

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

Interview # 63 - Executive Summary

Interviewed by: Barbara Nielsen
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This interviewee, who represents an NGO involved with Sudan beginning in 2004. During the CPA negotiations, the mission of Concordis was to bring the two negotiating teams, or their representatives, together with the whole range of tribal groups; militias; political parties, such as the Umma Party and the DUP; and other constituencies who were not at the negotiating table. Since these groups could not be part of the formal negotiations, it was important for their voices to be heard informally. In his view, these informal consultations did have a positive impact on the negotiations, improving the relationships of those participating directly and bringing up some concrete issues that would otherwise be neglected, such as land use, water, the relationship of religion and the state, and others.

An important part of this organization's track two process was to assist the Sudanese to reach consensus on in-depth issues, using technical experts as resources who could present ideas. That said, the interviewee is critical of the negotiations for only "patchily" supporting his NGO's efforts after 2004. In his view, greater support, particularly by the U.S. Department of State, would have strengthened the final CPA and its prospects for implementation. It might have prevented the distribution of ministerial positions only between the NCP and the SPLM, which left nothing for any other group.

On Darfur, the interviewee pointedly observes the irony of using the CPA as a model for the DPA, since the CPA "had already carved out the power shares between the SPLM and the NCP, and there wasn't much left for the Darfurians, or for the Easterners, for that matter." By taking the CPA's structure of negotiating power sharing, wealth sharing and military arrangements as the model for the DPA, it also ignored some of the fundamental causes of the Darfur conflict, which were tied to climate change, land and water use.

In characterizing the political will of the Khartoum government to follow through on its CPA obligations, this interviewee stresses the lack of homogeneity within the National Congress Party. He believes that there is an internal struggle within the Party, with extremists currently gaining the upper hand and people like Ali Osman Taha becoming less powerful in recent months. Other factors hindering CPA implementation include a lack of capacity on the part of the SPLM, which leads to weak staffing of its

positions, and more ambivalence on the part of John Garang's successors, who are not as committed to his vision for a unified New Sudan. Despite these set-backs, the interviewee sees some "glimmers of light," for example, in the fact that there is sometimes quite heated debate in parliament in Khartoum where a number of different voices are heard., suggesting some progress on the road to political transformation.

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Q: As I understand your organization, you're involved with track two diplomacy, building relationships through low profile consultations between adversaries and developing constructive solutions to long term conflicts. Was your organization involved during the years of the most intense IGAD CPA negotiations?

A: Yes, we were. My organization was actually founded in September 2004 but it was a continuation of the international work of a previous organization. I took over that department, if you like, or initiative and turned it into a new organization with a new name and an independent identity. So, yes, the organization had been involved with Sudan since 1999, started consultations in 2001. It's arguable when the IGAD talks actually really started, but certainly we've worked alongside those talks for some time.

Q: Let's say since approximately 2001, which corresponds with what I'll call an intensification of the talks - although they had begun before that time, but there did seem to be some real momentum about that time. Specifically what kinds of group meetings, consultations and the like did you host and how were those fit into the formal IGAD process?

A: The group involved with our consultation includes people who are in the two negotiating teams. Although we did so in the Darfur Abuja negotiations later, we didn't directly feed the results of our consultations in to the mediators. The IGAD negotiators were not particularly receptive to outside help in that way. So a major part of our role was to bring the two negotiating teams, or people close to them, the SPLM and the Government of Sudan, into contact with the whole range of different tribal groups and other constituencies who were not involved at the negotiating table. Probably for understandable reasons involvement at the negotiating table is very difficult when you go beyond two negotiating parties. Yet, there are other voices that need to be incorporated in any agreement; the concerns of the range of groups around the whole of Sudan, both North and South, need to be incorporated as much as possible. Probably that's not possible formally but we tried to do so informally.

Q: What were some of the groups that you brought into the informal meetings who would not have been represented?

A: Well certainly the non-governing northern parties, people like the Umma Party and

the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), would be involved. People from a range of different parts of Sudan, including the east, including Darfur and the Khartoum government itself. People in the South, just a whole range of different militias and civil society groups who were not part of the SPLM or only loosely affiliated with it. And although these people knew each other, the opportunity to get together was not always easy for them and we provided that opportunity. But we did so through the two negotiating parties, rather than through mediation.

Q: And how did you structure some of those meetings?

