

**CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

AFRICA PROGRAM

“PLANNING FOR PEACE IN DARFUR”

**WELCOME:
STEVE MORRISON,
AFRICA DIRECTOR, CSIS**

**SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:
ANDREW NATSIOS,
U.S. PRESIDENT’S SPECIAL ENVOY FOR SUDAN**

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STEVE MORRISON: Hi. Good afternoon and welcome to CSIS. We're going to begin this afternoon's program. I'm Steve Morrison, director of the Africa Program here at CSIS. I want to welcome you all and tell you how grateful we are that you've come to be with us this afternoon.

We have the pleasure here today of hosting Andrew Natsios, familiar to all of you, I'm sure. He is the president's special envoy for Sudan, and I might add also he is the professor on the practice of diplomacy at the Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. He has a long and distinguished career in development assistance, emergency relief, the Big Dig in Boston. He was the administrator of USAID from 2001-2005, and in that period also was a special coordinator for disaster assistance with respect to Sudan. He served in the period '89 to '91 as director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, OFDA, and thereafter, '91 to '93 was assistant administrator for the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance. He's published widely on foreign policy and humanitarian emergencies and authored in that process two books. He was a conscience here in the '90s particularly on matters pertaining to North Korea in a period of debate around what the proper response should be. He has served 22 years in the U.S. Army Reserve including a stint in the period in Somalia in the '90s.

Andrew, thank you so much for being with us today. We've asked him to come and speak with us on the status of international efforts with respect to Darfur.

So, Andrew, the floor is yours. Thank you. Welcome. (Applause.)

ANDREW NATSIOS: Thank you, very much, Steve. It's a pleasure to be here. You didn't mention that the first book I wrote was published by CSIS. It was a best seller at 1,800 copies – (laughter) – and it took 10 years to sell those 1,800 copies. (Laughter.)

MR. MORRISON: Still working on it. (Laughter.)

MR. NATSIOS: Yes, I know.

There has been measurable progress over the last few months in Darfur. The government of Sudan has accepted resolution 1769, which was passed by the Security Council unanimously at the end of July. The major rebel factions met in Arusha in August and talks are now set for Libya at the end of October. And for those of you who are interested in this, a figure that is more famous – who's more famous actually in the United States and the Eastern Darfur, Suleiman Jamous was just released by the Sudanese government after intensive quiet diplomacy by the United Nations and the United States.

But we have a lot of work to do between now and the start of talks in late October. Meetings in New York on Thursday and Friday of this week will iron out many of the details of what will happen over the next few months. Several critical issues and challenges lie ahead. Participants should be realistic, in our view, in the talks about what can be accomplished particularly in the early stages of it, but more importantly, there is I think a perception among some of the participants – some of the rebels – that if they do not get every single thing they want in the agreement, they will not support it. I've told them that that's not how political negotiations work in a democracy or an international – you don't get everything you want. The Sudanese government will not be happy with everything and neither will the rebels, and we need to be realistic about what those expectations are.

The rebels need to repair internal divisions within the movements which in fact have accelerated if anything and hammer out a common position before the talks, and this process has been facilitated of rebel consolidation in terms of a common position by the United Nations and the African Union. We urge all invited rebels, political leaders, and commanders to attend the talks. I cannot emphasize that enough. There's a tendency in American politics to put a black hat or a white hat on everybody, and it's part of our Puritan ancestral tradition even if we're not from that tradition that we always want to choose the bad guys and the good guys, and the fact of the matter is there are a lot of black hats, very black hats in Darfur there are not a lot of white hats, and I think we should cease and desist from attempting to find a lot of heroes because there aren't many.

Violence needs to stop. This has been emphasized by virtually every regional country involved in this, by the Europeans, by Ban Ki-moon, by Mr. Konaré, and certainly by the United States publicly and privately. If we go into the talks and do not have some early success on a functional cessation of hostilities, it will complicate our ability to be successful in those talks because each time there's an incident, there will be threats of walk outs and that sort of thing. It was very clear in our own experience in the North-South talks that the cessation of hostilities early on was a major factor in confidence building, one; and, two, that allowed us to proceed with some of the negotiations.

