

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

**Interview # 69 – Executive Summary**

*Interviewed by: Barbara Nielsen  
Initial interview date: March 3, 2007  
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The interviewee established the Marginalized Forces Forum for Peace and Development as an umbrella group to represent those parties and interests which were left out of the CPA negotiations between the SPLM and the NCP. He strongly supports the vision of New Sudan enunciated by Dr. John Garang, and wants his group to help implement the CPA. However, this interviewee stresses the many ways in which the National Congress Party and the government in Khartoum work to delay and “derail the whole CPA process.” These efforts include creating obstacles and denying funding so that the CPA commissions cannot do their work, as well as sowing dissension and encouraging factionalism within the SPLM. Regarding Darfur, the interviewee believes that the Government of Sudan purposely creates divisions among the parties involved, to keep the opposition off balance, with the result that the CPA is also delayed.

This interviewee disagrees that the CPA sets out too ambitious a timetable for elections. However, he sees danger in the lagging preparations for these elections, which the Islamic government could use to ensure their own victory and establish legitimacy. As a result, he strongly urges more involvement on the part of Europe, the United States and the Friends of IGAD, that they show greater “resolve in implementing the CPA.” He urges the U.S. to take a stronger stand, and questions the utility of the intelligence cooperation with the Sudanese government which prevents the U.S. from being more critical of the Khartoum regime.

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A: I am a former Sudanese diplomat. I came to the U.S. in 1989 at the Sudanese embassy and I was removed or dismissed by the Islamist government back in Sudan. I founded a Sudan civil rights organization here in Washington, D.C. and also established new chapters. I also founded other organizations like the National Democratic Alliance and the Cushite League. I'm active in the Sudanese community and I helped and worked with the SPLM while they were struggling against the Islamist government of the National Islamic Front in Sudan.

I may say that I am a witness of the development of the New Sudan vision of John Garang from the beginning, from its inception. It became a reasonable political theory which can be applied to solve the problems of Sudan. I started exploring many possibilities, and came out with the idea of the Marginalized Forces Forum. It was one of my proposals to organize all these marginalized people under one umbrella and under one political view or political vision and that was Doctor John's creation, the New Sudan vision. We were really working for a very charismatic leader who could present such an idea to find a way for Sudan's complicated problems.

*Q: So you established the Marginalized Forces Forum some years ago?*

A: Yes, a few months before the Naivasha agreement, we discussed this issue with Doctor John and Pa'gan Amum and both of them were very enthusiastic, because the New Sudan vision needs some kind of bigger support, not only by a movement.

*Q: I'm assuming that part of your concern in establishing this group was that the CPA was negotiated by two main parties, the SPLM and the NCP, so other groups and other parties were not part of the process. Does that to some degree explain why you wanted to establish your Forum?*

A: Yes, you touched on a very important point. The idea of the New Sudan vision actually came through a very long process. Doctor John was a very important partner of the National Democratic Alliance, which comprised of the biggest opposition groups or alliance against the Islamic Front government in the Sudan. Unfortunately, the NDA or the National Democratic Alliance of Sudan, there were so many conflicting views and ideas and parties inside this group and this was one of its main or major handicaps. And this is why they fell apart from the first real test, when the National Islamic Front started

negotiating with the SPLM and neglecting the other parts of the National Democratic Alliance. We felt that the major parties, the Democratic Unionist Party and the Umma Party were helpless and they were getting old and archaic and obsolete and out of the loop. They were not meeting the dreams of the new forces in Sudan, while Doctor John's approach was very appealing to many groups, especially in the marginalized areas and the rural areas of Sudan.

There are geographically marginalized groups and also there are politically and economically and socially marginalized groups. So it's a very big umbrella. Even around Khartoum, the capital itself, about one quarter of the population live in hamlets and shantytowns. They are even more marginalized than the people who live in the peripheries because they live in Khartoum, the capital, with the living standard of the capital but without any income. So at least in the peripheries people can sustain themselves or they can help themselves. But the people who are IDP's or displaced people who came from western Sudan, from the South and from the east and from other parts, they made shantytowns around Khartoum and it's one of the poorest areas in the world. The sky is their roof or they have nothing. Maybe they depend upon the help of the charity organizations and NGOs and so on.

