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Lessons from the Past

Reflections on U.S. Efforts to Bring Peace to Sudan

Jeff Millington November 2010

Five years after facilitating the signing of a peace agreement between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement, or SPLM/A, the U.S. government is once again engaging with the two Sudanese parties to prevent renewed conflict in Sudan. As part of Enough's ongoing desire to present multiple perspectives on peace in Sudan, former State Department official Jeff Millington offers a retrospective look at the strategy pursued by the U.S. government from the late 1990s to 2005 that produced the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Millington served in a variety of roles at the State Department during this period, including director of the Office of East African Affairs and Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum.

This report reflects the personal views of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Enough Project or the United States government. However, Millington's reflections on why previous U.S. diplomacy was effective are critically relevant for the situation today. As the Obama administration works to push the two Sudanese parties toward agreement on a number of flashpoint issues, the determinants of previous diplomatic success are worth remembering. These included engagement at the highest levels of government, thoughtful coordination with key international—especially African—actors, a diplomatic strategy that was focused on the objectives of the two parties, and a clear chain of command from which U.S. policy originated. Millington's narrative is a hopeful reminder that with robust diplomacy, peace in Sudan is still possible today, but that high-level attention to Sudan will need to be sustained over the long term in order to help ensure a peaceful future.

Introduction

The 2005 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, or CPA, for Sudan ended a war that had dragged on for twenty years, devastated southern Sudan, and cost the lives of two million people. The horrors of the war are not now as vivid as they were when the fighting and killing were taking place, but the human suffering in southern Sudan caused by indiscriminate military attacks, starvation, disease, and displacement was unimaginable. There is no doubt that the signing of the CPA saved thousands upon thousands of lives. It also created the hope for a lasting peace that would give the people of southern Sudan control of their own destiny.

Ending the North-South war in Sudan was a major diplomatic achievement for the United States. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations invested heavily in Sudan. The process was long, complicated, and politically contentious. But the United States persevered and demonstrated exceptional focus, consistency, and operational effectiveness. Whether by design or happenstance, the U.S. team did a lot of things right on Sudan and peace was the result. Unfortunately, many of the practices which characterized our efforts were not carried on after the signing of the CPA, and the impact and effectiveness of U.S. Sudan policies in the following years suffered as a result.

The intention of this paper is to examine the operational principals and sense of commitment that framed the U.S. diplomatic initiative from 1998 through 2005. My aim is not to find fault, but to contribute to the ongoing U.S. engagement on Sudan, an engagement that is rightly focused now on the January 2011 referenda, but must continue past the January votes to the point (many years out) when peace and stability are firmly entrenched in all of Sudan. The following analysis is a personal one and is based on my involvement in Sudan that stretched from 1994 to 2005 and my participation in the development of Sudan policies under the Clinton and Bush administrations, the Danforth initiative, the ramping up of Embassy operations in Khartoum, and the Kenyan-led Intergovernmental Authority on Development, or IGAD, negotiations.

Taking the lead—The essential U.S. role

It is an uncomfortable, but nonetheless true, observation that not much happens on the international scene without the United States taking an active, if not leadership, role. This was very much the case in Sudan.

The Clinton administration laid the groundwork for U.S. involvement on Sudan. Both State Department Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Susan Rice and National Security Council Director for African Affairs Gayle Smith shared a passionate commitment to the people of southern Sudan. Rice and Smith put Sudan on the front burner of U.S. foreign policy and succeeded in encouraging Sudan's African neighbors to push back against the Government of Sudan's, or GOS, military operations in the South. The United States also began to provide direct political support to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, or SPLM. Despite these efforts, the Clinton administration was not able to galvanize either party to engage in serious negotiations. Options for a more active U.S. role on Sudan were also limited by the lack of White House enthusiasm for policy initiatives that could have refocused international attention on the 1998 U.S. missile strikes against the El-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum. For the same reason, the White House was disinclined to appoint a special envoy for Sudan with real clout. In the end, under congressional pressure to do more, President Clinton did name Harry Johnson to serve as special envoy for Sudan. Johnson was an active and conscientious former congressman who did his best, but he lacked both the resources and personal pres-

tige necessary to prompt concerted international action on Sudan. He also never enjoyed visible White House support. For example, the announcement of his nomination was released over the weekend and Johnson never met formally with President Clinton.

