out on a limb, or far enough that they would consider it putting at risk what they have achieved in Southern Sudan. While that is unfortunate, it is completely rational and also not surprising.

What some people do not realize who have not worked more closely on the issues is that just geographically the distance between Darfur and Southern Sudan is so great that there is really no link, culturally or politically, between the two areas. So it is very difficult to muster support within the Southern Sudanese community, beyond general sympathy, for the situation in Darfur, because most of them have never been there and have never had



any contact. And the different Southern Sudanese ethnic groups have had a lot of contact with each other throughout the years under the colonial administration as well as during the war, so there is a lot of knowledge; there were boarding schools and things in the South that brought the Southern Sudanese together, whereas Darfur has been a completely different situation.

The other element —I do not know how much to make of this, but I have heard a few Southern Sudanese say it — is that while they are sympathetic about the situation in Darfur, they recognize that many of the soldiers, conscripts, probably, but many of the soldiers who fought against them for many years were from Darfur. The Southern Sudanese realize that many of the young men were drafted by the government in Khartoum, so they do not necessarily hold it against that region; they do not necessarily see that as the will of Darfur. The Darfurians, being a marginalized area of the North, made up a large number of the rank and file in the Sudanese military, which fought for so long against the Southern Sudanese opposition. So it is a complicated situation and while, again, we are a little bit disappointed that they have not had more impact in a positive way in addressing the conflict in Darfur, unfortunately I do not think it is surprising. Maybe the expectations were a little unrealistic.

*Q: Do you have any understanding of what the role is of the Southern leadership in the government in Khartoum?*

A: It is a hard question, because it comes down to individuals, largely. Some of the individuals, who have been put in key positions as Southerners in the government structure in Khartoum, have been aligned with the government for many, many years. While they come from Southern Sudan, they do not come from the SPLA and they do not represent, necessarily, communities in the South or authority structures in the South. So that has been one of the difficulties, while there are some very high level and high profile Southern Sudanese in the government, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs that does not broaden the perspective within the government. The structure of the regime in Khartoum is such that power is clearly held by very few people. So even having Southerners in high levels in the government now in Khartoum does not necessarily mean that they are influencing the policy, especially the military policy in western Sudan.

*Q: Do you have any understanding of this small elite group in the government in the North, of what their vision is or what they are trying to accomplish?*

A: It is clearly a survival mentality at this stage. They do feel they can have a military victory in Darfur. We are seeing that now, in the increasing fighting there, unlike the situation in the South, which they gave up on from a military; that was virtually the only thing that brought them to the negotiating table. They are clearly not willing to do that yet for Darfur. They do feel that they can win there. Historically, what they have done is held a very, very hard line. When the pressure gets to a point when it is about to boil over they give enough to reduce that pressure but not significantly and not substantially; they play a balancing act and we are seeing that now.

*Q: Have they evinced any kind of vision of what they want for Sudan or is it one of just hold the line?*

A: It is a survival game. It has been very clear for many years that the clique in power in Khartoum does not have support outside a very small group and so they are in a survival mode now and have been for some time in just trying to maintain their power; but I would not call it a vision, beyond their own survival.

*Q: Turning back to the South, I understand there is still a lot of conflict going on in the Southern region, there are militias. Is that abating or is that increasing, or what is happening?*

A: It did quiet down quite a bit in the period following the CPA. We have seen a flare-up in the last couple of weeks and, again that is a sign that the ethnic conflict, especially in the Upper Nile region. In that region, again, the government of Sudan really fueled conflict, used it largely, as they have done in western Sudan, used these militias as a way to fight the war in the South and to protect and clear some of the areas for oil exploration and extraction. So that has flared up; it unfortunately shows that the macro-level political agreements do not automatically carry down to the local communities when there have been years and years of conflict. They have basically stirred up some ethnic tensions and rivalries and individual rivalries that are more difficult to put back in the box and are not necessarily able to be put back through signing of a paper between the top leadership. So unfortunately that is what we are seeing.