A: Typically, meetings, the sort of bread and butter, if you like, a meeting of anything up to five days in a neutral environment on neutral territory, which may well not be in Sudan and almost certainly not in Sudan, for some good reasons. The groups that we would bring together would probably number about thirty, between 25 and 35 people, who between them, we would hope, would represent the whole of Sudanese society, which is a tall order, of course, in that size group but nevertheless a larger group is difficult to manage in the sense of bringing people into contact with each other. And so we tried quite hard, partly by selecting the participants ourselves; it's not an open meeting, it wasn't available to anybody. We would consult with, let's say, the Umma Party or the SPLM as to who should come from them. But ultimately we would issue the invitations and provide the air tickets. So we would try to control who was there.

Q: Did you have to overcome any language barriers, maybe having everybody speak English?

A: It generally worked with English. English is probably the *lingua franca* in Southern Sudan and of course Arabic is in northern Sudan but there are many who do speak English, and we found it better to use language facilitation within the group rather than have simultaneous interpretation, because firstly, that's expensive and we run our operation on a shoestring and secondly, it provides a barrier to communication in itself, the interpretation. So mostly we worked in English and the group of people we were working with were all mostly good in English, so that was not really a problem.

Q: As you look back now at the results of the CPA and the work that you were doing simultaneously, do you think you had some impact, indirectly?

A: Yes, I believe we did and often the evidence is not statistical evidence or in any sense evidence that you could draw on a graph or anything but anecdotal evidence. One of the negotiators in Naivasha said to me, "When you've lived with the person you're across the table from for three or four days and eaten meals together and shared things outside the negotiation, you can't really treat them as the devil incarnate."

So the relationship across the negotiating table was improved, but I think more importantly, I don't see a way in which the disparate views and interests of the whole range of Sudanese society could be brought to the Naivasha conference table or negotiating table without some kind of informal system like ours. It didn't do so

perfectly, though and the people who were not at the negotiating table were almost constantly complaining that they were not part of the negotiations.

I don't think it's practical for them to be so but there have to be ways to bring their voice to the table somehow and that's what we're trying to do. So really our technique, our methodology is to help them to study or help them to work through concrete issues in the negotiating field, so it's not just about military forces, it's not just about territory, but about land use and water and who has control of the oil and all those sorts of things and religion and the state and just all kinds of different issues, which were part of the issues to be negotiated, even though they were not formally on the table at the time when we were treating them.

Q: In other words, the idea of building relationships that you're trying to promote is key and quite important.

A: I'm talking about building relationships and then within that relationship helping people to work together on concrete outcomes. Not necessarily outcomes in the sense that a State Department diplomat would see as an outcome, in other words, a signature on a piece of paper, a treaty, whatever. But outcomes in terms of ways forward in dealing with some of the development issues that lie under this type of conflict.

Q: And you alluded to several of those: water and land.

A: Nile water is a big issue of course and the value of the land, or the usability of the land and the water that can be used to irrigate it, good land and bad land, are factors. We would almost call ourselves academic in some of the issues, because we would actually bring in academic experts on various issues, sometimes Sudanese experts, sometimes international experts, who would be able to bring a sort of view from other parts of the world where similar issues have been dealt with. So, yes, land and water and oil and religion and the state, currencies, how do you have one currency or can you possibly have one currency and two different banking systems, one Islamic and one not, and those sorts of issues which we hoped would be used as a resource in negotiations.

Q: And perhaps that's exactly what happened?

A: Indeed, we had a senior British economist write a paper, anonymously, suggesting some ways in which two banking systems could come together and ways in which they could have a solid basis for a currency, because obviously a currency has got to have some reserve and that was presented at one of our consultations to the two sides. It wasn't a broader thing from broader society so much as something presented to the SPLM and the government of Sudan as a think piece or things to think about on these issues. I don't think they followed exactly that pattern. I think it was maybe a step too far for them.

Q: But maybe it planted some ideas.

A: Yes, indeed and that really was the aim, to produce ideas which then can be used in negotiations and not ourselves to become a separate or parallel or rival negotiating forum.

Q: Was your organization well known to the government in Khartoum and also to the SPLM?

A: Yes, quite well known. We are small and therefore we can't be in all places at once but, yes, I think so.

Q: Are you acceptable to both parties?

A: I think so. We work quite hard not to become mistrusted by one side or the other. One of the rules that we have is that we do not do any advocacy. We don't go out and make public statements for or against any particular issue or player or group, because we think that is potentially damaging to our nonpartisan role. There are enough voices out there saying things publicly and doing advocacy which are much, much bigger voices than ours and so our additional voice is certainly not needed.