We need to find a way to include voices of ordinary people in Darfur. It is clear from my visits with leaders from four of the displaced camps – this was in July when I visited and I spent my July traveling – that there is a new sense of political identity by people in the camps, so and when I said to people – in one camp I met 60 leaders who the U.N. and the NGOs said were representative of the opinion of the camps, and they said, the only that – I said, who represents you in the talks? And they said, the only people who represent us are us. If you're not an IDP, you can't represent us. And I heard that from all of the four different camp leader groups that I met with. Tribal leaders, traditional leaders – I met Mehmet Dum (ph) for example, of the Fur tribe, the largest tribe, 75 percent of the people in the camps are from the Fur tribe. The mekdum is the next level in the hierarchy below the sultan of the Fur. The sultan governed Darfur region for 400 years, and I met him when I was there in July.

Arab groups must be included. If Arab groups in some way through the traditional leadership system are not included in the settlement, there's a real risk that the settlement will not be accepted and the conflict will continue. I think women's groups can play a major role in this whole effort to get inclusion because they have been a force in Darfur for peace. And local Sudanese NGOs and professional groups – I remember one of my trips before the war started I met with a businessman's association, businesswomen's association, I met with a lawyers' association. There are various professional associations in Darfur that can be constructive forces.

International community needs to continue to use all pressure and leverage to keep the talks moving in a positive direction. We cannot forget that peace in Darfur and ultimately all of Sudan hinges on the successful implementation of the comprehensive peace agreement between the North and the South. If that fails, there isn't going to be any peace in Darfur. There is a tendency in the West because of our political system and the way the media reports to divide these conflicts as though they're in different countries. They are not in different countries. They're in one country, Sudan, and they've been a problem for Sudan – these issues of marginalization of the periphery since independence and from the period even before independence.

So we need to understand there's an intimate and direct connection between the aggressive and disciplined and fair implementation of the comprehensive peace agreement to peace in Darfur. At a minimum, any new agreement must – or amendment to the Darfur Peace Agreement of last year must address the core needs of ordinary people in Darfur including as a minimum in my view, the effective security arrangements that offer civilians protection from marauding government-backed militias, bandits and the confiscation of heavy weapons out of the hands of government black militias and from rebel forces as well. We cannot have a disarmament of heavy weaponry from only one side. It simply does not work. There must be a provision dealing with the issue of compensation for the victims of the crisis.

Guarantees of property and land rights are essential and have a profound effect on livelihoods. I think Physicians for Human Rights have written an excellent report, one of the best I've seen on the connection between this issue of property and livelihoods and peace. The economic factors that are at work in Sudan, particularly in Darfur have a profound effect on conflict generally. And finally, reconstruction, a long term development, after there is a peace agreement signed in our view is critically important to address some of the longer term causes of all three wars in Darfur that have occurred in the last 20 years.

I have attended the – or visited as the director of OFD, the first Darfur war in the last 20 years which took place in the late 1980s. It started under Sadiq al-Mahdi when he was prime minister. He was overthrown by the current government and then the war continued and there was a brutal suppression by the central government of that war. That was between the Fur and the Arabs. And there was a maselite (ph) conflict between '96, '95, '98 between the maselite and the Arabs. That was brutally suppressed. Neither of these two earlier conflicts were anywhere near on the scale of the current conflict.

But these wars appear to be getting worse each time; that is to say, more bloody, more destructive, with a greater loss of life and more damage to the economy. And in the poor area, the damage that's done to the economy is something that takes a great deal of effort to repair. The symbiotic relationship, for example, between the farmers and the herders, people constantly think of them as at war with each other from Biblical times, that may well be true.

There is conflict over the use of land, but the fact is neither can exist with the other and because the farmers, who tend to be from the Fur tribe are no longer growing crops the way they did, there are huge food problems now for the Arab tribes because the nomads have nothing to trade with them in the markets. There is food in the markets, but it's not what it used to be, and that symbiotic relation has been broken. The Arabs and the Africans tribes used to intermarry with each other. You would frequently find an Arab or Zaghawa man marry an Arab woman and vice versa, and you'd see the tribes intermarrying with each other. That has stopped now or it has diminished significantly because the tribal tension has been exacerbated by the catastrophe of 2003 and 2004 and the destruction of the 2,000 villages by the government and its forces.

