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Transcript Q&A

Perspectives on the Sudan, South Sudan Crisis

HE Pa'gan Amum

Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Secretary General and Chief Negotiator of the
Republic of South Sudan

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Alex Vines OBE:

I don't know if Ambassador Abdullahi [al-Azreg] wants to make any first remark, if so, I would like to invite you first of all... please, ambassador. Ambassador Abdullahi of the government of Sudan.

Ambassador Abdullahi al-Azreg:

Thank you very much. It is always a pleasure to be in Chatham House. I would like to know how many hours do I have to answer?

Alex Vines OBE:

[Laughs] No hours, unfortunately, ambassador...

Ambassador Abdullahi al-Azreg:

Okay. First of all, for sure, war means devastation, and we have tasted the bitter fruits of war for years, and it has devastated both the south and the north. We were really happy to sign the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and at the signing we meant it actually, to real [incoherent] costs because of peace. We would like very much to have a real, good and friendly relation with our neighbours and brothers in South Sudan, it is, you know, in our benefit to have stable and peaceful relations, even for economic reasons, let alone so many other reasons.

As Mr Pa'gan Amum is saying, almost the south is depending on the north – on Sudan – especially on food, and this is a big market. So, for economic reasons we would like to have very good relations, we would like the border between our two countries to be a [incoherent] border. We expect so many benefits for both sides. We would like the border to be a bridge of cooperation between us. Yet, the South Sudan leadership does not manage to face the so many daunting challenges inside the country, which is really not in our benefit, or the benefit of South Sudan. In all honesty – and this is the policy of my government – we would like to have good relations with South Sudan. I don't want to count the challenges that South Sudan is facing, but so many observers have written about these challenges, among them is the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. In their last report they have outlined these challenges, and I think if the leadership of South Sudan concentrate on these challenges it would be good for us, and good for them, and good for everybody.

Mr Amum is talking about closing the border, we have closed the border after the escalation that was initiated by the government of South Sudan, and after the occupation of Heglig in which we lost hundreds of people [incoherent], and afterwards they have destroyed the oil facilities. It is only natural when a country is attacked, they try to defend themselves, this is why we closed the border, and the border will be closed as long as there is hostility, as long as they are having [incoherent] that are crossing the border and attacking our country.

Mr Amum was in Sudan, and he was talking peace and we were very happy, but we are surprised by the occupation of Heglig a couple of days after he attended to Juba, because this is contrary to what [incoherent] in Khartoum. In Heglig, 20,000 people fled the area, civilians, so many of them had been killed. During that time we used every force we had, [incoherent], because this is war. But after that I didn't think we did anything like that. Yet, His Excellency is trying to project, and draw a very rosy picture as if, you know, they are real innocent people, like an innocent lamb surrounded by vicious Sudanese wolves. This is the truth: they have attacked us, and they are still harbouring rebel groups. We are ready to make peace today if they stop the hostility, and if they stop harbouring the armed groups that are creating instability and causing the suffering of the people.

They are still claiming that Heglig is part of the South, and the international community is saying it is part of the north, and the arbitration court of the Hague said the same thing. Even after the condemnation of the international community, they are still claiming that Heglig is part of the South. I noticed this [incoherent] with the intention of making peace. I would like to reconcile these [incoherent] with the actions that are taking place on the ground. Four days ago they have occupied an area called [incoherent] in northern Sudan. How can somebody be talking peace and at the same time sending forces [incoherent] into another country? We are ready to sign the non-aggression treaty the moment they stop harbouring these rebel groups, and the moment they stop, you know, attacking, you know, so many areas in northern Sudan. We are ready, of course, to go to the International Court of Arbitration, to put an end to these disputed areas. War is not in the benefit of everybody. As for these international forces he is suggesting, those forces are already there, but they don't stop the war, the aggression in Heglig.