On a positive note, though, there is a history of conflict in this area anyway in much of Southern Sudan as pastoralist groups compete for water and access to water and grazing areas, so there are a very well developed conflict management, local community-based conflict management mechanisms traditionally that the tribes have used to negotiate access to water and lands. There is some interesting work being done on trying to build that up. Of course, throwing a lot of arms into that as well as the larger political conflict, which some of them have been pulled into, has made that more complicated. But there have been strong traditions of reconciliation which hopefully will serve this situation well now, too.

*Q: Is the Government of Southern Sudan providing any leadership for this or is it still trying to get itself together?*

A: No, it is. Again, I do not follow it that closely because I am outside the region, but they immediately sent teams out there. There is a very strong recognition that this really needs to work in terms of these local governance issues in the South, and the leadership, has a very good understanding, obviously, of the area and the issues, the dynamics. They are very committed to addressing them, as we saw that in Upper Nile. I do not know the details of that situation, but from what I did read that they quickly sent in some groups to help address the conflict and bring the parties together.

*Q: There has been some comment that the CPA was simply an agreement between the Northern Government and the SPLM and excluded a large number of groups. Do you have an understanding of whether an agreement would have been possible, if it included them or should more have been done in that area?*

A: Yes, this was a very big topic of conversation at the time; just realistically it was not possible to include everyone; there were a lot of complaints from civil society organizations. The churches are very strong in Southern Sudan, too. For example, the New Sudan Council of Churches was very vocal about their lack of a seat at the table for some of the peace negotiations; but just realistically they had to start with that top level agreement and from that work down. The SPLA has done a pretty good job of reaching out to other groups, civil society groups and even its own factions that had split off and had fought against it, in some cases. In 2001, 2002, the SPLA undertook its own reconciliation effort. It realized that they needed to; the government of Sudan was provoking a lot of this conflict and it needed to, therefore, undercut that by opening up discussions directly with some of the militias and the militia leaders that were opposing them. And so they undertook -- we tried to support this as much as we could -- they undertook a series of South-South dialogues, as they were calling them, in different regions, where they would call everybody together and hold reconciliation meetings. They have been quite successful at that. Again, we have seen a flare-up in the last couple of weeks and there have been some bumps in the road but they have done a pretty admirable job in that and were quite successful in negotiating with some people who had split away from the SPLA and fought against it and brought them back into the broader -- what the SPLA turned into -- administration of Southern Sudan.

*Q: What was the focus of those dialogues; what they were really trying to get at?*

A: They were to address the grievances that these individuals had; now a lot of it was political, individual political rivalries and some of them were more approachable than others, but they were trying to address why these people -- who had for years been funded by the government of Sudan -- had to have their own militias to fight against the SPLA, had to be offered an olive branch by the SPLA. John Garang, before his death, was quite strong in this area, even though some of the areas that had split off had fought against the SPLA and had attacked his home area.

*Q: What were they offering them?*

A: Reintegration back ultimately into the SPLA structure or you could say the SPLM administrative structure; a reconciliation in a way so that they would have a place in the structure that was being developed by the SPLM for governing Southern Sudan, for most of them. Although some of them that had been the most disruptive, clearly saw that when the conflict was over they would not have a role, when their sole role was as an agitator funded by the Sudanese government, they clearly saw that they would not necessarily have a function in a peaceful Sudan and they were some of the last ones, probably some of the ones that are still making life unsettled, especially in Upper Nile.

*Q: Is the assistance program being used to help bring them together?*

A: Yes, definitely, some of the NGOs provided direct support for these local reconciliation meetings, by providing flights and food for the meetings. We also tried to target our assistance, again, particularly in Upper Nile, as the most conflict affected area; we tried to target our assistance in a way that would help support

*Q: Such as, for example?*

A: Again, a lot of these quick impact projects were done in areas and distributed across areas with a mind of reinforcing community support and leader support for the peace process. And, again, at that level it is more the local peace process, rather than the national or North-South peace process.

