

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

**Interview # 80 –Executive Summary**

*Interviewed by: W. Haven North  
Initial interview date: March 29, 2007  
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The interviewee is a journalist who traveled in Sudan with John Danforth in 2001 and 2002 and covered the debates on Sudan at the United Nations (UN). He interviewed John Garang and President Bashir. He also traveled with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and International Republican Institute (IRI) staffs in Southern Sudan. In 2006 he traveled in Northern Sudan including a special project on the African Union (AU) troops in Darfur.

On the CPA negotiations, the Bush Administration's handling of the conflict was an exception to its foreign policy. The Administration was responding to pressure from the Christian Right; the policy was pragmatic and reasonable and focused on the CPA by pushing the two sides to end the civil war rather than scoring points against the Khartoum government. The Northern Government was responsive in large part because it was concerned about what the U.S. would do after 9/11, given that the Northern Government was a bastion for Islamic extremism and had bin Laden living there.

Danforth and his team were quite adroit with their strategy that led towards negotiation and compromise. The key to the strategy began with trying to have a ceasefire in the Nuba Mountains as confidence building as part of the four tests. The Nuba Mountains ceasefire held reasonably well and became a model for the larger ceasefire between the North and South. The UN peacekeeping force was effective in the Nuba Mountains because there was the political will on both sides (North and South) to stop the fighting. Other factors contributing to the CPA were the respect for Danforth on both sides, and the multilateral approach. The attempt to apply the North-South model to Darfur could be applied to Darfur. The single most important failure of the CPA was not to incorporate Darfur.

John Garang grew a lot over the three years from 2002 from someone who was out for himself and the South to someone who was more open to the idea of a new united Sudan. There were Arabic Muslims in the north, who are disaffected from the Khartoum government; they feel marginalized and saw Garang as a liberating type of leader.

U.S. policy is currently more pro-South and hostile towards the North; the resources that have gone into the South have been disproportionate in favoring the South. There are a number of well-educated people in the North who could help with the integration process. However, the Khartoum government is a cynical, calculating, self-

interested group, if very smart and shrewd. However, there are opportunities to make a deal with them, and efforts have yet to be fully made.

On CPA implementation, the Abyei commission work is going nowhere; the Northern Government has not been transparent enough on the wealth sharing. Both sides are dragging their feet on different aspects and more interested in how to secure their position geographically and militarily than in trying to build a unified country.

The U.S. should have put more emphasis on beefing up the Africa Union (AU) forces with regard to Darfur. The Europeans and the U.S. have failed to deliver on some of their the commitments and payments for the AU forces. We should have used Darfur as a means for bringing in the North-South troops. We need to strengthen AU forces instead of relying on the UN to do so.

Very little is being done on the census and elections preparations. Ninety-nine percent of the people in the South think that the election is the date when they will have independence. In the North, people are more focused on the corruption and authoritarian nature of the government than on the elections as critical. It is possible to have a peaceful secession, but the South's push for independence could lead to an outbreak of war. The problem is that the oil resource is right on the line between the North and the South; the North is trying to redraw the boundary; the South will never accept that. The crisis situations go well beyond Darfur; the indices of infant mortality and malnutrition among the Beja in eastern Sudan are worse than in Darfur.

The U.S. has not continued the sustained commitment and engagement over a long period of time as it did during the Danforth period.

The way forward: do much more with the AU forces and opening up the Northern government by engaging civil society in the North.

Referring to the report *Saving Peace in the East* and *Another Darfur* on the Pulitzer Center web site, there is very little attention being paid to the peace agreement and no attention by the media.

In summary, the main lessons are: making a sustained commitment, working multilaterally, reaching out to both sides, and developing civil society in the North and the South.

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*Q: Let us start off with a summary of your involvement with Sudan, what your role has been and what your experience has been, as a context for the interview.*

A: My experience goes back to the fall of 2001, when I was the bureau chief in Washington for a U.S. newspaper. In September of that year, John Danforth, the former senator from Missouri, was named as special envoy for Sudan. My newspaper had covered him, of course, for many years. So I wrote articles that fall about his plans, his involvement. Actually just before 9/11, we had a couple of stories and I had chatted with him then about the fact that he was going to be undertaking this task. Then I got diverted, as did everyone, by 9/11. I was doing reporting in Central Asia and Russia during the fall and came back in December of 2001 and January 2002.