As for the petroleum, actually, since the independence, or the secession of South Sudan, the government of Sudan used to send requests for our brothers in the South to pay the dues, to pay the fees of transferring the oil through the pipeline and using the other facilities we have in northern Sudan,

namely the processing unit, the refineries, and the terminals. They did not pay anything for five months. And, we have talked with the arbitrators [incoherent], or with in particular, and we have also sought the help of our neighbours [incoherent- speaker moved away from microphone]. You know, you can't ride the bus unless you pay for the ticket. It's quite unclear... don't want them to use our facilities. But for five months they did not pay us a single penny for using our facilities, and after that they have destroyed all the oil facilities in Heglig. It is a shock on the foot for both countries, this is why our president said, you know, that [incoherent] we will not allow them to use our facilities, because they have [incoherent].

We need peace, and peace is good for everybody. Thank you very much.

Alex Vines OBE:

Ambassador, thank you very much. Before responding, shall I get a couple more questions, because I know time is quite short? The lady just there, please. Do introduce yourself, also.

Question 1:

[Journalist] Sure...You were quoted last week, Your Excellency, as saying that South Sudan is taking oil off of the negotiating table, it is not something... you won't consider exporting it through Sudan. Is that still the case, do you stand by that?

Alex Vines OBE:

More questions please? We will try to get as many questions as possible.

The gentleman right at the back, there. Oh, okay... right, yep, there is a microphone coming to you.

Question 2:

You mentioned the importance of the African Union, the European Union, and, indeed, the United Nations, but how important is the role of China in the negotiations between the two countries? Thank you.

Alex Vines OBE:

Thank you, and a third question... the gentleman over in the corner there, we will come back for another round after that.

Question 3:

[From the Embassy of Sudan] It is known that even the truth need to be claimed [incoherent] if it is to appeal to a new age. Mr Amum... Mr Pa'gan has been telling the same lies since 30 years ago.

Alex Vines OBE:

Have you got a question?

Question 3:

This is a question: what he has mentioned about Heglig is just a cynical ploy, he would like to off-secure the truth of the atrocities he has committed in Heglig. There are more than 500 civilians that have been killed, one of them is my brother... that was in Heglig. This person who is sitting there is a killer wearing a nice suit—

Alex Vines OBE:

—Excuse me, this is a statement not a question!

Question 3:

Yes, this is a statement.

Alex Vines OBE:

No! No, no, we are only taking questions. No!

Question 3:

If I were in his shoes, I would have spent the rest of my life asking God for forgiveness.

Audience Member:

Stop his mic!

Alex Vines OBE:

No, please! We will ask you to leave the room if you continue like this. Please, would you like to—

Question 3:

He is not innocent; he is a war criminal!

Audience Member:

Just take him out from the room.

Alex Vines OBE:

Thank you.

HE Pa'gan Amum:

I am okay.

Alex Vines OBE:

Pa'gan.

HE Pa'gan Amum:

Well, thank you. If really the ambassador of Sudan is stating a policy of the government of Sudan that they want peaceful relations with South Sudan, then why are they continuing to bomb South Sudan up until now? If the government of Sudan's policy is that of having trade...

You can let the gentleman stay, he will come back. It is okay. Please, let him come back.

If the government of Sudan is really for peace with South Sudan, and trade with South Sudan, why would you close the border in May 2011? What did South Sudan do in May or before May up until today? And, now, you impose

capital punishment on your own businessmen and women. You threaten them to shoot to kill them if they trade with South Sudan. Is this really... there is something that you need to put in harmony between your statement and your policies and actions.

And there was no fighting between South Sudan and Sudan in May last year – actually South Sudan was just about to be bombed. And, also, the... if the ambassador is stating a policy of the government of Sudan – on the question of readiness to go for arbitration – this is very important. Your delegation in the negotiations have refused and rejected that the two countries go to resolve all the disputed issues through international arbitration. So this may be a new development... this is very important, and this meeting is also on record, and we really appreciate this change of position. We are ready to go for arbitration.