*Q: Coming down the road, there is a census and there are going to be elections and then a referendum. Do you have any understanding that there has been any preparation for them or movement in this direction? First, the census?*

A: The census, I cannot say I have followed very closely. They have been talking about that for a very long time and, of course, it is critical for registration for voting, as well as other efforts. So I could not really comment on whether there has been preparation for that.

*Q: Is the assistance program supporting a census?*

A: I am not sure, to tell you the truth. I am not closely enough involved in the programs.

*Q: And then there are the elections coming. Are there any preparations for the elections, apart from the census?*

A: I am not familiar with the specific programs that might be working on civic education and other elements but I think they... from the very beginnings of the CPA there was a lot done on distributing information on the agreement, which, of course, includes the referendum. So from the very beginning there has been a lot of work; there were questions and a lot of criticism along the lines of what you mentioned that the agreement was essentially between two leaderships rather than communities or groups of people. And so there was a lot done when that agreement was signed to translate the elements of that agreement and make them available to the community. In a general sense, in a long term sense, that was very helpful in leading up to the...

*Q: You think there is a fairly widespread understanding of the CPA agreement?*

A: I do, at this stage, even before I left.

*Q: Down at the local level?*

A: I do. Even before I left the region, the understanding of it was pretty good and getting better; and I can only imagine that with the influx of additional development relief workers and people talking about it. Also, there has been some radio; there have been some newspapers started and some radio broadcasting efforts that I am sure have helped.

*Q: What about in the North?*

A: I do not have a very good sense of that, but the press in the North is interesting. While it is tightly controlled, it goes in waves and the short time that I have spent in Khartoum I have been surprised at the press; it can be quite free and then the government cracks down on it and it goes underground or goes away for a while. And the Sudanese population in the North is generally very well educated and literate, and everybody reads the paper. So people are pretty well informed on the elements of the CPA. For the Southerners, it is much more an issue that directly affects them and you have major literacy challenges in the South. In the North there is a lot more awareness so they are indeed aware of it.

*Q: Turning to the international community, what role can they play to help keep this process going? The Darfur crisis, people say, has diverted them from the CPA agreement and that worries them. What is the role of the international community in trying to keep the CPA process moving?*

A: The important thing is, in some way, to keep a perspective on both issues. The situation in Darfur should not completely deflect international attention. The issues are in some ways different. The issues in Darfur are about humanitarian assistance and access and protection to those people and that needs to get full attention; it is getting the full attention of the U.S. government and the rest of the international community. But on the implementation of the CPA, people should not necessarily be distracted by Darfur. I would say that, just speaking from within the U.S. government, I do not think that is happening. We have essentially different teams working on the specifics of both of those situations, including the humanitarian assistance program continuing in the South, but as peace continues there that becomes more of a recovery and development program.

*Q: And is that emerging now? Are there more recovery, more development activities?*

A: Definitely. We did small amounts of road rehabilitation during the conflict, even, but entirely to facilitate the delivery of food aid, from Northern Uganda, primarily. Now, with a peace agreement and with it holding, things like road rehabilitation and infrastructure rehabilitation become possible.

*Q: Are there other avenues, other actions that the international community should be taking to move, particularly the Northern Government to take more responsibility for making this work?*

A: I do not know how much influence we can have. They are not very receptive to ideas like this, but the integration of Southern Sudanese into the Government of National Unity

could be more effective. For example, here in New York there is no Southern Sudanese representation in the Sudanese mission here. It is essentially unchanged from before the CPA versus after the CPA. I understand in Washington the SPLM continues to have its office and I do not think it has any formal link with the Sudanese embassy in Washington. Again, I do not know how much influence we have on things like that. In many ways, the inclusion of the Southern leadership into the Government of National Unity has been largely token and that is part of the problem and part of the reason that we have not seen a positive impact on the situation in Darfur. It has not fundamentally changed the positions of the government of Sudan, even before the CPA. So if there is anything that the international community can do to move that forward...