I had arranged with Jack Danforth to go with him on one of his early trips to the region. So I went out to Sudan with him in January of 2002. I traveled with him both to Khartoum and then to the Nuba Mountains and down to Rumbek, where he met with John Garang and then to Cairo; part of the travel he was doing was to engage the neighboring countries; we were also in Nairobi, where he met with Kenyan officials.

So I did a number of interviews as part of that trip. I interviewed John Garang and other participants, President Bashir in Sudan and the foreign minister, a number of other officials. That took about two weeks or so. I stayed on after Danforth left. I went back from Cairo, back to Sudan and then reported for another two weeks or so, both from Khartoum and then back to the South. So on that trip, I traveled with representatives of the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute. They were making an assessment trip all over southern Sudan. I hitched a ride on their plane and then flew around to a number of places in the South.

Out of that I wrote —actually I was writing these stories as I went along —probably 12 or 15 stories on Sudan at that time. Back in the States, I continued to write about the issue and particularly the Danforth perspective. I probably wrote more stories about his role, what he was doing, than any other journalist in that period, just because we had had this experience together and I had covered him for a long time. When he became the representative to the United Nations, I covered debates on Sudan at the UN and continued to deal with him from that perspective.

In the fall of 2004, when they were getting close to the CPA agreement, Danforth asked me to come as a journalist to cover the Security Council going to Nairobi. I went on the trip in November of 2004, when they were trying to press the parties to reach agreement; they did get a tentative agreement on that trip. They used Colin Powell's plane and had all of the Security Council members, except one or two, who went on that trip; there were three or four journalists, total. It was a great opportunity to watch these diplomats close up, from a journalist's standpoint, highly unusual to see them negotiating the terms of this agreement, as we flew from here out to Nairobi.

After the CPA was signed, I was back in the States again and continuing to write about it from Washington. In January last year I went back to Sudan again. At this point, I had left the newspaper in December of 2005 and had begun the non-profit center I run now. The first project that we did was on Sudan. I went out and spent about a month, in January of 2006, in Northern Sudan, for the most part. The specific project that I did last year was on the African Union role in Darfur. So I spent eight or ten days in Darfur, traveling with the African Union (AU) troops and writing about that. I came back and we made a video documentary and then I wrote about it. I have done a number of talks around the country, presenting the video and talking about the Darfur issue.

*Q: That is a rich experience: a lot to cover. Let us go back to the very early period. You were involved just before they even began to negotiate. What were the factors that brought the two, the North and the South, together even to talk about a peace agreement?*

A: You mean when Danforth first went out, at that point?

*Q: Right, when we were trying to get the two sides to at least come to negotiate the CPA.*

A: There had been envoys before. In the Nineties, there had been two or three but several envoys had been appointed in the Clinton Administration.

*Q: And there had been work by IGAD earlier on and all that.*

A: That is right, but without much success. The Clinton Administration with bin Laden being there and what happened in 1998, when the embassies were bombed and we bombed Khartoum in turn, from that point on, my sense was that the Clinton Administration had little interest in engaging Khartoum. They were trying to affect the sanctions to put pressure on Khartoum, but there was not a sense that they had a partner to engage with.

When Bush came in, I think Bush had (again this is my perspective, looking back on it six years later, but that there was a lot of interest among the evangelical community) pressure from them as well as from the African-American community. You had the left and the right putting pressure on the Administration to take a more proactive stance on Sudan. Some people were saying even back then that it should be more support for the Southern Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) against Khartoum, more pressure on

Khartoum. In response to that (this is just days before 9/11) Bush came up with the idea of bringing Danforth in to go out and try to force negotiations.

I thought at the time—and I thought during the whole process— that the Bush Administration’s handling of the conflict was an exception to the foreign policy of the Bush Administration in general, particularly post-9/11, because in Sudan you had a commitment to negotiation, a commitment to multilateral engagement. There were very substantive attempts to bring in the Kenyans, the Egyptians, the British, the Norwegians, the Catholic Church, to reach out to the Muslim community and the religious leadership of the Muslim community in Khartoum and to engage with the Khartoum government. So given that he was responding to political pressure from the Christian Right, I felt that the president and his advisors had a very reasonable, pragmatic policy towards trying to keep their eye on an agreement, to push the two sides to something that would end the civil war, rather than simply scoring points against the Khartoum government.