We want to attract all these people to the Marginalized Peoples Forum, rally all these people with the SPLM in the South, the Darfuri groups, the SLM and the newly founded Redemption Front, the Nuba Mountains, the people living in Blue Nile, Eastern Front and Beja Congress and the Nubians in the far north, besides the women of Sudan. They are also marginalized under this Islamist government, the biggest bloc.

*Q: Some of these groups that you named of course are ethnic groups, but would they all be members of a particular political party?*

A: Many of them are scattered in different parties but we want to bring them back under one umbrella. They are lost because they are voices crying in the wilderness. Nobody is listening to them when they join the DUP or the Umma Party or Communist or Islamic Front or so on; they are lost. But when they come under an umbrella like ours or also under a political vision like the New Sudan vision, we are giving them a very powerful tool for change.

*Q: You were working with Dr. John Garang during the time of the CPA negotiations, during the time that your Forum was created. Did you see some impact of the ideas that you were putting forward evidenced in the CPA?*

A: I consider myself a good friend of Doctor John and most of the SPLM leaders; some of them were my schoolmates and at the university and throughout the struggle against the National Islamic Front we became closer and closer and our ideas became more harmonious. Also, many people, even in Sudan, do not know that the beautiful ideas in Sudan, the big ideas for change in Sudan, came from that part of Sudan, from the South. In 1924 the first revolution for independence of Sudan from the British colonialists, Ali Abdel Latif, his mother was from southern Sudan and his father was from the Nuba

Mountains. The second guy, Abdel Latif Almaz, also his roots are from the South. Also he led a big struggle and battle against Egyptian and British colonialism.

We want to make the New Sudan vision of Dr. John Garang, which is actually, his use of this idea is in the CPA, we want to expand and help implement the CPA, so that we can make a New Sudan. We do not want Sudan to fall apart into many states, a very dangerous scenario, not only for Sudan but for the whole region, if Africa flares into flames. And this is why we tell our friends here and in Europe and in the free world in general that it is very important to the stability of Africa and the world to ensure the unity of Sudan through the New Sudan vision of Dr. John Garang, such that democracy, human rights, even fighting terror regimes and all these things, they will come.

It's one package. It's just like freedom. You either have freedom or not.

*Q: It's quite a challenge.*

A: Yes, it's an uphill battle but it is feasible and applicable and nothing is impossible, because we made many meetings with all these groups, the SPLM, SLM, the Redemption Front, Beja and Eastern Front group, the Nubians in the North and in Blue Nile and the Nuba Mountains. We are all on the same page. We do not have any differences, nothing racial, ethnic, cultural, nothing, because these are the new forces. They are educated, enlightened. It also helps that we are friends and schoolmates and we know each other, so we do not feel those kinds of barriers or cultural differences and so on, because we had, either schooling in high school and the university or in work together.

*Q: Let me ask you about some of the specifics of what has happened since the CPA was signed. Salva Kiir has the first vice president position in the coalition government. How would you evaluate his performance so far?*

A: Well, Salva Kiir, he is walking a tightrope, a partner with the National Islamic Front, or the National Congress Party and also ally to the New Sudan forces. And they are not going to implement the CPA fully, the National Islamic Front or the NCP, the National Congress Party. They are delaying or buying time to derail the whole CPA process. We read from the daily newspapers and so on that there are some tendencies or intentions to delay the elections of next year and also they are putting many obstacles and funding gaps in front of the different commissions emanating from the CPA so that at the end of 2008 or up to 2011, end of the transitional period, they want all these commissions to be dormant or dead. And they are planning to weaken the SPLM from inside by making more factionalism. This is a very corrupt regime.

*Q: And what is their primary motive in seeking to derail the process?*

A: Their primary role is to implement their strategy of building the Islamic government, not only in Sudan. They are trying to topple the regime in Chad and Eritrea and Uganda and even in Egypt. So now they have some problems. They are very, very shrewd and when they are facing a big wind, they yield and try to let it pass over and then they

bounce back and so on. Now they are buying time with the SPLM, to delay the implementation of the CPA, to make obstacles against all these commissions, the Abyei and Petroleum or Oil, all these commissions, so that either the SPLM will be forced to opt for separation, secession or they explode from inside, become many factions and so on. And they did it before.

*Q: That is, they had become many factions before? One of the criticisms that is often leveled at the SPLM is they are a group of many different interests and not always united.*

A: Yes, they want to deepen or make these internal feuds and disputes among the Southerners, the SPLM and the other fronts. We heard that Foreign Minister Lam Akol is trying to make his own political party. He is a minister on the SPLM ticket.