The hesitancy in the U.S. approach to Sudan changed with the election of President Bush. From the beginning of his administration, President Bush was under pressure to act on Sudan, including from evangelical Christian leaders such as Reverend Franklin Graham. This resulted in a personal commitment from the President to peace in Sudan, a commitment that reflected his deep concern for the suffering of the Christians in the South. When the new president took office, I was the director of the State Department's Office of East African Affairs and I soon saw the impact of his attention to Sudan. One early marker was the announcement of a major increase in food aid for victims of a drought in northern Sudan—a very public indication of enhanced U.S. focus and an implicit overture to Khartoum. During the course of his administration's subsequent efforts on Sudan, President Bush closely followed the process and participated in meetings periodically to assess progress. He also remained prepared to engage directly when asked to do so, even to the extent of calling the belligerents directly—including Sudanese President Omar Bashir—to move the process forward.

President Bush's first major step on Sudan was to appoint former Sen. John "Jack" Danforth (R-MO) as his special envoy for peace in Sudan. Sen. Danforth brought with him exceptional prestige, congressional support, and a deep personal commitment. He also enjoyed the visible support of the president, who introduced him as his special envoy at a Rose Garden ceremony just before the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center.

The appointment of Sen. Danforth and the commitment of President Bush had a galvanizing impact. The GOS and the SPLM both signaled a willingness to engage. While this was not unexpected for the SPLM, the turnabout by the GOS surprised many observers since the government had long opposed non-African initiatives, especially anything involving the United States. Nevertheless, Khartoum took a different approach this time, most likely because the government saw this as a way to avoid possibly more direct U.S. support for SPLM military resistance. Government concerns about the Bush administration's intentions with regard to Sudan were likely heightened by U.S. preparations for military action in Afghanistan. When I traveled to Khartoum in late fall to prepare for Sen. Danforth's first visit, much time was spent watching CNN coverage of the massive U.S. and allied offensive in Afghanistan.

With the U.S. dramatically ramping up its engagement on Sudan, President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya decided it was time to revitalize the IGAD-led Sudan peace process by nominating the respected Kenyan military officer, General Lazaro Sumbeiywo, to lead the effort. The IGAD countries had initiated talks between the Sudanese government and the southern rebels in 1993, resulting in a Declaration of Principles that provided a

basis for negotiations, but this effort had lapsed during the late 1990s. Despite disclaimers to the contrary in Kenya, the aggressive entrance of the United States onto the Sudan scene was a precipitating factor in President Moi's leadership. (The re-launching of the IGAD peace process turned out to be a key stop on the road to the CPA since it provided regional support and pressure on the parties, as well as serving as a firebreak against excessive outside agitation.)

You can't go it alone—Forging the necessary alliances

A fundamental change that Sen. Danforth and the Bush administration implemented soon after engaging on Sudan was to focus on developing a viable international framework for action. The Clinton administration had succeeded in expanding regional cooperation and had helped to lay the groundwork for later diplomatic efforts through close collaboration between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway, although U.S. hostility toward Khartoum had complicated efforts to expand cooperation further, particularly with Egypt and at the United Nations.

Determined to expand the parameters of the international role, Sen. Danforth made a point early on of visiting the United Nations, the United Kingdom, Norway, and the key regional players—Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Egypt. After being confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Walter Kansteiner also personally reached out to the United Kingdom and Norway to elevate the coordination and engagement of what later became known as the Troika of Observers—United Kingdom, the United States, and Norway. (Although the United States continued to coordinate closely with Egypt on Sudanese matters, efforts to include Cairo more formally in the Troika or the IGAD peace negotiations were never successful, due in large part to the multilayered nature of Cairo's historical ties to Khartoum.)