*Q: Then, what brought about the fact that the two sides did get together to negotiate? Was our role the key one or were there other influences that were more important? We are looking for lessons learned.*

A: There definitely were other factors. One of the reasons that Khartoum said yes to negotiations, when they had balked before, was 9/11. After 9/11 happened and the U.S. made it clear that we were going to respond and that countries of the world were going to have to decide whether they were with us or against us in this battle against terrorism. At that time, Sudan had all kinds of black marks against it, from having been so ideological, early in the Bashir government, setting itself up as a bastion of Islamic extremism and then having bin Laden living and prospering in the country. There was every reason for people in Khartoum and the government to be nervous about what we might do. We could go after them. So that was one reason they were responsive.

*Q: Because they were afraid of what?*

A: They were afraid of what might happen, at that moment. I am talking about 2001, 2002, right when there was some openness. Danforth and his team were quite adroit at taking advantage of that opening and coming up with a strategy that led towards negotiation and compromise on both sides.

*Q: What were the keys to that strategy?*

A: The Nuba Mountains part was very important. They began with trying to have a ceasefire in the Nuba Mountains region

*Q: There were the “four tests”?*

A: Right, the “four tests” and the one that sticks in my mind most vividly was the Nuba Mountains, because he used that as a confidence building measure; it also showed the importance of political compromise and negotiation. I have thought about that often,

actually, in terms of Darfur. People say we have to have such huge numbers of people to enforce the peace in Darfur and to protect people and yet in the Nuba Mountains, where there had been hellacious fighting for years and years and many people had been killed, the actual numbers of peacekeepers were tiny. Yet that ceasefire pretty well held, and it became the model for the larger ceasefire between North and South.

*Q: What were the key features of that model?*

A: Part of it was that there was faith in Danforth as an impartial negotiator; he was seen as relatively impartial. Also there was the inducement, from the North and South point of view, the inducement of all this oil that was sitting there, not far from the Nuba Mountains, in that same region. Both sides thought, "There are actual resources here that we can divvy up and it is to the interest of both of us to take advantage of the resources. We cannot exploit them as long as it is the fault line of the civil war." So you had that as a kind of carrot, if it got resolved.

I am sure there were cynical calculations on both sides. From the South, I know that many felt even then that this was a way station on the way to full independence. And in the North, there were people who felt that if they maneuvered a way to get out from under international sanctions and to trade with us and others and fully exploit the oil, that they could still dominate the South and come out with the lion's share of the oil resources, no matter what pieces of paper they might sign. So on both sides, there was a sense that they could game the system down the road, but that, in the short term, it was in their interest to go along with a ceasefire and a cessation of the civil war.

*Q: You said there was a very small peacekeeping group in the Nuba Mountains?*

A: They were not even peacekeepers. They were peace observers, as I recall. It certainly was not a Chapter Seven UN force and I do not believe it was an AU force. It was an *ad hoc* thing that was set up among the parties, with international observers coming in. But in any case, it was in the dozens of people. It was tiny.

*Q: But it was effective?*

A: It was effective because there was political will on both sides to stop the fighting. As I look at Darfur now, I think there has not been enough focus on forcing them into negotiations and reaching a settlement and to figure out what the root issues are and getting something the people actually believe in. But, in the case of the North-South and specifically in the Nuba Mountains, you had that political will.

*Q: Do you have a sense of how the negotiation process proceeded, what worked and did not work in the negotiation arrangement?*

A: The fact that Danforth was going back and forth. Danforth established a relationship with John Garang and that was very important. Garang had so much power in the South and there was an understanding between the two of them. Danforth had a reasonable

relationship with Bashir and Taha and the others in the North as well. It was very interesting talking to people, even today: if you talk to Northern Sudanese as well as the South, there was a respect for Danforth and the fact the Danforth came from a religious background, where he had been and is an Episcopal priest; that meant something to them.