*Q: Have you had any communication with the delegation in New York, the Sudanese delegation?*

A: We do, in regular intergovernmental discussions. They are extremely difficult, I would say and they are very defensive about the situation in Darfur, very strongly opposed to references to it made in the General Assembly and Security Council and other places. So, yes, not specifically on these issues but as we interact with other delegations here at the UN, the Sudanese delegation

*Q: Do you interact with them about the CPA implementation?*

A: No, that communication would be entirely in Washington, or Khartoum.

*Q: I was assuming the UN would have some responsibility for CPA implementation.*

A: UN agencies do, the agencies that are working in Sudan are definitely involved and, of course, the Secretary General's special representative, Pronk, who was recently expelled, was very much engaged in it. I was just saying that we do not have direct contact with the Sudanese mission here, on a bilateral basis on CPA implementation.

*Q: Do you have any sense that the UN Secretary General and others are providing any leadership on the CPA?*

A: I think they have. The problem, again, is that the SRSG, Jan Pronk, clearly went overboard; it was a funny situation. He was writing in a personal weblog about military matters in Darfur. So I was not the least bit surprised that they objected very strongly to that. But that aside, the fact that he has been expelled from that role, he was essentially the top, he was the top UN person there and while a lot of his attention was focused on Darfur, he and his offices were critical and were central to the CPA implementation in the South.

It is true and I have not been out in Khartoum in a number of years but probably the UN, the scale of need and the difficulty in providing assistance in Darfur is probably distracting the UN effort from fully or from more effectively engaging on the CPA. They do have an extensive presence in the South, and they have tried to divide their structure

so they have people dedicated to the North-South peace and the CPA. And in fact, the work plan for Sudan, which is an appeal document to the international community, was released yesterday in Geneva for 2007 and that includes Darfur and some of the emergency assistance for Darfur, but it is largely reconstruction and recovery for the South, which is central to the whole CPA implementation.

*Q: It is also essential for the Northern Government to provide some leadership or openings for moving the CPA, forward, right? Does the work plan include anything about the Northern Government's role in the process?*

A: Projects in the North. It is an assistance appeal. It is not a political document. So it is the elements of implementation that involves reconstruction, development.

*Q: This is mostly for the South. Does it have a dollar figure attached to it?*

A: It does; \$1,220 million is the request for 2007. That is the humanitarian component of it.

*Q: There is another component for development, right?*

A: Right.

*Q: It would be interesting to see that. Some think that if there was an aggressive implementation of the CPA, particularly with the North taking more active responsibility for bringing it about, that this could influence a lot of the other issues and might open the door for change there. Is anybody thinking that way?*

A: I would agree with that. There is general disappointment in the lack of leadership that the Khartoum government has shown in implementation but that potentially would have a very positive impact. It is hard to really see their very strong support of it. They wanted a peaceful solution to the conflict. They were tired of the conflict and they got that. But in terms of real power sharing and wealth sharing and recognition of Southern Sudan as an equal player in this leadership and relationship, I have a hard time believing that there is sincere support for that in Khartoum. That is unfortunately what we have seen. So the implementation of the CPA in the South, which is largely the work of the Southern Sudanese, is moving ahead, on one hand, but not moving ahead very quickly in terms of the integration and the representation of Southerners in the North. A more aggressive or a stronger role by the government of Sudan in implementing the CPA could have a positive impact on situations like Darfur but, unfortunately, it is not likely and unfortunately not surprising that it is not unfolding that way.

*Q: Another dimension: I have looked at the CPA, an enormously complex and lengthy document. Is there any monitoring process going on to try to address all the details in the agreement, because it is very complex?*

A: There is. Again, I am not working on Sudan issues that closely and this is where the UN could play a role and probably is playing a role, but, yes.

*Q: Are you familiar with the Assessment and Evaluation Commission that is based in Khartoum?*

A: No.

*Q: They are supposed to be doing some of the monitoring and supposedly producing a monitoring report, but I have not been able to get much feel for what they are actually doing.*

A: No, I am not familiar with that. The Secretary General's special representative reports at least once a year, more like two or three times a year, to the Security Council and CPA implementation is one of the things that he reports on but, again, I think the level of detail in his reporting on those issues is not great. One, because the UN is an outside player and, two, because the situation in Darfur and their role there is so overwhelming that it has been hard for them to be everywhere at once.