Now, if the government of Sudan wants peace and to cease hostilities... on 4 April the government of Sudan refused to sign the proposed agreement on cessation of hostilities. Is the government of Sudan ready to sign that agreement now? We are ready to sign that agreement. We have written to the African Union indicating readiness not only to cease hostilities, but to sign that agreement. Is the government of Sudan ready to sign? Until I came to this room, it was not ready to sign cessation of hostilities. It is not stopping its aerial bombardment of civilian populations in towns.

On the transportation fees: the oil companies and the operators, has written to the government of Sudan informing them that South Sudan from July has been paying transportation fees. That South Sudan has been paying processing fees. There is a letter to the Minister of Petroleum of Sudan. Actually the letter is saying the government is causing a confusion; South Sudan has been paying transportation and processing fees from July 2011.

What the government of Sudan can discuss with the government of South Sudan is transit fees, which is a royalty that is paid to government. Now, Chad, as a land-locked country, is paying 41¢ per barrel – 41¢ of \$1 – for transit. We have offered to pay 69¢. The government of Sudan is demanding that South Sudan pays \$36. It is not heard of, there is no transit fee that is beyond \$1. No transit fee in the whole world exceeds \$1. And there is this state practise just next door with Chad and Cameroon.

The oil, obviously, as I said that the oil now is out of the table, it is out of negotiations. For sure, South Sudan... it is in the best interest of South Sudan to export its oil through Sudan, paying transportation fees – that is, pipeline fees or tariffs – paying processing fees, and paying transit fees to Sudan. We

have been paying transportation fees, we have been paying processing fees, we are ready... we have been ready to pay transit fees to Sudan to export our oil. But the Sudan government is obstructing this. The Sudan government is blockading, it has stopped a number of ships in Port Sudan, not to sail loaded with our oil. And, worse, the government of Sudan has been diverting our oil on transit. Now, if you have your goods in transit and in that area of transit piracy is starting to be practise, in this case state piracy of diverting resources. What do you do? You can only stop and look for safe, peaceful routes. If you have a country that is not willing to do trade with you, what do you do? You cannot go to war with them so that you pass your goods through, you can only look for other willing partners.

And, by the way, there is a serious problem here; and I would like the ambassador to take note of this, and the leadership in Sudan. The problem is the mindset. If Sudan considers – if the leadership of Sudan, the current leadership in Sudan, today – considers and think of South Sudanese as ‘insects’ or ‘cockroaches’, now, what would they think of properties of the insects? You see, this mindset... when you think that I am an insect then my property is free for you. When you think that I am an insect, then you think that it is very normal and it is okay to spray me with your bombs. When you think that I am an insect, you refuse to accept my assistance to you, because how can you be assisted by an insect? This is a problem. I think Sudan has to change its mindset. These racist and...you know, false superiority has to change. We...for God’s sake, we are in the twenty-first century, and definitely you know that we are human beings. We have to accept that we are equal, so that we can relate to each other, so that we can trade.

Now, on the role of China. China has been a long-term friend to Sudan, to the Republic of Sudan, and the Chinese have made huge investments in Sudan and in South Sudan, invited by the government of Sudan, so they are a friend to Sudan. China, today, is the largest investor in the Republic of South Sudan, and they are beginning to establish relations with South Sudan, they are relations which are beginning, but I see a strategic future to those relations between China and South Sudan.

And therefore China, I can say, is a friend to two countries, to the two countries, and its interests also are affected by the relations of the two friends. The more peaceful relations these two countries have, the better for China. China now has invested in the pipelines, and actually one of the pipelines, at least, is owned by the Chinese, it is not owned by the government of Sudan, it is owned by the Chinese and their partners. It is not yet reverted to the Republic of Sudan; they have to recover this. But because

of the policies of Sudan and hostility of Sudan towards South Sudan, China now is going to lose this investment in Sudan. We would want to see China playing a more active role; their role has not been very active. Maybe China has also to catch-up its foreign policy with the international position it has acquired. Having huge investment abroad, they definitely, they need to be more proactive, especially with relation to Sudan and South Sudan.