It was funny...I remember talking to the Sudanese when I first was trying to get a visa for the first trip that I made and I was spending time at the Sudanese embassy here. The assumption on the part of the Sudanese diplomats... they were quizzing me about what kind of guy Danforth was and highly skeptical of the fact that he was a Christian minister. They saw he must therefore be representative of what they saw as the very hostile evangelical Christians in the United States. And of course he was not. He was able to talk to the Christian Right here, but he did not go in there with their agenda. He recognized early on that having the trust not only of Sudanese government officials but also the UMMA, the Muslim religious leadership in Khartoum, was very important.

One of the points which was quite effective was the multilateral aspect of this. He and Bob Oakley and Charlie Snyder and the rest of that team were so conscious of not having this be a U.S.-imposed solution. They were working very closely with General Sumbeiywo and then also with the foreign minister and others in Egypt, with the Norwegians, the Brits and the Vatican. They brought all of them into this and then later on, towards the end, Danforth did the same thing, where he just worked the Security Council; he worked them one by one and persuaded them all to go out to Nairobi and to take a collective position on this. It was never presented as my way or the highway. It was trying to work out something that they all could support.

*Q: Then the actual negotiations, before they signed an agreement, before the Security Council went out. It was quite an extended period of negotiation setting up all the protocols and all the arrangements. Do you have any sense of how that process worked and what did not work that brought Garang and Taha together and all the other parties.*

A: Looking back and, again, during that period of mid-2002 to mid-2004, I was only involved in it intermittently. I was seeing it from occasional stories about Danforth's point of view. My sense from that rather distant vantage point was that it was pretty halting, pretty slow and that you were dealing with pretty obstinate people on both sides that were slow to come to an agreement and sort of jockeying for position as to what they would have.

*Q: But then Danforth was not involved at that point, was he?*

A: He was quite involved all the way, because he continued as the envoy.

*Q: ...all the way up to the signing of the agreement?*

A: Up until January of 2005 when he left the United Nations.

*Q: During that period, when he left Sudan and went to the United Nations, it is not clear what he was doing*

A: His main role in the United Nations —you all have talked to him— he would say that was his main achievement at the United Nations was in pushing that agreement through. He also would say that his biggest frustration was dealing with what had emerged in the meantime on Darfur. They had made the decision, looking back, that it was probably the single most important failure of the approach that they took was not to incorporate Darfur into the CPA. They thought that the North-South, the model, the modalities they put into the CPA would then be applied to Darfur or to the Beja region and the conflict in the southwest as well. As it turned out, that did not work. The Darfur crisis exploded on its own and you did not have very much in the way of a constructive overlap from the North-South talks into Darfur.

*Q: There were some discussions at the time of the negotiations that they should be just between the North and the South; they should be exclusive and not bring in other parties. While other people were pushing for bringing in the other parties. What is your sense of which way was the right way to go on that?*

A: Looking back, it would have made more sense to have continued to push. It might have delayed the North-South agreement, but they might have had a more viable countrywide solution. If they had brought in others, I sympathize with their approach and their sense that they knew it had taken them —depending on how you count it— three years of very intense negotiating to get to the point of the CPA in early 2005. One could say, it had gone back 10 or 15 years, to the beginning of the latest round of the civil war. So I can see, God help us, bringing in the eastern Sudan and Darfur and all of these other equally fractious, complicated situations... Better to make this the model. They also were relying on Garang's personality and that Garang, they felt that—maybe alone among the senior leadership of the SPLA—Garang thought that it was possible that he could lead or be part of a united Sudan. What we have seen since he died is that there just is not any other leadership in the SPLM that has that kind of vision or that kind of charisma in the country as a whole.

*Q: You talked to him at some length. Did he have a vision of a united Sudan or was he really pushing for the South?*

A: The extended conversation I had with him was late one night in January of 2002 and he was, I felt, all over the lot and somebody who would say whatever he needed to say in a given circumstance. My impression that night was that John Garang was out for himself and out for the people that he led, to get the best possible position for them. I did not see him as somebody who was a transcending, unifying kind of individual. But I he grew a lot over the three years that followed.