Q: One could ask whether your organization is quite unique or if there are other NGO's that are working similarly?

A: In terms of the Sudan situation, I think we are unique; I suspect so. There are other organizations working with Justice Africa, which is a civil society organization, which has connections to mostly Southern civil society in Sudan, but very much does do advocacy, gets out and makes statements about whether the negotiations have been done properly, whether the government of Sudan is evil or those sorts of things, which may or may not be true but it's not something we get involved in.

The other area in which I think we may be unique is that we do go into some of the issues in some depth. We do work to get Sudanese expertise and Sudanese consensus on some fairly deep-rooted issues. It is, of course, possible just to hire a consultant, the World Bank or UNDP or somebody to hire a consultant who can come for two weeks and write a report and that is the answer on that particular issue, maybe semiarid land use or something like that and those reports are valuable. We tend not to work like that. We tend to assist the Sudanese to reach consensus themselves, in depth on issues like that. And, in general, they would choose the issues. We might start out in a series of consultations with our suggesting one or two issues, but we were very quickly trying to get our participants to propose the areas that they want to work together on. So are we uniquely unique? Nobody's unique but I don't know of anybody doing what we do in Sudan and arguably I'm not sure that I know of many people doing it in the world, but that's a separate issue.

Q: Now, of course, the conflict in Darfur has attracted a lot of the attention since the signing of the CPA. One of the questions we like to ask people who've been observing the process throughout all this time is to what degree you would say that the Darfur conflict was a result of what was decided in the CPA?

A: I think that's too simple. There are several factors that come together. Darfur, like several other regions of Sudan, has been marginalized economically, politically, culturally and certainly the people of Darfur, or some of them, saw that military action against the Khartoum government had brought the SPLM into a position of power and brought them quite major benefits. So, I think it's fairly clear that the result of the CPA or more the way it was going, the way it was obviously going, was an encouragement to the SLA to take similar routes, a similar military rebellion route and the same for the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), though they have a slightly different national agenda. Also, the SPLA allegedly in the early days supported the SLA with training and military assistance, so that's another complication.

Q: You think that was probably the case, that they were supporting the SPLA?

A: I think it likely. A small organization doesn't have good intelligence sources but I think it likely. And the other aspect was that the CPA as it developed was a result of bilateral negotiation between the government of Sudan and the SPLM and as a result, others were excluded; as I alluded to before, others were excluded from that negotiation. The carving out of shares of power in the state between the SPLM and the National Congress Party left others out in the cold. The Darfur rebels and others in different parts of Sudan were actually, they would probably say, left with no choice but to pursue a military solution, to try to pursue a military solution.

Q: Obviously from what you've said it seems that you would agree that it was pretty necessary to restrict the negotiations to two major parties, and so broadening them really wasn't a viable option; yet, it led to an agreement that was viewed by the Darfurians, at least, as having left them out, politically. Would there have been a better middle ground?

A: I don't know. I think the kind of work we were doing had the potential to bring those forces to the table but actually having them sort of, getting them heard, getting them to become part of the negotiations. To take a very simple and very straightforward example, the number of ministerial positions, which is a very straightforward thing, were all carved out between the National Congress Party and the SPLM, leaving nothing for anybody else. The presidency positions were a similar case. Now the broader view might have recognized that it was more sensible to bring others in. I think the international pressure to get an agreement at Naivasha and Nairobi was distracting people from dealing with the Darfur situation as it developed. And ironically, I think the international community, this country and others, was not willing to think about Darfur until the CPA had been signed because they wanted that agreement.

Q: Or you might say they were afraid that it would unravel if their attention was diverted?

A: Exactly. And then, of course, once the CPA had been signed, attention turned to Darfur and then distraction, until today even, distraction by the Darfur situation seems to be reducing the effectiveness of the implementation of the CPA in the rest of the country.

So, it's an ironic reversal.

Q: When you are meeting folks in Sudan, is it quite apparent that those who are responsible -- I'm thinking actually of members of the different commissions -- for doing certain things under the CPA aren't getting them done? Let me ask you broadly, what are the disagreements that prevent them from actually carrying out their mandate?

A: I think because the government, because the National Congress Party, is focusing on Darfur because the international community is focusing on Darfur that this other work is not being done. That's the sort of charitable way of looking at it. The other way of looking at it is that because the international community's attention is on Darfur, the pressure is not on the National Congress Party to act honorably, honestly, with any kind of momentum in all of these different commissions. The oil commission is a significant one but the "three areas," the Abyei problem, are others.