Alex Vines OBE:

Okay, let's do another round of questions. Here in the front first, thank you.

Question 4:

[Academic] I was wondering your opinion of the mediation from the African Union. There has been some talk about IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development] becoming involved, and some people in South Sudan saying that it is not a neutral party. Is that your experience, would you like to continue with the AU, or go to IGAD, or another regional block?

And do you think the allegation from Uganda that Sudan is backing the LRA [Lord's Resistance Army] again, will this make it unlikely that the Sudanese will accept IGAD mediation?

Alex Vines OBE:

Yeah, the gentleman just there. Please, sir?

Question 5:

Mr Pa'gan, he actually spoke the language of peace, and as we all agree, all of us agree that we need peace. But, words should be followed by deeds, and should be supported by the deeds itself, so as to be valid, not just to be words.

Actually, what I see throughout this talk...Mr Pa'gan, he tried his best to maintain the image that the south is always being victimized by the north. It is intelligent and good to do that, it is very profitable as well, to come to this country and say that we are always under this. It is political, yes; we are not going to build peace in Sudan unless we face the facts as it is. Firstly, the north part of Sudan, actually, when you go in the last seven or eight years, worked for peace, even signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement based on

absolute will to maintain peace in Sudan, even if the cost is the cessation of the south part of Sudan. And they did this by goodwill, actually, and all the world actually supported this and witnessed how this government signed this peace and implemented it exquisitely throughout. And if there is no actual will of peace, it would not have been able to do that.

Actually, the second mistake, actually, people do... Mr Pa'gan, actually, tried to portray that there is a problem between north Sudan as a nation and South Sudan as a nation. There is no problem, I mean, we are living together, we live together. And when the president said in that 'insects' he actually meant – and you know that – the SPLM, not the citizens. And, actually, trying to create a problem between nations in this way, even if peace is realized between governments, it could not be realized between nations in the future.

What happened in Heglig is actually a very provocative action, reckless, irresponsible action from a country that always says we are a 'baby country'. No baby country invades others' land and destroyed in that way if you want peace. What happened, actually... the other thing, the final thing, if there is anything happened, this is a reaction, why you put reaction to a state? After you invaded Heglig, you declared war against Sudan. This is actually reactions, why you put reactions as the basic will of north Sudan against the south? So, we have to separate between reactions and the actual will of north Sudan.

Alex Vines OBE:

Thank you very much. The gentleman at the there. You, sir, do tell us who you are please.

Question 6:

Thank you... I want to address the failures of the purpose of independence in Africa. Mr Amum mentioned, for example, freedom, peace, and prosperity. Now, certainly some of the realities of independence in Africa are so obvious, for example, corruption, [incoherent] of public officials, failure of projects to yield expected outcomes, human rights violations by those in power, an unfair distribution of wealth, nepotism, periodic food shortages, hunger, starvation. Now, how much has this new, emerging state of South Sudan learnt from these failures of independent Africa, and how much of these inform their socio-economic policies. For example, what do you propose to do about

feeding your own people? I hope it does not mean selling oil and importing food, like Nigeria is doing. Thank you.

Alex Vines OBE:

Thank you very much...okay. I'll come to you. There is a question just over here, and one more after that. Then we'll see where time is.

Question 7:

Is it not the case, as the ambassador said, that the Southern government is supporting groups that are fighting the government in Khartoum? Such, as the SPLM North, and other groups, such as JEM fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile?

Alex Vines OBE:

Pa'gan, if you want to respond to those questions? And then we will do one more round after that.

HE Pa'gan Amum:

The peace agreement that was signed between the SPLM and the government of Sudan, the NCP [National Congress Party] government of Sudan was mediated by the IGAD countries. Both countries – South Sudan and Sudan – they are members of the IGAD regional organisation, that is our primary, you know, where our primary membership is. And therefore there is an important role to be played by our region, and we would like to see the IGAD countries playing a more active role to bring peace between its two members. The continental role and the international role really will be supportive. This is how we see the role of the African Union and that of the UN. And we are happy with the roadmap and reference to the role to be played, the active role to be played by the IGAD countries, though there was a mention of the shared agreement.