By the time he came to Nairobi, and the times that I saw him briefly when he came through Washington during the years since, he was more and more open to the idea. The new Sudan that he talked about seemed to be at least plausible that it could be all of



Sudan. I was back there last year, in January of 2006, just six or seven months after he died. One of my daughters was teaching English in Sudan, in Northern Sudan with her husband, so we visited them up in Ed Damer, which is on the railroad towards Port Sudan; it is one of the most conservative Muslim areas in Northern Sudan.

They were leading discussion groups. She led one with women and he led one with men in that small community. I went to a couple of these meetings and it was very interesting listening to these people talk about Garang, because about half the group really believed in John Garang. Here they were, Arabic Muslims in the North, but they were disaffected from the Muslim government. They felt that the Bashir government was corrupt and isolated and was taking most of the resources of the country to itself and not developing the country. They felt as marginalized, in their way, as the people in the South did from the rulers in Khartoum. So they saw Garang as a liberating type of leader.

*Q: When you say "they," who specifically?*

A: I am just talking about average Muslims in this community. These are the people that my daughter and son-in-law had gotten to know.

*Q: In a Northern area?*

A: Yes, but it was remarkable. It was not what one would have expected, that they saw at least the possibility that one could have a true reconciliation. But I do not think that very much beyond Garang. Garang saw that potential and it died with him. I have not seen it from Salva Kiir and the others under him.

*Q: Let us turn to the implementation of this CPA. How do you see that going or not going and what might have been different to make it more effective or not? It is a pretty complicated agreement, over three hundred pages.*

A: This is anecdotal but my daughter was involved in Juba last fall; she was teaching English to an integrated group of soldiers from the North and South. The negotiations that went on over that, weeks and weeks getting agreement to meet together and take these English classes together and every part of the CPA has been kind of haggled over and resisted and delayed. The sense of everybody I have talked to, either living in Sudan or close to it, is that both sides are just biding time; that there is not a serious effort towards true integration; that they are waiting for 2011 and the chance to vote on independence. The expectation among many people is that the war will resume at that time. Of course, that would be a tragedy for everybody in Sudan.

One of the things that bothers me and, again, it is not from close reporting, because I have not been back in the South myself since 2002 and so it is just following it as an observer, our policy has continued and more so since Danforth left, that we have been reflexively pro-South and hostile towards the North and that the resources that have gone into Sudan have been way disproportionate to the South. It is true that the South has no infrastructure; there is a lot that needs to be done in the South, but the civil society in the

North is the educated society. My sense from talking to people in the South and my children and others who have lived there is that there were and are a number of well-intentioned people who are well educated in the North who could help with this integration process and our policies have been pretty constrained so that even though there are a lot of resources that have gone into the country as a whole, most of them have gone to the South alone.

*Q: This is a lesson, that we were not treating both sides equally, we were biased, in effect?*

A: Right.

*Q: Do you have any views on how the implementation is going? There is a wealth sharing protocol, there is a power sharing protocol, there is the Abyei Boundary Commission, there is the Audit and Evaluation Commission*

A: Abyei has gone nowhere. There were attempts to get that started and folks in the North, in that case, just blocked it.

*Q: They rejected the commission's report?*

A: Right.

*Q: But I have not talked with anybody who knows much about the Evaluation Commission that was set up. They were a monitoring group that was set up. Do you have any information about what they are doing, or what they are not doing?*

A: No, only the most cursory. My impression is that they have not gotten access to the information; the northern government has not been nearly transparent enough, has withheld basic information. So you do not know whether the terms of that are being complied with or not.

*Q: And on the wealth sharing?*

A: The same thing, just the lack of transparency, that it has been stymied by lack of transparency. But again, that is not from any close reporting. It is just from reading the press.

*Q: It is mainly the North resisting the implementation?*

A: That is the case. They have that information.

*Q: I was thinking more broadly about the implementation of the whole CPA?*

A: For the whole implementation, there is definite blame on both sides. I do not think that the commanders of the SPLA believe in an integrated army. There are still connections

with some of the rebel groups in Darfur, for example. That kind of gamesmanship is still being played out, with bad consequences for the country as a whole.