Q: There's a question of the political will in the NCP and the government in Khartoum which always comes up. How would you characterize their political will to follow through on the CPA obligations?

A: I honestly don't know. I think that what they are not is a homogeneous political entity. There is internal struggle within the National Congress Party and there are extreme elements, there are moderate elements and it's very difficult to understand what's going on inside it. I'm sure there are those within the NCP who have absolutely no intention of following through on the agreement, but they may be counterbalanced by others who do. Some have suggested that the extremists are gaining the upper hand, that people like Ali Osman Taha have become less powerful in recent months, but that's very much second hand.

Q: I've heard that myself. The people that you're working with, presumably you would be able to judge whether they are still committed to the Agreement.

A: Yes, and the answer is apparently so, but we're not naive and our purpose is to bring those within the government and those parties and the SPLM, as well as others, together. This is post-CPA, of course, but certainly on Darfur and the east we've been doing work to bring people together to find ways forward in those regional difficulties. We've been asked to do the same on Kordofan, but we don't have the resources to do so.

Q: In Darfur, you've had another series of consultations?

A: Yes, we have.

Q: And the specific themes there were...?

A: So far, there's more to come and always funds permitting, but so far we started out with something that we thought was fairly crucial and fundamental, which is land use and the effects of different means of land use that affect the rivalry between settled farmers

and pastoralists, and how that might be moved forward with an overall reducing resource, usable land. The Darfurian participants then wished us to get expertise for them on mostly political marginalization, but also cultural marginalization and economic marginalization, on the lack of control over their own resources, economically and politically.

Then thirdly, we did a consultation on what are the preconditions for people to go back to their homes. We're sort of edging closer and closer to the security issue and obviously the primary answer to that question is security, although there are other issues, too. And so we've done three consultations. We'd like to do some more. We think that there's a big correlation between the Darfur environment and the conflict, so that the degradation of the environment to the detriment of available water and those sorts of things have caused conflict and stimulated a vicious cycle by which conflict causes further degradation of the environment, so we want to do more work on that. And we're always trying to get science into that kind of dialogue. We're doing that without much support, really, so just doing it on our own resources.

Q: Who are your major funders?

A: We're funded by everything from the widow's five dollars up to as much as we can get, including individual trusts and foundations, church and community groups and then government. So governments will sometimes fund us to do specific things. For example, the British government, we were able to persuade them that eastern Sudan was a powder keg and we should bring some of the eastern Sudanese together to work on some ways forward and we did that with a relatively small amount of British money. And then we were asked to move from that to try to get negotiations going between the Eastern Front and the government of Sudan, which we spent about nine months trying to do and ended up not running the negotiations with ourselves mediating, although that had been the plan. Eritrea ended up mediating, with attendance from Western countries. And we did workshops with the Eastern Front to help them to become (a) more willing and (b) more capable of negotiating with the government. And that, to answer your question, that was funded by the UK, Canada and Norway and USAID. So for specific projects we can sometimes get some funds.

In fact, just to take you back to the Naivasha process and what we think, have thought, was the importance of dialogue between the negotiating parties and the wider society effort, I haven't mentioned it but we tend to work with a fairly influential level, or try to work at a policy level with junior ministers or leaders of militias and that sort of thing. The U.S. government was at one time quite convinced that this was worth doing. And this was when Walter Kansteiner was the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. This was before my time but we had a quite substantial amount of State Department funding to do this work alongside the Naivasha process.

Q: You mentioned that, in the negotiations with the Eastern Front, you had initially been slated to do the negotiations with this organization but that sounds like a departure from your normal practice.

A: Yes and no. We started out by doing an inclusive consultation. Our normal *modus operandi* is informal, low key, not exactly deniable but certainly low profile. And the Khartoum government was willing to negotiate with the Eastern Front on that basis and so both the Eastern Front and the Khartoum government were willing for us to do that, to be not so much mediators. It would have been dialogue to see ways forward and what might have been called pre-negotiations. But then the UN office in Khartoum tried to help and the Eastern Front, who were fairly canny about the use of the international press and international profile, which the underdog in an asymmetric conflict often has to be, they thought that the prospect of a UN mediation was far more interesting than a small British NGO. So the UN offer kind of undermined what we were trying to do and we were put back by three or four months.