As for the LRA, of course, the LRA has been supported by the government of Sudan from its inception, from the beginning, and we have evidence to that given to South Sudan when we signed the peace agreement with the LRA mediated between the LRA and the government of Uganda. And the support of the government of Sudan was very clear for the LRA. Now their support is not only continuing, but it is increasing. And the LRA is being supported

through southern Darfur by the Sudan armed forces and intelligence. The LRA, of course, has become a regional problem, causing mayhem and destruction not only to Uganda, but it is actually even more now to southern Sudan, to South Sudan, to northern Congo, and to eastern Central Africa Republic.

On the opposition, we are not here coming to preach peace and do war. What we are saying here is the government of South Sudan, now, is ready to return to negotiations; is the government of Sudan ready? No. The government of Sudan decided to suspend all negotiations, and has not responded to the African Union's roadmap. We are here to state our opposition that the government of South Sudan has ceased hostilities, and is ready to sign the agreement on cessation of hostilities that was proposed by the African Union High [Level] Implementation [Panel]. Is the government of Sudan ready to sign? I mean our pen is ready to sign and to implement. Is the government of Sudan ready? It has not been, it has not shown that. And this is where our actions are. The government of Sudan today is bombing South Sudan, after it has been called to cease and to stop bombing South Sudan.

As for Heglig, the records are there. South Sudan and [incoherent] was attacked five times by Sudan armed forces for Heglig. Five times. On four occasions, they were repulsed; on one occasion they took one of the garrisons near [incoherent], in the oil fields. Now, South Sudan has all the right to self-defence. Sudan has been bombing South Sudan from February up to now. So, it is South Sudan that reacted to continuous provocation and, again, it has the right to react and respond to this continuing provocation if they do not stop. And, as South Sudanese, really, we do not want war with Sudan. After the independence of South Sudan, there is no ground for war. Now Sudan is occupying a number of South Sudanese territories, and we are saying, 'Let us go for arbitration. Come with your maps and records, we will go for arbitration.' Sudan was refusing.

On the firm promises of independence, indeed, we are just as a new nation, we are beginning gradually. Definitely we learn a lot from the experiences of nation building in Africa and elsewhere in the world. And, there is a lot that we learned from all our humanity, and South Sudan has huge opportunities, and these are the area where we really want to focus our work, our energies, and to develop our capacity, to make good use of these opportunities. As a newborn nation born in the twenty-first century, the environment of nation building is definitely different, and it is better. You know, it is not like in the eighteenth century George Washington and his comrades struggling to build a nation out of the thirteen colonies. Maybe they had friends with France by

that point providing solidarity to them. But today we have the whole world providing solidarity top South Sudan. And with the level of development achieved by our humanity now, it is definitely, I believe, despite all the difficulties and challenges, it is easier, I believe, to begin building a nation in this environment than say the time of Bismarck when trying to bring together the German state. There is more solidarity, there are more connections, there is more awareness and positive contribution from humanity to those who have been left behind to come up, and catch up.

So, we have huge opportunities, and I am certain that we will be able to succeed. That is why our focus here is really to have peace with all our neighbours, particularly with Sudan. We really do not need their hostility; we need their solidarity and their support. Why Sudan is refusing our assistance, in actual fact South Sudan will benefit a lot from Sudan in terms of assistance in different fields, and that at least will be a compensation for the policies of the past, that we open a new type of relations.

Our commitment to peace is not opportunistic, it is not political, ship-top, no. It is at the core of our interest because we... first of all, we have limited resources, we have huge challenges, and in actual fact peace is in the interests of Sudan, the Sudan that has remained, because the state that was divided was a failed state. It failed to build a viable nation from 1956. These same policies are there. Sudan needs to take this opportunity – of the separation of South Sudan – to put its house together, to reconcile its people, and move away from this extremism.