*Q: So both sides are dragging their feet?*

A: Both sides are dragging their feet on different aspects of the CPA. Both of them are looking more to how to secure their own position geographically and militarily in the long term than they are to trying to build a unified country. This sort gets back to Darfur policy. We have tended to have a reflexive anti-Khartoum positions on Darfur; we have railed against them; we have been talking about ramping up sanctions or imposing a no-fly zone or trying to impose on them a UN force which they have been balking at and we have confronted Khartoum again and again for the last three years on Darfur.

I do not think we have had much affect, in terms of building a stronger force in Darfur. My own sense and this comes from the experience I have had with the African Union last year is that we should instead have put much more emphasis on beefing up the African Union forces that were already there and that Khartoum had accepted. We could have used the African Union force as a cover to pump in a lot of logistical support and advisors and the kind of equipment they do not have and they need.

We did not follow through on the commitments that the Europeans we made to support the African Union; we made the commitments and then we reneged on some of the payments. As a result, the African Union force is a lot weaker than it needed to be. If we had been able to aggressively get a handle on what was happening in Darfur, we could have resolved it. We should have used Darfur as a means for bringing in combined North-South troops, for example, from the Sudanese government as well as the SPLM and we never really seriously pursued that.

We said we did not want to have any Sudanese Army out in Darfur; we want to rely on the United Nations instead because the people in Darfur cannot trust the Sudan Army. There was some logic to that, but if we had used that as a wedge, to say, okay, you have lost the trust of the people in Darfur. We want to have co-commanded, co-equal units of northern and southern troops to balance each other out and you become responsible for keeping the peace in parts of Darfur. Then, if they had been working together to do that, you could have had a constructive peace keeping operation.

*Q: But nobody proposed that?*

A: We did not really push it because all of our emphasis is on bringing in the United Nations. Nobody ever talks about how much it is going to cost to bring in the United Nations or whether China would ever in a thousand years let us do it. There are all these reasons why it was foredoomed, but we just spend all of our energy; Danforth did this, too. It was the wrong emphasis in 2004 and it has been the wrong emphasis, in my mind, since then. We should have focused on much more practical, immediate steps that could have actually had an impact, like in the Nuba Mountains, where you start to make things

better, in El Fasher and Nyala, and then you grow from there and you grow confidence and you get people used to the idea of working together on something.

*Q: Is it too late to do something like that?*

A: No, I do not think so. The African Union is still the only force that we have got there. We just showed this documentary at the American University; we had a Real Journalism Video Festival this past week and they showed mine and a lot of other documentaries. It is a year old but it is essentially unchanged. The argument that I was making in the video was that we need to use the African Union and strengthen that force, instead of insisting on the UN. We are still kind of stuck in that same argument.

*Q: How would you characterize the Northern Government? People have different views about its willingness to even cooperate.*

A: It is a cynical, calculating, self-interested group of people, but very smart, very shrewd. There are opportunities to be had. You could make a deal with them. They can easily take advantage of you, but they are people that we should be trying to strike a bargain with. I do not think we have tried quite enough.

*Q: Now, there is supposed to be a census and then there is supposed to be elections and then the referendum. Is anything happening in preparing people for those and preparing to carry those out throughout the country?*

A: Very little. I do not think anything has been done on the census. In terms of preparing for the elections, the number I keep hearing is 99 per cent of the people in the South think that the election is just the date that they will have independence, that that is what they are headed towards. So there is not a sense of voting for a national government or training people or getting them ready for that or thinking how it would all fit together.

*Q: Do you think the Northerners understand that is a fixed position of the Southerners; that 99 per cent say they are going to vote for independence?*

A: They do, although there is a lot of prejudice in the North against the South. There is a sense that the South is so backward, so undeveloped, that you cannot take too seriously anything that you hear from the leadership. There is a feeling of entitlement on the part of the North, that somehow because they have always controlled the resources that they will continue to do so. But they are not thinking in terms of the elections as a critical moment; they are not focused on it. To the extent that people are educated and aware, they are much more focused I am sure on what they see as corruption and the authoritarian nature of the government they have.