In addition to developing a more robust international framework, the Bush administration also made clear that it supported the IGAD peace process and had no desire to operate independently. The Bush administration took this step because they believed that an African process had the best chance for success, continuing the Clinton administration policy of support for IGAD. There was also concern that political divisions in Washington would make it extremely difficult to host any sort of peace process on U.S. soil. Once the decision to support IGAD had been made, the Bush administration was careful in this regard to address lingering concerns that the United States wanted to hijack the process. I sat in many meetings where both Sen. Danforth and Assistant Secretary Kansteiner emphasized repeatedly to key international players on Sudan that we supported the IGAD process and saw it as the best possible chance for achieving a just and durable peace. The State Department also reiterated this in its public pronouncements. Moreover, the United States provided direct support to General

Sumbeiywo's efforts to set up a negotiating framework and participated in the peace negotiations from the beginning. I attended the first informal sessions of the IGAD peace process in the spring of 2002 and was under instructions to defer to General Sumbeiywo's lead, to the point of my sitting behind him in stoic silence as he and the two parties wrangled over the agenda for the formal talks.

Support for the IGAD peace process and the Troika remained a constant of U.S. policy for the duration of the talks. The Troika members stayed in constant communication and met regularly. Washington also remained attentive to the Kenyan/IGAD lead. Things were a bit more complicated on the ground given unrelenting pressure from Washington to see the process move ahead as quickly as possible. At one point, I was personally denounced as a Khartoum stooge by the chief SPLM negotiator and thrown out of the office of GOS Vice President Ali Osman Taha for arranging an unexpected and acerbic call from Secretary of State Colin Powell. General Sumbeiywo also told me after one particularly contentious disagreement about Washington tactics that he had had enough of "American meddling" and had instructed the Kenyan police to shoot me on sight if I tried to get into the Naivasha negotiations venue. Nevertheless, despite occasional mishaps, cooperation with IGAD negotiators and members of the Troika remained surprisingly good throughout the process, a testament to the consistency and professionalism of the U.S. approach and to the personal commitment of most of the players involved in helping to end the war.

Reaching out to Khartoum—Inclusive, but not even-handed

The Clinton administration found it hard to work with Khartoum, as a result of the government of Sudan's previous support for anti-U.S. terrorist attacks and the barbarity of GOS military attacks against the southern Sudanese. While there had been progress in expanding the U.S. diplomatic presence in Khartoum and finding new ground for antiterrorism cooperation, communication between Washington and Khartoum was almost nonexistent at the end of the Clinton years.

The Bush administration took a different approach. In an unexpected shift, the Bush administration made it clear soon after taking office that the U.S. would be prepared to work with the government if Khartoum were in fact committed to reaching a comprehensive peace agreement. Secretary of State Powell expressed this new position when he visited Africa in May 2001. He also publicly announced the decision to provide U.S. emergency assistance to all of Sudan, a clear overture to Khartoum. When Sen. Danforth was presented as the new special envoy at the Rose Garden ceremony, he voiced concerns about GOS attacks in the south, but also reiterated the willingness of the United States to work directly with the parties on a solution. Once the IGAD talks were underway, Assistant Secretary Kansteiner would reinforce this message personally to GOS Vice President Taha.

The willingness of the Bush administration to deal directly with Khartoum initially took some by surprise, including most probably the GOS. Some observers had previously argued that the new administration would adopt a more aggressive approach to Sudan, one that might include direct military support to the SPLM. This did not happen, however, and U.S. outreach to Khartoum reflected very much the inclusive approach favored by Powell, Danforth, and Kansteiner. The commitment of President Bush to a negotiated peace also presupposed by its very nature the participation of Khartoum in the process. Of course, many observers were skeptical that the GOS was committed to peace, and the mandate for Sen. Danforth was carefully constructed to test underlying GOS intentions.