Eventually it became obvious that the Eastern Front wouldn't accept our mediation. As I mentioned, Libya was brought into the picture as a mediator. The UN was sort of out of the picture again. We kept trying to bring the two sides together in some way or other, with fairly close liaison with some of the Khartoum Western embassies, probably led by the British embassy. We were generally seen in Khartoum by certain international partners as leading on the East.

Q: Some of the other areas that are in disagreement, such as Abyei, come to mind; is your group able to have dialogue among the parties to break the logjam that seems to be occurring over the boundary report?

A: Indeed. We haven't yet been able to do so is the answer and I'm not sure whether we would, because first having rejected the boundary commission's report, there's a bit of an impasse and I'm not sure we could break it. We did put a proposal for an Abyei consultation, actually before the commission had reported to the presidency, in fact I think it was before the CPA had been signed, but Abyei was known to be one of the big issues. And our proposal to help in trying to bring minds together on the Abyei issue was essentially rejected by the international diplomats because they felt that they'd solved it, in that there was an Abyei Protocol, at least.

Q: Indeed, and they didn't anticipate it would be rejected.

A: No. So we haven't revisited Abyei and we really haven't the capacity to do so; yet, I wouldn't exclude it.

Q: It seems like that's one that has to be revisited.

A: It does. I'm sure it does.

Q: In different fashion than the present?

A: Bashir puts himself, frequently, for example regarding the UN troops and all kinds of things, he paints himself into a corner and I think on the Abyei report he's probably done

that. So it would be quite difficult to extricate himself from the corner. There are arguments on both sides and the Messeriya tribe will spill the last drop of blood to defend their land against the Dinka.

Q: Some of the key commissions, the Assessment and Evaluation Commission, Abyei, which we talked about, the North-South Commission and the Elections Commission are the ones that seem to be key. Could you comment from your vantage point on what you see happening within these commissions to make the implementation less than everyone hoped? We talked about political will, but maybe that's not the entire explanation.

A: Yes, I think, apart from everything else, most of the time scales were ambitious, anyway.

Q: That was done on purpose.

A: Yes, of course, to keep the pressure on. I think there are two issues. There is an issue of political will and heel dragging. There is also an issue of capacity. I don't think the SPLM has the capacity to "fight its corner" in these commissions and it's the same as its role in the ministries, where even though an SPLM, a Southerner, has been made the minister, the previous minister becomes the deputy minister and essentially isolates the minister from his ministry. So there is a certain amount of deliberate malign intent, I suppose, but also these are checks and balances things. The SPLM has very, very few good people and increasingly those who are good want to be operating in Juba or if they don't actually like Juba itself geographically, they want to be back in the South. I wouldn't say they've totally given up on the Government of National Unity, but they certainly have withdrawn to a certain extent and one gathers that Salva Kiir has withdrawn quite considerably from the presidency and is spending much more time in being president of southern Sudan. The vision for a unified New Sudan more or less died with John Garang.

Q: That's a dramatic statement. Of course, the Government of South Sudan folks here, naturally, they say that isn't the case, that his vision has been carried on by Salva Kiir and then by themselves, who are supporters.

A: I don't think the emphasis is there, though. I think John Garang genuinely held it strongly and I think that some of his successors are much more ambivalent about it.

Q: And how is that ambivalence manifested, in terms of their ability to coexist with the North?

A: Well, perhaps they haven't quite decided yet, but I think they're shifting that way and certainly if the vote were taken now they would go that way, but some of them have said to us, to me, that they gave it nine months to see how it would work out and after about nine months Salva Kiir made a big speech which challenged the situation as it was, challenged the good will of the NCP and the indications are that it hasn't improved that much. I think we need to be ready for both eventualities. I think we need to be ready for

relationships between the Government of Southern Sudan and the Government of Sudan in Khartoum and the periphery and we need to be ready to sort of try to make those relationships work as best we can. But also we need to be ready for the eventuality of separation, because even if the South secedes, that's not the end of the story. It won't be a hermetically sealed border and certainly some of the foreigners believe that the government, the NCP will try to undermine the Southern government, even if there's a separate state. So what happens in Khartoum or in the North will not suddenly be irrelevant the day of secession.

Q: Let me ask you to make the difficult case for some of the successes of the CPA. There have been some. Obviously it was a tremendous, ambitious undertaking and some think things have gone better than expected. What would you count as some of the most important achievements thus far?

A: Well, the lack of fighting was the main thing. And there is an attempt to get a Southern government going. It's very difficult; it's very slow. Not all of the government ministers in the South are as engaged in their ministries as they could be and they may be out of the country more than they should be. But nevertheless, there is some development in the South and the peace dividend is very, very, very limited but there is peace.