The issues I've just raised are the issues that the IDP's raised with me. I asked them, I said, if you could choose the three most important issues, what would you choose, and consistently we heard a repetition of these issues in all of the four leadership groups that I spoke with, and I might add, I talk with the Jan Eliasson every week, I talk to Selim Selim, I talk with – I just came back from four days in Europe with our allies to discuss these issue and when they go to the camps, they hear the same things. So we cross check to make sure we're not getting one view from an isolated group of people. There's consistent reporting that these are the issues that count to the IDPs in the camps and to civil society.

Ultimately, what will truly transform Darfur along with the rest of Sudan are successful elections that include Darfur in the 2009 election cycle which is stipulated under the CPA. Guarantees on how those elections will be run should be a focus in my personal view of these negotiations which will address some of the rebel demands on the issue of power sharing. Finally, we need to carve out a clear role for the EU and U.N. hybrid peace keeping force in implementing the peace agreement. That mandate is in resolution 1569. People overlook that, and they only look at the issue of protecting civilians, but in the longer term, the most important role for the long term peace of the provinces will be the implementation of the peace accord, and that is in the resolution as a mission of this peace keeping force.

We have two important earlier agreements through CPA and the DPA which service evidence that it's possible to negotiate a political settlement to resolve Sudan's profound problems. If the Sudanese government made a more serious effort at implementing the provisions of these agreements, it would be a powerful incentive to the rebels to negotiate more seriously. Ironically, right now at this moment, the biggest obstacle to the talks is not the government of Sudan; it is some of the rebel groups, and I

say some, because some rebel groups are acting very responsibly, they are trying to participate in the process and others are refusing to participate making outlandish demands despite significant international pressure to the country.

Other groups continue to use violence to enhance their position prior to the talks. Particularly disturbing in this regard is the recent attack by the Justice and Equality Movement and the SLA Unity rebel movement in Kordufan, a neighboring province that is at peace that killed over 40 police officers and triggered retaliatory government bombings in Haskani (ph), which was the location of a city in Darfur that these two rebel groups came from.

Finally, for those rebels who are committed to talks, we must ensure that they have the help and the space they need for internal dialogue so that they can consolidate their positions, reunify their movements and establish effective communication links prior to the start of the negotiations. Despite important progress in Arusha, there are still serious divisions among rebel groups and between rebel leaders and field commanders, and we must work to help the rebel groups repair these divisions and establish effective channels of communications. On a recent trip to Darfur, my most important discussions were with tribal elders, people in the camps, women's groups and local NGOs. And what they told me is they are fed up with and frustrated with political bickering among rebel leaders. If the rebel leaders don't step up and represent them in the issues they care about most, security compensation, the return of their land and development, they are ready to represent themselves, they told me.

Another obstacle to peace is escalating violence among Arab tribes in Darfur. They are fighting over land they have taken from the Africans who were displaced by the burning of the 2,000 villages in the ethnic cleansing campaign of 2003 and 2004, and these Arab tribes are now trying to take this land and they're fighting with each other over it, a very dangerous precedent. Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced this year, and most of them are Arab actually and most have been caused by this fighting between tribes over this land, none of which belongs to them.

Many Arabs in Darfur did not participate in Janjaweed atrocities and do not believe the government represents them. We must be sure that Arab tribes are included in the talks as I mentioned earlier. One of the most encouraging developments has been watching the international community come together in support of the current EU-U.N. efforts. I think those efforts had a slow start earlier in the year, they sped up, they've accelerated, they are staffing properly the offices in Khartoum that are needed to back up all of the complex operational plans that are being put in place. I think China has played a very useful role behind the scenes in using its leverage to get the government to accept Security Council resolutions 1769 and to participate in the upcoming talks. It has also committed 300 engineering troops to the hybrid force which will be arriving in a few weeks, and they've made other promises in some detail which I don't want to discuss publicly which I think are very constructive.

We've also used our influence to press rebel leaders to attend the talks and encouraged the GOS to make constructive steps such as the recent release as I mentioned earlier of Suleiman Jamous, one of the SLM leaders. One of the major topics of discussion for the upcoming New York talks will be how we as an international community continue to use our leverage and influence to keep the talks on track. Together with our allies, we are discussing measures including sanctions to discourage anyone on any side from taking actions that would jeopardize the talks. This includes the government of Sudan, rebel groups and runaway rebel factions who signed side deals with Khartoum for personal gain.