Now, South Sudan is being accused of having, or supporting rebels. Sudan, the remaining Sudan, has serious problems that it has to change its approach on how to solve these problems. There is a problem in Darfur, there is a problem in South Kordofan, there is a problem in Blue Nile, there is a problem in eastern Sudan, there is a problem in the far north, there is a problem in all the marginal areas of Sudan – with the centre. This sharp contradiction is what led to the separation of South Sudan. Now, we believe Sudan should focus its energies and resources – limited resources – to resolve these problems and to develop its new nation building project, and hopefully this time they will succeed.

These are serious Sudanese problems, they are not from outside. To think that this can come from outside, this is basically continuing the old road of deepening crisis. And we, in South Sudan, are interested in a stable Sudan. We are willing to help that Sudan solve its problems peacefully. Now, the

government of Sudan has chosen the path of war within Sudan itself, this is what is extending into South Sudan now.

In July 2011, there was an agreement signed between the leader of SPLM North and deputy president of the National Congress Party and the assistant president to the republic [incoherent]. That agreement has been thrown out by the extremists within the government of Sudan, and they have chosen a path of war. I think that that was a serious problem then, I think there is an opportunity for Sudan to fix this now, to go back to the table and resolve these problems. The two areas have a problem, and this problem was negotiated in the CPA [Comprehensive Peace Agreement], and there is a complete protocol that is there. This is a problem that is inherited by Sudan, it goes with it, and they have to solve it.

Thank you.

Alex Vines OBE:

Yeah, I am going to just take three questions because we are badly over time, so in the corner there. First you, but tell us who you are, and take the microphone. Very quick, because we are short of time.

Question 8:

Thank you so much to His Excellency Pa'gan Amum for his excellent presentation... I am the foreign secretary for JEM [Justice and Equality Movement], and a member of the SRF [Sudan Revolutionary Front]. I just would like to state for the records that South Sudan doesn't support the movements in the north at all, and if there is any kind of support that is coming from the people of South Sudan, that is moral support because we share history and we share aspirations also because actually we are facing the same policy of marginalisation and oppression.

And the other thing I would like to mention here, the ambassador was actually talking about the challenges of the South Sudan, but I actually call on him, actually, to talk about the challenges of north Sudan. We have a lot of problems in north Sudan, and I think we need, actually, to face these kind of problems. Everybody in Sudan, most of the people in Sudan, most of the political parties they want stable relationship with the South. But the problem is the ruling party, the problem is [President Omar] al-Bashir, al-Bashir does not want a normal relationship, any kind of strategic relationship, with South

Sudan, and I think his policy is very clear that he wants to overthrow the government of South Sudan.

What we have right here, and we need the international community's focus on it... yes, it is better to focus on the stable relationship between the South and the north, but also they have to support us to fix the north itself because with the current regime in Khartoum, with the current policies of imposing [incoherent] actually Sudan is going to war with itself, and I think Sudan is going to be a failed state. And that is going to destabilize not only South Sudan, but also the entire region. Thank you.

Alex Vines OBE:

Thank you very much. Okay, you made your statement. The gentleman there.

Question 9:

I work as an independent researcher on China in Africa. Let me stand up please. First, I welcome the secretary general, but before I say anything—

Alex Vines OBE:

Can you keep your comments short, please?

Question 9:

I will do, yes. Before saying anything I want to extend my sincere apology for you, Secretary General, for the government of Sudan and for the Sudanese people inside South Sudan and outside Sudan for what the president of Sudan has said. [Applause] I offer my sincere, unconditional apology, and I request you I am talking, I am speaking on behalf of myself. Whether there is war or peace, whatever, you remain, all the people of South Sudan remain our brothers and sisters, and we know, and we have the commitment, we will overcome these difficulties. So, you are our beloved ones.