In Khartoum, there are patches of the government which I think are genuinely positive. There is a national planning team which is very undermanned and under-resourced but, nevertheless, is trying to move some of the regional planning forward. It doesn't have a strong power base particularly but it is at least trying to do those things. There is sometimes quite heated debate in the parliament and there are a number of different voices in Khartoum which are not afraid to sort of raise their voices at one another. I think those are just glimmers, tiny glimmers of light. Because, mind you, the ideal scenario in Khartoum is not regime change but regime transformation. And I think probably the only hope in Khartoum is if that can be done in a way that is non-threatening to the central power, so that a gradual change towards more open society is effected without scaring the horses, without actually either causing a coup or causing a crackdown by the central power.

Q: A difficult balancing act.

A: Yes it is, and the jury is out as to whether it can actually happen.

Q: When you were working with the Darfur negotiations, I guess the CPA to some degree was a model for those.

A: Yes, it was. There is an irony in the use of the CPA as a model for the DPA, because it was a different type of conflict and therefore the CPA was not necessarily the right model. Just simply taking over, for example, power sharing, wealth sharing and military arrangements as the three things that would be negotiated in Darfur actually left out a whole range of different subjects which were at the base of the conflict, which were

actually fundamental causes of conflict. So that's one thing. Using it as a model was not necessarily the right thing. But the irony is that it was used as a model, but it was also itself a constraint on what could be agreed, because the CPA had already carved out the power shares between the SPLM and the NCP and there wasn't much left for the Darfurians, or for the Easterners, for that matter.

Q: So it really wasn't the best choice as a negotiating model.

A: The expectation of the Darfurian rebels was that they would get something like the CPA. But almost because the CPA existed it wasn't possible for them to do so.

Q: Taking one step further back and trying to come to some conclusions here, what do you think are the main lessons we've learned from negotiating the CPA and trying to implement it over these last two years?

A: I think that a comprehensive peacemaking approach should have been taken. It was done in a very, very, very patchy way. There were some attempts. But there was no real coordination of the grassroots peacemaking, peace building and the track two or the policy level peace building and the formal negotiations. I think Sumbeiywo had many, many strengths as a mediator, not least his ability to keep the international community off the backs of the parties.

Q: That's a nice way of putting it.

A: Well, he's a general. So he knew what he wanted. And I think one of the weaknesses of his way of doing things was that he was perhaps a little bit too defensive of the process and, therefore, the other voices were excluded. And the way he put it to me was once something had been agreed, the SPLM and the government of Sudan, as it was then, then they went out to people and explained it to them. And that was his response to my question, "How did you involve all the other voices?"

I think maybe that was the wrong way around. I think that the kind of work that we were trying to do to bring those voices to bear in a non-threatening way was only patchily supported, and certainly in the latter years it was; it was well supported in the earlier years, before my time. I think there were organizational issues within my organization, before my time, that led to a loss of confidence in our process and because we were almost the only process in town, that meant that there was a loss of confidence in any process at all.

Q: NGO process?

A: Yes, any sort of track two, unofficial diplomacy type process. And I think the funding did die down. I think personality changes in the U.S. Department of State caused that loss of confidence in our process, which we have tried to scabble back to and we have still not really succeeded with State, although with some other governments we have. So I think that those sorts of processes, which are the glue which hold together a peace

agreement as it's being negotiated and once it's been negotiated and is signed, the relationships of trust and all those things need to be in place. And if they're not in place you're wasting your time having a signed piece of paper.

Q: I think what you've said emphasizes something that we haven't had emphasized from other interviewees, at least that I've talked to, primarily because they didn't represent NGO's. You've brought an important perspective that was definitely lacking and I want to thank you for that.

A: One more thing. The other issue with track one diplomacy or mediators is it's a relatively short term process. The people who are doing it are mediating that particular agreement, negotiation and they'll move on to something else and they may have come from something else. And that's an inevitable consequence of the types of tour lengths that people have and all of those things. And I think that a long-term approach is essential. Long-term understanding, long-term building of relationships with the people involved in the conflict and it's very, very difficult for diplomats to do that, but there are people out there who are doing it, like ourselves.

Q: I guess not only the diplomats but the politicians to whom they may be beholden are put under pressure to do things in a certain time frame and NGOs don't suffer from that pressure. That gives you a longer time frame, I guess, which is important.

A: We hope so.