*Q: And he's trying to make his own party?*

A: Yes. There are many ambitious guys who work for their own cause. And the NCP is actually trying to make use of all these differences to widen the crack among the SPLM and the southern Sudanese political forces. To circumvent all these ploys or tactics of the National Islamic Front or the NCP we called for an urgent conference of the Marginalized Forces Forum to be hosted in Southern Sudan and to be partnered by the SPLM.

The SPLM is going to be the launch pad for New Sudan. Without the SPLM, we are not going to do anything. We are telling our friends in the South that we are working for a New Sudan vision and Doctor John's ideas. We want to make it true and real, so that unity will be attractive through these groups, not the NCP.

Some of our brothers in the South, they think that if this NCP does not make unity attractive we will walk away. And we tell them "No." They are not going to make it attractive, never. It is not their agenda. This is kind of wishful thinking or you are waiting for an impossible thing to happen. The Islamists are not going to make unity attractive. Doctor John used to hammer on this point, that the Northerners must make unity attractive so that Sudan can be unified. If they opt for separation, they are not going to blame the SPLM. The ones to blame are the National Islamic Front or the National Congress Party, the Islamists.

*Q: Who's going to blame them?*

A: The Sudanese people will blame the National Islamic Front or the Islamists.

*Q: For not making unity attractive?*

A: Yes. So I'm saying that even if our brothers and sisters in the South opt for separation or secession, it is because the northerners failed to make it attractive. On this line the Marginalized Forces Forum came to implement the CPA with this very big idea of

uniting all these marginalized forces around Doctor John's New Sudan vision and the CPA's going to be the springboard we are going to jump on.

*Q: So in the view of your organization and yourself the idea of unity is still an attractive one, despite the obstacles that have been put in the path over the last couple years. How has the problem of Darfur impacted the implementation of the CPA? You mentioned some of the other reasons why the CPA has been delayed but we haven't spoken about Darfur. How has that had an impact?*

A: Darfur's impact on the implementation of the CPA is very clear. There are differences and disputes among the two partners about inviting the local forces into Darfur. You cannot implement peace in one part of the country while the other part is in flames. So theoretically or practically you cannot implement the CPA without having peace in other parts of Sudan, because we cannot separate the Darfur issue. It is just like a Siamese twin. If there is a problem in one part and the problem in the other part is solved you cannot sleep or stay calm in your place. This is exactly what happened to Sudan when the Abuja conference failed. I also told our friends at the State Department that it was wrong for the U.S. administration to send an ambassador to be a partner in hosting the conference which laid the foundation for the Abuja conference because it actually planted the seeds of all these disputing factions in Darfur.

Next week we will invite different Darfuri organizations to American University so that they can come out with a view, how to handle the Darfur issue in a unified way and to negotiate with the government as one voice, instead of by giving the government the right to negotiate with many groups. The Islamists are enjoying this kind of factionalism because it makes it easy for them to bribe this one and hit this one. They are playing games with all these factions because they are not united.

For the CPA to be implemented we need all these groups to be united or have a working paper or an agenda, so that that they can face one enemy. There is one enemy but many factions. While there are factions, the enemy will be a formidable power to handle even the SPLM. They are making many problems inside the SPLM, so as to make what they are doing in Darfur. They are doing the same in eastern Sudan.

Divide and rule is their game and they won't stop it.

*Q: What kind of offers can they make to the factions within the SPLM that are attractive, given that probably most of the people in the SPLM do not trust the Northern government, either?*

A: Well I think they trust in some Northerners. We cannot say that the whole of Northern Sudan is against the SPLM. There are many forces, many groups. If you saw Doctor John's reception at Khartoum Airport, it was the biggest in Sudanese history. No leader in Sudanese history was received or welcomed like the welcome of Doctor John when he returned, despite all this propaganda and the media trying to distort the image of the SPLM and Doctor John, saying "Doctor John is a terrorist and he's a killer. He's so

and so.” The propaganda, the media, the Sudanese media in Khartoum was bombarding the population every second saying the SPLM, “these are Christians, they are going to do so on and so on.” But when the CPA was signed and Doctor John went to Khartoum, he was met by over six million people. Why? Do these people hate Doctor John or the SPLM? No. They believed that there is something genuine in what he is saying about New Sudan. Everybody wants human rights to be restored.