So that in the context of the North, to the extent that people are cognizant of it, are concerned about it, it is an issue of how you open up the system in the North and that again goes back to the civil society and what we are doing in the North. Groups like NDI and IRI, they should be flooding the North. We should have all kinds of engagement with

the media, with political parties, with helping people to see that it is possible to have a different structure, because there is a civil society, there is a base of educated people who would like things to be different than they are.

*Q: And they would be allowed to work there?*

A: It would be difficult but I think they could.

*Q: If the South is going to push for independence, will that lead to an outbreak of war again?*

A: My fear is that is where it is headed, but I suppose it is possible you could have a peaceful secession. The problem is the same problem they have had for twenty-odd years. The oil, this great new resource that they found, is right on the line and the North has already tried to redraw the line so that it would be within the Northern side and the South is never going to accept that.

*Q: Does anybody locally or internationally have in mind a framework of a united Sudan or a way of thinking of it as a united, all-inclusive political society? NGO types or governments or even within Sudan, anybody that looks towards having a larger framework of dealing with all of these crises, because they are all connected to the question of independence or involvement or participation.*

A: I cannot think of anybody out front pushing for that. And that, of course, is a huge problem. You do not have any strong advocates for that. Our official position is that it should be unified, that the country should stay together and that is the position of the European Union, the United Nations and others. One of the things that I found frustrating about the debate about the UN in Darfur is that the UN has fallen well short of the commitments it made for personnel in the South. That is still not fully staffed, as I understand it. So you have a rhetorical commitment on the part of the world at one level. Mainly because of Darfur, the public in general is more aware of the issues in Sudan than they are probably of any conflict zone in the world, outside Iraq or Afghanistan. But it has not translated into particularly effective action and I do not know if that is the fault of the advocacy community or our government or the media, but I do not think we have quite framed the issues in the way that they should have been framed to have a truly constructive affect on the people there.

*Q: Because Darfur is the focus of attention. But you have Darfurs all over the country, in effect, to some degree or other. You have factions and fragmented groups and rebel groups. Even in the South, there are several. But people do not get that picture; is that a fair picture of the situation?*

A: One of the pieces that we commissioned here at the Pulitzer Center was a video documentary on the Beja people in eastern Sudan. And one of the things that this videographer brought out about that situation is that it is much more closed off than Darfur. It is harder to get to and aid groups are not there and the media is not been there

in general. But the information that has been gathered, the UN figures, suggest that if you look at infant mortality or malnutrition, indices like that, it is worse than Darfur. It is a bad situation that by many indices is worse than Darfur, by the basic measures. Because in Darfur you have two million people, a third of the people in Darfur, are actively being managed by humanitarian organizations and the United Nations. So you have the World Food Program providing the people a minimum diet every day. But in Beja you do not have anything like that. I am just seconding your point about the situations that go well beyond Darfur.

*Q: On Darfur itself, what are the political dynamics within the Darfur situation? They did have a peace agreement but it did not hold; is that right?*

A: In that case, my sense is that we were pushing to have a peace agreement and put what was probably an artificial deadline on it. We reached a peace agreement last May, but we are only at that point one of three principal rebel groups. We did not have Chad buy into the peace agreement. So the fighting continued and they have been unsuccessful since at getting back to the negotiating table.

Looking back, hindsight is easy, but it would have been better to have spent longer or stayed longer. I thought we had a situation where Bob Zoellick, who was the Deputy Secretary of State, had thrown himself into this but he, like Danforth in a way... Danforth threw himself into it for three years and then when he was at the United Nations he made another push and he got it as far as the interim or the tentative CPA agreement of January of '05, but then he left. Then, Zoellick came in in 2006 and he had a similar kind of six or eight months intensive engagement with it, multiple trips and trying to bang heads together but then he left. He was able to leave saying, "Yes, I got this peace agreement in Nigeria" but it was barely worth the paper that it was written on. And then he was gone and then Andrew Natsios is coming in.

So we are back to where we were in the Nineties, in a way, where you had one American after another doing it for a few months or a year or so. The exception, if you look back over the last ten years and all of the envoys and senior State Department folks responsible for this, the exception really was Danforth, in terms of having three years of sustained engagement and moving from the envoy position to UN representative. He accomplished a great deal but it took that kind of sustained engagement to make that happen and we do not have that now.