The decision to deal with Khartoum as a partner in the search for peace did not imply that the United States had adopted an “even-handed” approach toward the government. The Bush administration never shifted from the view that the people of southern Sudan were the aggrieved party in the conflict and that the goal of our involvement was to achieve a peace agreement that addressed their legitimate grievances. Nevertheless, since the government was seemingly committed to an agreement, and remained so during the course of the talks, the U.S. found it could engage with Khartoum on peace process issues, even when bilateral relations were strained and the peace process was bogged down.

Despite this underlying basis for bilateral cooperation, neither side was prepared to carry the water for the other. For the Americans, it was simply out of the question that we would have tried to explain or contextualize GOS actions given the ferocity of public and congressional opposition to Khartoum. As a consequence, we never backed down from aggressively holding the GOS responsible for attacks against civilians, limits on the relief program, or support for ethnic violence in the South. For its part, Khartoum never exhibited the slightest interest in the problems the Bush administration was having in Washington. I remember clearly the time when the GOS clamped down on relief deliveries to civilians in the South just as Assistant Secretary Kansteiner was preparing for contentious congressional hearings called to examine the administration’s policies towards Sudan. GOS actions provided congressional critics with ready-made ammunition to hammer the administration, a development which seemed of no interest to Khartoum.

Although the basis for our cooperation with Khartoum was the shared desire for a negotiated end to the war, the Bush administration also maneuvered to secure enhanced cooperation from Khartoum by assuring the government that progress in the peace talks could lead to an improvement in bilateral relations. This was something that was (and still is) crucially important to the isolated leadership in Khartoum and they remained fixated on upgrading our bilateral relations and removing Sudan from the State Department’s terrorist list for the course of the negotiations. As it turned out, the State Department was never able to deliver on either issue, even after the CPA was signed. Part of the reason for this was unwavering congressional opposition to doing anything that might be perceived as rewarding Khartoum. More importantly, increasing public and congressional outrage at GOS-orchestrated attacks against civilians in Darfur made any effort to improve bilateral relations a nonstarter.

Finding a point of confluence

Peacemaking is a unique diplomatic undertaking in which success does not rest with the efforts of outside actors, like the United States, but with the parties themselves and their commitment (or lack of) to peace. The Bush administration understood this point clearly when it first asked Sen. Danforth to explore the desirability of the United States engaging directly on Sudan. As a result, Sen. Danforth's original mandate was carefully crafted to focus on gauging the commitment of the parties, not on setting up an actual negotiating process.

In order to gauge the sincerity of the parties' professed commitment to peace, Sen. Danforth and the State Department's Sudan team developed a set of four confidence building proposals to be implemented by the parties on the ground in Sudan. The proposals included an internationally monitored ceasefire in the Nuba Mountains, a commitment by both sides to refrain from attacks on civilians, enhanced relief efforts in southern Sudan, and an international investigation into slavery in Sudan. Sen. Danforth presented these proposals to the parties in the fall of 2001, but the reaction in Khartoum was far from positive. The government opposed the inclusion of the ceasefire in the Nuba Mountains and the GOS representatives literally exploded when we handed them our proposals. (They claimed that adding the Nuba Mountains expanded our proposals beyond the North-South conflict since this area had never been considered to be part of the South.) The GOS also opposed establishing an international mechanism to investigate attacks against civilians. Nevertheless, Sen. Danforth was adamant that the proposals had to be accepted "as is" and the government ultimately agreed to all four proposals. Although the GOS negotiators were never happy with our ideas (final agreement came only hours before the U.S. team's departure from Khartoum), Khartoum's calculation that the new administration was actually prepared to engage in a good faith effort to achieve a negotiated settlement is what probably generated this new-found flexibility.