Everybody wants democracy. Everybody wants freedom of speech and political parties and all these things. Doctor John was able to address these issues in a very powerful way, more than other leaders. So in Northern Sudan, they have a very, very big presence over there. With just small hard work and coordination between these different groups, the SPLM and its allies can come to power next year. They can win the majority. Believe me!

And this is why I’m telling my friends at the State Department, in Europe and elsewhere, even when there was talk about slavery in Sudan, I used to tell them “Ignore it. Don’t waste your time. Slavery is a very dangerous human practice but if you help us to bring a change in Sudan we will bring these slave traders for prosecution. They will be prosecuted. But you are talking about slavery. So instead of talking about the dangers of the dragon and hitting it on the scales, you go ahead and target the head, the National Islamic Front.” If the Western democracies invest their time, effort and money in supporting this project, it is going to be a very big breakthrough for Africa, for democracy and for stability in the region, in Ethiopia, Eritrea. But any delay or any mistake like what happened in Iraq, it might aggravate the situation and bring anarchy to Africa.

For example, we offered our idea about the Marginalized Forces Forum for Peace and Development to the State Department and we met with Andrew Natsios about two months ago. We gave him our vision about these marginalized forces, that we need to start mobilizing the marginalized forces in Sudan and also claim our candidates for the election and begin electioneering and political campaigning. We also need access to media and all these things.

There are many things we can do here for the marginalized forces: train them, show them the tactics, how to steer the election campaign and also prepare the observers in the upcoming elections. There will be international observers for the election. So we want also to make safeguards for this election, by training candidates and also preparing for the political campaign and how to run this campaign, gaining access to the media, because all these things are controlled by the National Islamic Front. The media in Sudan is controlled by the National Islamic Front, by the National Congress Party, both the TV and the radio. They also have the economic ability and the security apparatus in their hands.

*Q: Has the date for the elections in 2008 been set?*

A: Not yet.

*Q: Is it maybe too ambitious to have elections in 2008, which is a year away?*

A: According to the CPA and so on, it should be conducted in 2008.

*Q: I'm wondering if that is one of the points in the CPA that now when you look at it, it would appear to be too ambitious. Maybe it needs more preparation?*

A: Well, it needs more preparation but we have to meet the deadline, also. We do not want to be overtaken by the National Congress Party or the Islamists, what they see as still not united or not prepared and they say, "Okay, we are going to conduct this election next month" and we're not ready. And as we mentioned, the CPA says that this election must be conducted in this period of time. So our stance would be very weak and we do not want to give any chance for the National Islamic Front people to forge an election and get any kind of legitimacy, international legitimacy, because if they win the upcoming election, it is going to be a disastrous scenario.

*Q: How would you manage to win, do you think?*

A: Well, they have, as I told you, billions of dollars in assets inside and outside Sudan and up to now the oil commission, the SPLM failed to know the exact revenue or income from oil. So we are talking about a very big mafia controlling not only the revenues from oil but even working in money laundering. Afghanistan, drugs and all this, they all go to Sudan and the money laundering is done by the Sudanese government.

*Q: So there is no shortage of money.*

A: They do not have any problem with money. They have billions of dollars in South Sudan and in banks in Malaysia and in China and in Hong Kong, Singapore or Korea and even in New York. Here also they have some money. They have many front companies.

*Q: But I guess for the Southern government also, one thing that is not a problem is money, even though there may be some discussion about the oil revenues, whether they are getting precisely what they should be getting?*

A: No, no, they are not getting what they should. They are getting a very, very small slice. Up to now they are complaining about that.

*Q: They have been complaining, but I believe now, apparently, the Norwegians tell us that there is a Norwegian expert, or more than one, advisor to the ministry of mines ...*

A: But also they can keep him away from the most highly confidential information and so on. He can get access to some kind of information.

*Q: Okay, so you are not confident that the South is getting its fair share, according to the agreement?*



A: I am sure they are not getting their fair share.

*Q: Was there a problem inherent in the CPA that, although it provides for a particular percentage, was there a mechanism in place to ensure that the Government of South Sudan actually received these revenues?*

A: Well, all these agreements are written on paper. When you come to doing them in practice there are so many details which you have to take care of. The SPLM were absorbed by their own problems in the South and the government is making lots of problems because they have Southern supporters, also, for the government, those who are very supportive of the National Islamic Front agenda, because they are opportunists. Like Dr. Lam Akol, if Doctor John were alive, he would not have been foreign minister, never.