*Q: Is there a new special representative?*

A: No, not yet. They were waiting until the new Secretary General took office. It is such a significant role that I presume somebody will be appointed soon.

*Q: What is your sense of the prospects for Sudan, in terms of the CPA and its future?*

A: I am relatively optimistic that it will hold. The referendum will be a very important time for Southern Sudan. I expect the Southern Sudanese to vote for independence. I have met almost no Southern Sudanese who would like to maintain the same arrangement and, unfortunately, the interim period has proven that the political will is not necessarily there and the political integration that was hoped has not become a reality. So it is going to be a very difficult time; an independent Southern Sudan is going to have a difficult time, given its isolation and level of underdevelopment, but, at the same time, I would not be at all surprised if that is the outcome of the referendum.

*Q: Do you see any evidence of the strengthening of their capacity to run a country?*

A: Yes, definitely. Again, I am not in the midst of things at the moment, but there has been a lot of capacity building. There was a surprising amount of capacity building done while the conflict was going on and since the ceasefire and then since the CPA has been signed there has been more done there. There is a tremendously long way to go, still, but there has been a lot of work. Another interesting element that I saw and have heard from friends, that is even more substantial, is the return of Southern Sudanese from the Diaspora, from the U.S. and from other places, refugees who were resettled, educated in the United States and who have returned to join local administrations or NGOs, even, and work in Southern Sudan, which is a very positive contribution.



*Q: Do you get any sense that the Southern leadership understands that breaking off can be almost more complicated administratively and management-wise than staying in the government?*

A: Yes, they realize that. They are very much aware, too, that they are landlocked and their relatively remote location within the African continent would make things... they are natural resource-rich but in terms of trading opportunities they are a long way; it requires a lot for forestry efforts and other things that would come to mind for Southern Sudan; it is not an easy prospect. They are well aware that the challenges of an independent Southern Sudan are quite substantial. But I would say that I do not know if they see the benefits of remaining in a unified government, which are few. They obviously have a wealth sharing arrangement, which has helped provide revenue but presumably they would get their share of that as an independent government, too.

It is going to be hard to convince anyone, including, definitely at the community level where there is a lot of strong support for independence. Then at the leadership level, there will be even more, if at the end of the interim period they have not received any benefits. They have not been welcomed very warmly in Khartoum and have not received much of the benefits of unification. It will tip the balance in that direction even more.

*Q: Recognizing that Southern Sudan needs everything, what would you say are the highest priorities in terms of the development of the South?*

A: Now that the situation is relatively stable, basic infrastructure. There are no paved roads anywhere in the area, so trade and even transport of people is extremely difficult and is done largely by air, which is very expensive. So basic infrastructure, such as roads and the links into Northern Kenya and Northern Uganda, as well as into Ethiopia, potentially, but that is both a remote side of Ethiopia and a remote part of Southern Sudan. That is the top priority beyond, obviously, the real basics, the lifesaving, health and basic agricultural support. That is what we are seeing now is a lot of projects addressing issues like basic road rehabilitation and infrastructure development. And then, there is, of course, human capacity building, as well.

*Q: Before we wrap up, are there any areas that we have not touched on that you want to put forth?*

A: The one thing that I have a difficult time envisioning where it is going to go in terms of the CPA is the "three areas." I do not have a very good insight into specific problems, but there is situation of the Nuba Mountains, for example, Southern Blue Nile and Abyei and where to draw the boundary. In some ways Abyei is less difficult, because it is contiguous to Southern Sudan and it is culturally and ethnically linked to Southern Sudan. But the Nuba Mountains is an island, completely unique. In some ways both those areas feel like they were sold out in the CPA. It could drag the region back down into conflict, if it is not managed carefully. On a positive side, the Nuba Mountains, more than Southern Blue Nile, has very strong community structures and very strong civil society

support structure. Both local and as well as international NGOs have worked there; it is a relatively small area so people have worked with the communities there a long time and are very familiar with the issues. It has a very dedicated core of people working on issues specific to that region.