The U.S. decision to focus first on the objectives of the parties now seems noncontroversial and straightforward. Nevertheless, it turned out to be crucially important that the United States came into the process looking not to impose a settlement, but to find areas of agreement between Khartoum and the SPLM that could serve as the basis for a settlement. In the end, the ultimate trade-off was Khartoum's willingness to accept the right of southern Sudan to opt for independence in exchange for an end to the war. But, even before the GOS formally accepted the idea of independence, the fact that both parties shared the desire to find a negotiated settlement provided subsequent negotiations with surprising stability and resilience, even in the face of tumultuous disagreements and renewed fighting. The success of U.S. efforts to influence the actions of the parties during the negotiations rested primarily on the fact that we were not trying to get them to do what we wanted them to do, but instead for them to do what was best in their own interests to achieve their shared goal of reaching an agreement.

Weighing in when needed

The United States stuck by its commitment to the IGAD process despite setbacks in the talks and calls in Washington for the United States to take over the process. Nevertheless, we were also prepared to weigh in when needed. Most often, U.S. engagement meant going to one side or the other to urge flexibility or an increased sense of urgency. I remember in particular the pressure that Washington brought to bear on the SPLM in September 2003 to accept compromise figures for post-agreement military levels in the south. Calls were made from the Department of State, from the White House, and from SPLM supporters in Congress. In this case, we were successful. The SPLM adopted a moderate position and an agreement was reached which committed the GOS to removing most of its troops from the south as part of a final peace agreement. The United States also undertook a similarly successful effort when President Bush called President Bashir and SPLM Chairman Garang on wealth-sharing arrangements in December 2003. In other cases, however, neither side was receptive to U.S. advice or admonition. The GOS tended to view all U.S. interventions as a demonstration of American bias toward the SPLM. The GOS military also had its own views on dealing with the United States and often seemed to be operating at cross purposes with the rest of the government.

The SPLM was more open to U.S. overtures, but Dr. Garang was also more than prepared to push back, especially as the talks progressed and he became more comfortable working directly with his GOS counterpart at the talks, Vice President Ali Osman Taha. I was particularly struck by this point near the end of the negotiations, when the United States and Norway were pressing the GOS and the SPLM to agree to the early establishment of the Assessment and Evaluation Committee, or AEC. The purpose of the AEC was to monitor the parties' implementation of the CPA and, as expected, the government opposed any international involvement. Dr. Garang was more alert to the advantages for the SPLM of an active AEC, but he too dragged his feet because he believed that he could more effectively work out post-agreement problems by dealing directly with Vice President Taha. In this particular instance, our combined efforts were to no avail. Looking back, it is hard to understate the importance of our collective failure to insist on the establishment of a robust and aggressive AEC. The operational model we had in mind for the AEC was the Civilian Protection and Monitoring Team, or CPMT, which the United States had developed in Sudan to investigate attacks against civilians carried out by either party. The CPMT had its own transport and could travel to the site of an attack within hours. It also had agreement from the parties to undertake any investigation deemed necessary and to disseminate its findings publicly. The CPMT had teeth and did have an impact. Unfortunately, the AEC as it was finally composed lacked this operational independence, a weakness that, in my view, contributed directly to the current situation, where key elements of the CPA are still not completed and the independence referendum is still not certain.

The only time when the U.S. chose to step out from behind General Sumbeiywo and to intervene directly in the talks came on the question of Abyei. Abyei is an area in central Sudan which had always been considered part of the South until the British colonial administration arbitrarily decided to attach it to the northern region of Kordofan. The SPLM never accepted the inclusion of Abyei in the North because many of the SPLM leaders were born there and the Ngok Dinka, an important SPLM constituency, considered it their homeland. The government, however, was opposed to any change in the status of Abyei, most likely because Abyei sat on large oil deposits. In the spring of 2004, the continuing disagreement over Abyei threatened to derail the talks.