*Q: How did he become foreign minister?*

A: Once Salva Kiir became the head of the SPLM, he tried to accommodate all these differences, like Bona Malwal and Lam Akol. They are also very influential and very powerful in the South. They also have their own political sway. And in his attempt to unite, Doctor John was going to do the same but the charisma of Doctor John was very powerful. He was able to control or solve many problems.

Salva Kiir is also doing some progress in this matter, but time is running short. The government is using some elements from the Southerners to dilute or to make inroads or to make the Southerners more receptive to their policies, not resilient or opposing them, in contrast to Dr. Pa'gan Amun, for example, or the old guys of the SPLM, who are still very tough in their stance against the National Islamic Front policies and delays. During the last meeting, last month in Juba, they voiced these concerns and they said that the National Islamic Front is derailing the implementation of the CPA. Pa'gan also thought if the NCP continues this tack, the South will break away.

*Q: Is Pa'gan Amun still in Sudan?*

A: Yes, he is the secretary general of the SPLM. He is the number two, after Salva Kiir. He is the oldest of Doctor John's group of the old guard.

*Q: This is internal discord within the SPLM, different individuals who are perhaps looking out for their own interests more than for the interests of the country. You mentioned Pa'gan Amun, who believes that if the trend continues, then when the referendum takes place the South will vote...*

A: Yes, he said the South might go away, but Pa'gan himself, he is a unionist and he believes in this New Sudan vision, a united Sudan and Doctor John's vision.

*Q: Right, so these being the problems, there are different mechanisms that could perhaps be brought to bear to help resolve them and to get things back on track. For example, the*

*Assessment and Evaluation Commission exists and while it has had problems getting started, it is now operating. In your view, should the international community be doing more to assist that commission to help those who are trying to meet the deadlines?*

A: Yes, the Western democracies, the Friends of IGAD and those who brokered the peace agreement or the negotiation between the government and the SPLM, they need to use more pressure and show a resolve in implementing the CPA. Otherwise, the whole agreement might explode. It might evaporate. For example, is it logical to ask a culprit or a killer for permission to come and protect his or her victim?

The United Nations, these people are very stupid. They said they are waiting for permission. Why? Permission from Sudan to bring UN forces to Darfur. If they are obsessed by these kinds of futile thinking and disruptive thinking and so on, there is no need for the UN to be in Darfur. They have to be there, by force, without any prior permission from the Sudan government, because the Sudan government is the one who is violating human rights there and committing genocide and all these problems. The UN Charter is designed to protect people from aggression and so on, not to ask the aggressor, "Please, allow me to protect your people from you." Even the Western democracies are going to behave in the same line, not to exert some pressure like an oil embargo, for example. Giving assistance to the Government of Southern Sudan and making an embargo on oil for one year or so on.

They are allowing some officials from Sudan, intelligence people, to come here and go there or they are giving them some kind of protection so that they get more information from them. Why? The administration, Andrew Natsios mentioned last month that what's going on in Darfur does not rise to the level of genocide and so on. These kinds of compromises actually are very important for encouraging the Islamist government in Sudan to deviate or to derail the CPA and buy time.

*Q: Did Mr. Natsios say that was the reason, in order to encourage the exchange of intelligence that the U.S. government would not be ...?*

A: They give them very minor suspects and information and they keep the most dangerous issues hidden, of course. They are not going to give them everything. So they are buying time, "Let us discuss or negotiate with the American administration and waste their time and so on and so on." They want to elongate these kinds of discussions until they come to 2008, the election, or they can go for the election and win the election through bribery and money and economic power and security and all these things. They have all these cards in their hand, so they can win the election. When they win the election, they will become more powerful. They will have international legitimacy. "This is what the CPA says, elections and we won the election. What do you want from us? This is the choice of the Sudanese people. They chose us. They elected us. So what are you going to do?" These people are very sneaky and very treacherous. They know how to play politics and I felt that even some European nations, they started giving way to the NCP diplomacy. The Germans, for example, the French, and we are having problems with China and Russia at the UN.