*Q: But you think that resolution of the issues of those three areas is very critical to getting anything to happen on the CPA?*

A: Yes, I do. In some ways they are a microcosm of the larger issues and, if the government is not willing to address them in the Nuba Mountains, for example, then it is a test case, in some ways, for the other areas. But that is why it is particularly challenging for the government, too. And I do not think it is entirely a coincidence that we saw the conflict in Darfur flare up simultaneous to the CPA. With the inclusion of areas outside of Southern Sudan in the agreement, or at least in the discussion, the other marginalized communities of Sudan realized that they, too, have the possibility of stronger representation and autonomy, ultimately. We see that in Eastern Sudan as well and Northern Sudan, too, to a lesser extent, far Northern Sudan.

*Q: And then there is the boundary commission that was really tied to these issues that has not been able to sort it out, is that right?*

A: That is my understanding of it. It is a very complicated issue and, yes, that is what I understand, that they have not been able to sort it out yet. But, again, unfortunately, in those areas there were, traditionally, systems and mechanisms of addressing some of the conflict, which inevitably occurs among those pastoralist communities that were destroyed and pushed aside essentially from the conflict. So there is a lot to be done in terms of community peace building and some of that was happening; we supported some of that immediately after the ceasefire but before the CPA was finalized, but there is a lot of work to be done. But that is in addition to literally defining the boundary.

*Q: Stepping back and looking at the whole evolution of the CPA and the conflicts, are there particular lessons that stand out in your mind of important things that were done right or things that should not have been?*

A: The U.S. Government played a very critical role and we dedicated a lot of resources to it and people to the process. It was a long process and those people remained engaged at a level that I had not seen before and that is very commendable. And I know that other governments were involved and some very involved but the U.S. Government was very much on the forefront of the negotiations leading up to the CPA, and we see the positive impact of that and that is a strong lesson.

Also it was very interesting... the close links between the humanitarian efforts and the political effort were critical. Lessons can be drawn from that and parallels can be seen for other situations. When the conflict had been going on for so long that people most familiar with the situation were those who had worked on the humanitarian and they were brought into the discussion. I am talking mostly internally within the U.S. Government,

but there was a very close working relationship between the assistance side and those working more directly on the political negotiation. That was a good use of our own resources within the government and taking advantage of people's familiarity with the situation and cross-fertilization of ideas and skills.

*Q: Anything else that comes to mind?*

A: No, not at the moment. Again, most of my perspective was from this humanitarian angle.

*Q: Is there anything from the humanitarian side that might have been done differently or more appropriately or more effectively?*

A: No, without sounding too self-complementary because I was directly involved, we did quite a good job at providing assistance. One of the sample questions that you had sent talked about the Sudan Peace Act and it is interesting because that was very much in the center of the discussions when I was managing the assistance programs and that I think very strongly expressed the frustration by some members of Congress that the government of Sudan was able to block access.

As the U.S. Government, we got around that very effectively by our support to these agencies operating outside Operation Lifeline Sudan. Some donor governments would not support that; they claimed that they could not legally support organizations working outside the UN framework and outside the tripartite framework. But we learned and continued to see regularly that the government of Sudan was using the obstruction of humanitarian assistance as a tool of war and the way to get around that was to help support some of these organizations that were providing humanitarian assistance, at great risk, often, directly into Southern Sudan from Northern Uganda and Northern Kenya, outside the restrictions imposed by the government of Sudan.

*Q: That has a political dimension as well as a humanitarian one?*

A: Yes, definitely. We also were publicly reporting the assistance we were providing to these organizations. It definitely had a political dimension. It was a very sore subject, as you can imagine, with the regime in Khartoum. But the key point was that there were very large-scale humanitarian needs in Southern Sudan and clearly the government was trying to manipulate access to those populations.