I want to... my question is about China. I know that president Salva Kiir [Mayardit] was in China last week, and I read in the news that about \$8 billion went over to South Sudan. What sort of mediation or political role do you expect China could play between north and south Sudan? Thank you very much.

Alex Vines OBE:

Thank you very much. Final question, here, this gentleman; final question.

Question 10:

Thank you very much.

Alex Vines OBE:

Do introduce yourself.

Question 10:

I am from the Embassy of Sudan. Mr Amum, you have spoken about the mindset, but what about the mindset of the SPLM, which still calls itself the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and you have as someone who is guardian of the whole of Sudan. Your party speaks about regime change in Sudan, and there are two battalions of the southern SPLM in the north, occupying parts of the north in southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile, battalion nine and battalion ten. So, the mindset that has to be changed in the mindset of a guerrilla movement, which is still thinking in guerrilla tactics, not in the mentality of statesmanship and of diplomacy. Thank you very much.

Alex Vines OBE:

Thank you very much. Over to you.

HE Pa'gan Amum:

Thank you. Indeed, South Sudan wants peace with Sudan. Our president, President Salva Kiir Mayardit, sent the lead negotiating panel, and myself, I led the delegation in Khartoum, to invite formally and officially President Bashir to visit Juba for a summit where the two heads of state to discuss and create all outstanding issues, and the two agreements that were signed. And in Khartoum it was very clear that there was a serious divide. The securicrats, or the leaders of the National Congress Party, the army and the security, were opposed to peace with South Sudan. They were opposed to the visit of President Bashir to Juba. Actually, the lead negotiation panel of the Republic of Sudan asked us to go and meet with the leaders of the security to persuade them to support President Bashir, and we did.

We went and met them, and that is the extent of the divide, that even the lead-negotiating panel did not attend the meeting. We were surprised that in return for President Bashir coming the army sent their warplanes to bomb South Sudan, and attacked South Sudan in [incoherent]. The African Union panel called on the two parties to go to Addis Ababa on the 30th, cessation of hostilities to sign. The Minister of Defence refused to sign. This is very important that it is pointed out, and now those who want war and those who want to be waging war not only with South Sudan, but also internally who are refusing peace negotiations, and who are actually taking the two countries to war now. And it is unfortunate that President Bashir has been dragged by that group to war with all the statements he is making.

But, of course, this is not name-calling. President Bashir declared *jihad* on South Sudanese, and we lost nearly a million people, when President Bashir changed that war from a civil war to his holy war, or a religious war. And this should not be forgotten and that is why have to take him very seriously when he talks about 'spraying insects'. Even the place called Heglig, it has a people, the ruined people, they have been all pushed out of that area, they are victims of early practicing of ethnic cleansing. They are not back to their homes even now. You go back to reports of the European Coalition on Oil in Sudan and you will get those reports.

My brother, with open-hearts, we accept your apology. We do not blame the people of Sudan. The people of Sudan are not the ones making these statements. It is the leadership that is stuck in the past, it is the leadership that is a shame, it is a shame for the Sudanese people to have that type of leadership, it is a shame to all of us, even to those of us who are being referred to as insects. But this is a human condition, you have it... it happens with our mind, especially when ignorance and fear play this game of the ego, of seeing yourself as less than you start over-compensating to see yourself as special and better than the others. This is a human condition, we have to not accept it, but we have to deal with it.

The future is definitely different. Our children of Sudan and South Sudan, they will be meeting and working together in different fields where they will be contributing their best for humanity, for a better life for all of humanity. That is the future, so, it is okay. We are even sorry even to be mentioning those because it is really a shame on us, this is... we are all human beings, by the way, Bashir is a very nice person too. [Laughter] Honestly! I worked with him, I used to sit next to him, and he would be joking and all that, but those things are in his mind too, we have to accept him.