*Q: Are those governments just naive? In the case of China, I do not think it would be naïveté; rather, they are willing to cooperate with the Khartoum government.*

A: Not willing only. They are cooperating with the Khartoum government. China is also a very dangerous element in derailing the CPA, Russia and China. I would add France and also Germany, some European countries, so when they get some kind of lenient stance or some kind of mild conditions from these countries, it is a very big political success for the NCP. And every success for the NCP is defeating the implementation of the CPA, or it is delaying the implementation or it is making it impossible for it to be implemented before the interim period, 2011.

*Q: What does that tell you about the CPA? You have put your finger on a number of issues that have developed after the CPA was signed. Should people have known that this was going to be the outcome, or how can we draw some lessons learned for the future from this experience?*

A: I think one of the most important things to learn from this lesson, the process of implementation of the CPA, the delays and the obstacles and all the things, we have to come to the conclusion that the NCP, the National Congress Party, the old partner of the SPLM, the government, is not going to allow the CPA to be implemented, because they know that this is the end of their ...

*Q: Role?*

A: Yes. They are not going to take that risk. They will do their best to derail, to delay, to play games, divide and rule and all these things. On the other hand, we have to do a counteraction to foil or abort all these tactics by the Islamists. One thing is to invest some kind of energy and time with the Marginalized Forces Forum for Peace and Development. We said that the SPLM, SLM and all these groups will work to implement the New Sudan vision, which is implementation of the CPA in a broader way, because we believe that implementing the CPA is not only to solve the problem between the Islamists and the SPLM or between the South and North in a slightly larger way.

We believe that the CPA is the right key to solve the Sudan problem. We do not want to lose that key. We want to stick to it and to help implement it we need to make workshops, seminars. We want to discuss and find out means and ways to implement the CPA and force the National Islamic Front or the National Congress Party to adhere to the particulars of the CPA. Without that kind of will or force the CPA will not be implemented.

*Q: Obviously your group, because you know Sudan and the Sudanese, would be well placed to engage in some of these workshops and to educate the population about their new responsibilities in democracy and so on. I am sure there are groups, like the IGAD Partners, that provide funding. Are you able to use some of your people to work in these projects in Sudan?*

A: After 17 years I visited Sudan last October and I had many meetings with representatives of the marginalized forces group and they are ready, but, unfortunately they are handicapped. Their movement is limited due to the security measures and also their financial ability; they do not have access to the media or anything. For example, we have the satellite TV video; we have the Voice of America. We can also even dedicate a wavelength to Sudan in the Sudanese Arabic language to be directed to the Sudanese people, so that they can listen to the marginalized voices project and their campaign and all these things. We cannot wait until the National Islamic Front or the National Congress Party gives us the right to “Come on, use the TV or the radio, please. You are welcome.” They are not going to do that.

So we need this kind of help, access to media, and the right to reach our people easily from these wavelengths, shortwave. We want to disseminate the New Sudan vision and our program for the New Sudan and how we are going to implement the CPA and what we are going to do for the people, because we are facing a very, very powerful; it is not a powerful regime, but it is a mafia, it is an international mafia: the Islamists.

The international Islamic brotherhood, financed by the wealthiest Arab people, in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and also money laundering, all these things. So we are facing a very big organization. I do not like people, when they talk about the National Islamic Congress or the National Islamic Front, to say Hassan Turabi or Omar Bashir, no, no. It is an international organization. This is the only Sunni military government which gives safe haven or refuge to all militant groups, Islamist groups and nationalists. Hassan Turabi made an alliance between the Islamists and many radical groups in the Arab world and told them “since the common denominator is our regime and Islam, we can make a big alliance and dominate the whole area and even make some kind of power balance with Europe or America.” So this kind of mentality is still there.

*Q: And it sounds like it's very powerful.*

A: Yes. It means a lot of homework and if we fail in this homework it will be really catastrophic. It will be disastrous. I used to tell our friends at the U.S. State Department and in many meetings at the Congress that if you do not extend your front line to that part of the world, to Sudan and Yemen and many areas, this will come back, they will come for you here and they will hit you in your heartland. I mentioned this to the Sudan desk official just eight days before September 11. I told them that you are wasting time in talking and talking and talking about slavery. Slavery is not important, like terrorism. We are talking about slavery, they come and give you a big blow? Everything in your mind will shut up. You forget about yourself, not only about slavery. Give this issue the utmost concern and attention. Time to go and fight.