*Q: That is one of the lessons of this experience, the continuity of someone who has rapport on all sides and can maintain that over time is key. Individuals do make a difference in this process.*

A: Absolutely; that does stand out. If you look at before and since, that was the period where we had sustained engagement. The administration, to its credit, they sustained their own team, the team of people who were working on this; it was not just Danforth. It was Ranneberger and Oakley and Charlie Snyder and the rest of them. They were all working

on this for those three years together. And then if you look before then or after then, you do not have the same kind of sustained commitment.

*Q: What is your view of the way forward? What is the role of the international community, what could be done locally to deal with some of these crises which seem to be spreading.*

A: I would do much more with the African Union, not only because it would help in Darfur but because it is critical to have a effective African Union force for other conflicts in Africa and to make that work, when it is so much cheaper to use a regional body like that than to send in the UN or to send in NATO. They need to have that kind of capability. So that is one thing.

The second is the point that I made about civil society engagement in the North; we have to seriously try to influence what happens in the society in northern Sudan, as well as the South, because for the moment they are the people that have much more of the power. You are starting from scratch in the South, but in the North you have an entrenched government, an entrenched bureaucracy and party in power. You need to open that up and there are things that we can do to help that.

*Q: Is there any leadership on the African side related to the African Union or otherwise that can be a catalyst for this? General Sumbeiywo was the key person in the IGAD operation, but is there anybody from the African side that seems to be out providing leadership?*

A: I cannot give you individuals, but I do know that there are competent people from a number of countries. It is the same problem you have with any organization, particularly an organization that is an amalgam of developing countries. You have corruption; you have inefficiencies. The two things that I was struck by in spending this time with the African Union troops last year, on the one hand, they had a terrible shortage of resources. They were trying to function without radios, without effective helicopters, without the right kinds of weapons and so on and with the number of inefficiencies, things not being done because there were language gaps, or just mixed groups from all over Africa. But on the other hand, I was even more struck by how many relatively well trained people I ran into, that had been trained by us or trained by NATO and were bright young officers and who wanted to do something good, they wanted the mission to succeed. They were eager to work with us, to work with NATO and just wishing they had more in the way of U.S. and NATO observers there to work with.

So I am not blind to what the problems are, but I saw a lot more potential. It is amazing to me that we cut short, in the midst of all this debate about Darfur, that we had trouble repeatedly coming up with fifty million dollars here, a hundred million dollars there, to sustain the African Union mission, at the same time that Congress was declaring Darfur a genocide and you had Colin Powell declaring that we could not get money through Congress for even the basics, like paying the salaries. Most of the soldiers were two and

three months behind in their salaries, even. In terms of the money on our side, it was like rounding errors but you could not get that money through Congress.

So those are a couple of things that could have been done and still could be done.

*Q: I note that you have this report about Saving Peace in the East.*

A: That is not my report. That is on the Beja people. That is on the conflict in the east.

If you look on our site, on the Pulitzer Center site, we have a project that is called *Another Darfur*, that has information and the short video that was done for the *Foreign Exchange* television program.

*Q: This laid out a program for negotiations and talks. Has anybody picked up on it or anything being done there?*

A: There is a tentative peace agreement that was signed in December or January, but there is a lot of skepticism about whether the government was truly committed to it, comparisons between that and the peace agreement in Darfur last spring. No, there is very little attention being paid to it and virtually no attention in the media. One of the reasons that we chose to fund that project was that we were trying to get some reporting out about it.

*Q: We are interested in what we can learn from this, not just to apply to the situation there but to elsewhere. What stands out to you as some of the key lessons? Obviously, some of the points you have made already have implications of lessons*

A: Just to summarize what I have said before, making a sustained commitment and working multilaterally, bringing in as many partners as we can and reaching out to both sides and developing civil society in the North as well as the South; those are principally my main lessons.

*Q: And strengthening the peacekeeping force, whoever it may be?*

A: Right, not getting hung up on the nomenclature of a peacekeeping force but seizing the openings that you have.

*Q: I am sure there is much more of your experience that we could touch on.*

A: No, I'm eager to see this report. You are talking to a lot of people that are a lot more involved.