China can play a very big role between the two countries, but I am seeing that China as a new power especially in terms of investment abroad and all that, I think they are also going through a transition. There is a real contradiction between Chinese foreign policy when China was closed in behind their walls, and that policy of no interference and the internal affairs and how it is interpreted by the Chinese – those who are engaged in their foreign policy – with its new reality of being a big that is sending investment and people – their own citizens – into many part of the world. And I hope they will be able to adjust, to play a more active, positive I mean, role in the, you know, in the international arena, like in the case of Sudan and South Sudan.

Definitely Sudan and South Sudan are friends to China, I can say. They are friends to China, and the interests of South Sudan, the interests of Sudan, and the interests of China could be realized if we reach a fair deal – putting aside all those other historical claims – a fair deal that would give South Sudan and China transit of the oil produced in South Sudan through Sudan. And, it would give Sudan tariffs for the use of the pipeline, it would give Sudan transit fees, it would also give Sudan crude for them to buy. The refineries of Sudan are built for South Sudanese oil, and the system is that it has to receive it from the South – there is no pipeline from the sea to the refineries. So it is good for South Sudan, it is good for Sudan, and it is good for China.

But then China is not able to exercise its influence with Sudan, for Sudan to accept to talk business, pure business, and to abandon the idea that they have the right to use and exploit the resources of South Sudan as they were using in the past, that is in the past, we can now cooperate. Honestly speaking, China has not succeeded. They appointed a special envoy who came very late and also was very cautious, and every time telling the two countries: 'Please, you solve this problem.' Also they are in a situation now where, literally, they may be cancelling their role out by trying to move away from Khartoum so as to get closer to South Sudan, and trying not to get too close to South Sudan not to cause displeasure to Khartoum, and by doing that neither Khartoum nor Juba will be happy with China, and they will disappear in the middle. Or, they will wait until the two countries sort it out, then they will come.

On the mindset: first of all, South Sudan is not talking about regime change. Who in South Sudan talks about regime change? Who in the SPLM in South Sudan talks about regime change? None; nobody. And regime change or no regime change, this is the business of the Sudanese. It is the people of Sudan who has the right and the power to change their regime, or not to change their regime. So, we are having that total change of mind, we are not

for regime change in Sudan. When we were Sudanese, yes, we were for regime change, we were for toppling the National Congress [Party] government, root and branch. Now, this is not our business. It is the government of Sudan that is talking about regime change in Juba now.

As for the forces: the SPLM forces are not brigades, actually, they are divisions rather than a brigade. There are two divisions, yes, Division 9 and Division 10, but they are Sudanese. They are Sudanese SPLA. Arms even before the National Congress [Party] came to power through their coup. Youssef [incoherent] were there before the National Congress [Party] then. And they are carrying their arms, and we agreed in the CPA that they will have their arms until that problem is solved. And the government of Sudan supported three brigades of this army, totalling 6,000 men and women. They were provided guns and uniform, ammunitions, vehicles by the Sudan government, and this is part of the agreement.

Are you accusing yourself of having supported the SPLM in the [incoherent] mountains, the joined, integrated units? Of course you did provide that support, yes, South Sudan provided that support to the two divisions as part of the SPLA, and that was actually with the agreement of Sudan, where the government agreed that the government of South Sudan will provide all the military and logistical support to the other army, which is SPLA. Even foreign military assistance for them.

Now, as they have remained in the Sudan, we proposed to the government of Sudan that they immediately sign an agreement including security arrangements in the Sudan to take care of their future. The government of Sudan refused, President Bashir refused to integrate them, and President Bashir chose to go for disarmament of these two divisions, and this is a big mistake. To think of disarming two large divisions with artillery and tanks and individual weapons; why not sign an agreement with them? And, of course, sign a political agreement and take Sudan through a transition. They chose to go the opposite way, and well the [incoherent] and the leadership of the National Congress [Party] agreed to that, they went to throw out the agreement and they were very hostile to [incoherent] because he chose the path of peace.

Alex Vines OBE:

Pa'gan, thank you very much indeed.

[Applause]