At this juncture, Sen. Danforth decided to take the unprecedented step of presenting a U.S. proposal to resolve the impasse. Not everyone was happy with his plan, especially General Sumbeiywo who argued that tabling a U.S. proposal would destroy the process by pushing the government too far. Nevertheless, Sen. Danforth believed that Abyei posed an even greater long-term threat and on March 19, 2004, he and a joint State-USAID delegation traveled to the negotiating venue in Naivasha to present the parties with a “take it or leave it” proposal. The compromise U.S. plan addressed the concerns of GOS-allied tribes who called Abyei home, but also stipulated that the inhabitants of Abyei (predominantly Ngok Dinka) be given the opportunity to reunite with the South. The SPLM accepted the proposal as expected, but so surprisingly did the government. The reasons behind the GOS decision are still not clear, but I came to believe that they did so because they were not prepared to take on the U.S. directly at this juncture in the talks. It also appears that some on the GOS side believed that the phraseology used in the U.S. proposal to delineate the geographic boundaries of Abyei inadvertently limited the area covered to a small portion of Abyei. As it turned out, this view did not hold up in future international consideration of the issue, but by then it was too late for the government to back away.

GOS and SPLM agreement on Abyei put the talks back on track and ensured final success. Nevertheless, this turned out to be the last time that the United States would intervene so directly, even though the talks would continue on for another year and a half before reaching final agreement. Whether this hesitancy on the part of the United States to again weigh in directly was the correct approach remains to be seen. I continue to believe that the United States should have taken a more active role as the talks dragged on and that a greater sense of urgency on the part of the parties and the IGAD observers would have led to a speedier agreement and possibly more time to engage on Darfur. But, this was not to be and the talks bumped along for many more months to come.

One Policy—One Line of Command

Throughout the course of the negotiations, the bureaucratic organization of U.S. diplomatic efforts was remarkably stable and clear cut. The president was in charge and policy disagreements could ultimately be brought to his attention, if needed. This did

not happen often, but there were times when Sen. Danforth disagreed with the State Department on policy issues. I remember in particular his unease about claims that the government promoted slavery as an act of war and that southern Sudan had the fundamental right to pursue independence. Nevertheless, despite occasional policy disagreements, Sen. Danforth kept to the parameters of accepted U.S. policy since he knew he always had the option of raising issues directly with the president if he had to.

Operational consistency was also reinforced within the State Department by the direct involvement of Secretary Powell. The secretary understood Sudan very well and followed developments carefully. Like the president, he also was prepared to engage directly when needed, by traveling to the talks or by speaking with the Sudanese players directly. Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage was Powell's alter-ego on Sudan, and Armitage was the one who made sure that the State Department bureaucracy actively supported the program. The ongoing, hands-on engagement of Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage ensured that Assistant Secretary Kansteiner did not have to face the bickering and delays that former Assistant Secretary Rice had to contend with when she was running the Africa Bureau. In addition, the Sudan program benefited from many of the operational players on the State Department side staying on for the entirety of the negotiations. I served in various positions until the CPA was signed, as did Deputy Assistant Secretary Charlie Snyder, an experienced Africa Bureau hand with extensive peacemaking experience, and Ambassador Michael Rannenberger, who managed the Sudan Program Group. In effect, from Secretary Powell on down, the State Department team on Sudan remained the same for the entire process.

Final success, and beyond

President Bush came into office in January 2001 determined to bring peace to Sudan. It took almost four years to do this, but the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was finally signed on January 9, 2005. Four years is a long time to support a concerted diplomatic initiative, especially one dealing with a politically contentious war in Africa. But, the United States did persevere and it did succeed. In large part, U.S. success hinged on the operational principals listed below that served as the basis for our engagement.

- We remained committed to the clearly defined, long-term objective of promoting a just and stable peace in Sudan that addressed the legitimate aspirations of the southern Sudanese. Our objectives in this regard never changed, even when the talks veered from one crisis to another.
- We based our engagement on the shared and demonstrated commitment by the parties to reach a comprehensive peace agreement.
- Although firmly committed to the people of southern Sudan, we maintained a functioning and relatively transparent relationship with the government in Khartoum.
- We cooperated effectively with Sudan's neighbors, as well as the Troika and other key international players.