This was even before the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam attacks and so on. When a clergyman came with a presentation about slavery in the Nuba Mountains and in the South, I told him, “Reverend, this is a very heinous crime. We are really very sympathetic and supportive of this issue and we hope one day we will find time to put all

these criminals on trial in front of an international body.” And that was some brown bag luncheon event and many Congressmen were there. I told him that and this was about two months before September 11<sup>th</sup>. “I used to cry and cry. “Hey, listen, we know these people. We listen to their propaganda and their media. Every day we read about what is happening in that part of the world. Not only in Sudan, in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, in Pakistan, India, everywhere, because we know these people. We come from that part of the world. We know their mentality and how they think. If you do not want to take severe measures and so on, they will come and hit you again, believe me!” And that was also about two months before September 11<sup>th</sup>.

I was not actually saying this because I had some documents, some written proof, but from reading between the lines. When you listen every day to these people, sometimes, when they get obsessed, they believe they are the most powerful people in the world. Then they look out the window and remember that unfortunately they are still living in the Third World. They think that Europe and America, “these are just trash and we can put them under our mercy and so on.”

So it is very important. It is high time to bring these people much closer to the think tanks, to bring people from Somalia, from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Chad, Nigeria and even from Yemen, United Emirates, Saudi Arabia. You have thousands of people here. They are working as cab drivers, in pizza delivery and security officers and nobody is using their talents and skills and intellects and so on. So instead of wasting time in talking about minor issues and so on (of course, if I were a slave, I do not think I would consider slavery a minor issue), let them approach these people, recruit at least the smartest guys among all these groups, from Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria. You have thousands of them here, thousands. So it is a long-term goal but it could help, also, in implementing the CPA.

*Q: We need to take better advantage of all these resources, individuals who are here and who have knowledge about their countries. They are also willing to go back and work hard, even though the conditions are not necessarily as easy as they would find in Europe or in the U.S. And I gather you are willing to go back.*

A: Yes, after 17 years I want to go back and it is very hard. It is easy to live here. It is very peaceful. Nobody is harassing us or threatening us. But if we leave the place over there for these people, who is going to help? Nobody! We became U.S. citizens and we want to go back and at least spread the word about democracy, human rights and the New Sudan vision and all these things. We want to work together with the intellectuals and think tanks and the politicians and so on. I told an American one day, “When you go to Sudan, just imagine you are taking a cab or you are driven by one of the diplomats from the U.S. Embassy with a Sudanese driver and you ask the driver how people think about the U.S. in Sudan compared to China or Japan or Russia, and you will get a very negative answer, ‘You did nothing in Sudan.’ Giving this humanitarian aid, people just eat and forget about you. But if you make some kind of projects, if you ask about China in Sudan, he will lead you to the biggest monumental building facing the Nile, for international conferences and so on. If you ask about Russia, they will take you to a very

big hospital over there. If you ask about U.S. achievements, they will take you to the rubble of the pharmaceutical factory. Someone said earlier that we needed to get tough with Khartoum. Now suddenly “softly, softly catchee monkey is the way to go?” You have to beautify the U.S. image by adopting major projects, major investments. Now *that* will have Bashir and the gang quaking in their boots!

I used to warn key Americans. We used to meet in many meetings in the interagency action group. That was some time ago. I used to tell them that if you do not make a real investment in Sudan, first of all help the National Democratic Alliance to bring change in Sudan and then try to come and take the oil concessions and major investments and all these things. Otherwise, Khartoum or Sudan will continue to be a nightmare, it will break and it will become more and more complicated. But you can, through real strategy and so on, you can bring a change in Sudan.

This was the beginning of the idea of the Marginalized Forces Forum. We created it to support the SPLM and the New Sudan vision and then the CPA. Without this kind of instrument and elements, the CPA will not be implemented. If you do not have good players in the field, you will lose, again. Where are the players? Let us look for the right players, like your football games here. If you do not have very big and powerful players and so on, you cannot win the game. We have very weak players. They need to be trained. They need to be supported. They need to be helped. And one of the issues, I told you, is access to media.

*Q: I think you made that point very well and it seems like a logical one, I would agree. All of the different items that I had planned to touch on, you have definitely incorporated them. So I want to thank you for sharing your vision and experience.*

A: Thank you. I hope it was to the point and that I brought some refreshing ideas. If mine is a small idea, when it gets complimented with yours and with others, we can come out with a very brilliant idea.