- We developed a functioning line-of-command that avoided policy differences and kept key operational personnel in place until final success was achieved.
- And, most importantly, we stayed the course for as long as it took.

Because of these efforts, the war in Sudan ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the lives of countless thousands of Sudanese were saved. This was an accomplishment we all should be proud of.

Unfortunately, the operational principles which framed our efforts on Sudan were largely forgotten once the ink was dry on the CPA. People who had worked on Sudan from the beginning drifted off and there was no effort to retain them. The position of special envoy was allowed to lapse and, when filled, tensions between the envoy and the Africa Bureau were allowed to fester. And, most importantly, the focus in Washington shifted to the Darfur conflict, and Washington never seemed to be able to devise a viable strategy of dealing simultaneously with both Darfur and the need to engage actively and aggressively on the implementation of the CPA.

As a result of these lapses, U.S. leadership on Sudan became less focused, less clear, and less consistent. We also allowed the close relations with our international partners to wither. The result, as many observers now recognize, was the lessening of international attention to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Key aspects of the CPA went unimplemented, and uncertainty about whether the South Sudan and Abyei referenda would be held started to grow.

The Obama administration is now making a concerted effort to make up for lost time. President Obama and Secretary Clinton are personally involved, and Special Envoy Scott Gration, Assistant Secretary Johnny Carson, Sudan veteran Susan Rice (now U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations), and many others are working incredibly hard to ensure that the January referenda take place and that arrangements for the post-referenda transition are completed. Their efforts are having an impact and the international community seems once again to be fully engaged. The stakes could not be higher as the threat of Sudan once again slipping back into civil war is very real and very immediate.

Staying the Course on Sudan—Taking the Longer Perspective

While the success of ongoing U.S. efforts to avoid a return to war are not assured, the current situation in Sudan reminds me of the period before the January 2005 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. At that time, all eyes were fixed on getting the CPA completed and signed. But, once the signing had taken place and the foreign dignitaries had left Nairobi, attention shifted elsewhere. I now fear that we run the same risk in Sudan. The focus is now, as it should be, on the Abyei and independence referenda and the threat of resumed fighting. But, if the voting goes off smoothly, the most likely

outcome will be for everyone to claim victory and go off and do something else. However, as the signing of the CPA taught us, the holding of the two scheduled ballots and the completion of the post-referenda arrangement will be only the start of what will be a long and difficult effort to bring peace and justice to the people of southern Sudan and the rest of the country, including Darfur and the North. The Government of Southern Sudan, or GOSS, even in the event of a vote for independence that is credible and respected, faces staggering challenges including massive poverty, widespread corruption, weak governmental structures at all levels, and simmering ethnic tensions in parts of the South. The GOSS, and the United States as well, will have to learn how to deal with a government in Khartoum that will retain the capacity to meddle in southern affairs and to destabilize the region, as it has done in the past. And then there remains the continuing tragedy of Darfur. Addressing these and a myriad of other challenges will be neither easy nor quick.

The role the United States played in the process that led to the signing of the CPA provides operational examples of how we can maximize our effectiveness and enhance prospects for success. But, the most important lesson to come out of our past engagement on Sudan is that the United States must be prepared to stay the course, that we cannot let other pressing issues divert our focus, and that we must be prepared for the long haul. This worked before and can work again, if we are prepared to commit.

Enough is a project of the Center for American Progress to end genocide and crimes against humanity. Founded in 2007, Enough focuses on the crises in Sudan, eastern Congo, and areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army. Enough's strategy papers and briefings provide sharp field analysis and targeted policy recommendations based on a "3P" crisis response strategy: promoting durable peace, providing civilian protection, and punishing perpetrators of atrocities. Enough works with concerned citizens, advocates, and policy makers to prevent, mitigate, and resolve these crises. To learn more about Enough and what you can do to help, go to www.enoughproject.org.