Let me make a final point in the comprehensive peace agreement. The implication of the CPA is significantly behind schedule and its failure risks a return to war between the North and the South. I don't think we're at that point yet. If there are warning signs, we need to try to catch this early rather than wait too late. Limited progress on Abyei, which a city or a region of one of the three disputed areas under the CPA that has several codicils to it, is of enormous traditional importance to the largest Southern tribe, the Dinkas. The Dinka kings come from Abyei. It has been an issue of considerable emotion and there was a conflict that almost started two weeks ago between the Northern and the Southern armies over this city. The failure of the GOS to deploy forces – to redeploy forces in the South, North, by the deadline of July 9th provided for in the CPA was a serious violation although 85 percent of the forces have been redeployed. We still want all of them under the agreement to be redeployed.

Delays in the formation of the joint integrated units is a problem, delays on key legislation and funding for the census and the elections is concerning us. We must work to get the CPA back on track and we are hopeful that the incoming SRSG, the Special Representative of the Secretary General Ashraf Ghani whom I know well, used to be ambassador to the United States from Pakistan will be helpful in this regard. We also must reinvigorate the Assessment and Evaluation Committee mandated to monitor CPA implementation. We are troubled by the undermining of this important commission in Khartoum.

In closing, let me say that I am more optimistic now than I have been in a long time, but it is a guarded optimism. We have seen some improvement on the part of the government of Sudan. They have accepted the hybrid force, improved the operating environment for aid agencies and agreed to talks, something I was not sure would happen several months ago. Many important rebel factions are committed to talks and they're doing the hard work necessary to build unity and develop the common negotiating position, but some are not. Important voices that were not included in the Abuja round last year, IDPs, women's groups, tribal leaders and local NGOs are explicitly included in this round of negotiation. The international community is united behind the EU-U.N. team and is committed to taking necessary, positive and negative measures including the possibility of new sanctions to censure those who obstruct the talks.

I now would be happy to answer any questions. If there are no questions, I can leave. (Laughter.)

Q: Thank you very much. Barbara Slavin, for USA Today. Nice to see you again.

MR. NATSIOS: How are you, Barbara?

Q: Very well, thank you. To what do you attribute Khartoum's new reasonableness and will it last, and then just some numeric type questions. How many rebel groups are there? How many people have been killed, how many people displaced? Thanks.

MR. NATSIOS: A lot of questions here. We do not have absolute assurance of exactly how the Sudanese government makes its decisions. In fact, if someone asked how members of Congress made their decisions or the state legislature that I was member of for 12 – there are complex processes. We can't quantify how they make decisions, however, it is very clear that the international focus in terms of the news media, the advocacy groups – and people think of it only in the United States. There's a lot of Africans very upset over what is happening. African leaders make comments to me and there have been demonstrations in Africa and student groups and other associations in Africa protesting what's happening. Certainly, the student movement, the stand movement that I know well at Georgetown – in fact, it started at Georgetown in the country has had an effect.

I know we know from our own analysis that the president sanctions that were announced at the end of April has had – while there were lots of comments made about – we know the effect they're having. They're quite profound, and we know that they've had an effect because of the changed rhetoric around them now with respect to people in Sudan, and if you look at all of the critical moments in which decisions have been made, they have been made since that date that those were announced.

So I think it's a combination of media coverage, international pressure, the advocacy campaign and the sanctions of the United States and the leadership of the international community, but most importantly, if you put anyone in a corner and you give them no way out, you're going to have an explosion, not a solution, so it's very important that we not see all this pressure as simply a way of punishing government most people don't like very much. It needs to be pressure to find a constructive way out, and so it's very important that we see the introduction of this 24,000-person force under 1769, the process of political solution and other measures that are being taken as a way out, a constructive way out for a solution to this crisis.

I don't actually have seen the latest numbers on death rates, but that's something we don't track, other agencies track, and I can try to find them for you, Barbara. I tracked them before and they're lower now than they were last year for example. The biggest problem is with population displacement and that is, as I said, caused by this fighting between Arab tribes over this land that had belonged and still belongs at least in my view to the African tribes that are in camps.

In the back.

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. NATSIOS: I guess I'm asking all the reporters. I should be asking the ordinary people in the audience questions.

Q: I wanted to ask you about whether you're satisfied with the planning at the United Nations for this hybrid force because there have been a couple of things that have slipped, and what the U.S. is going to offer this hybrid, how is the U.S. going to help speed up this process and make – (off mike).

MR. NATSIOS: Well, one – there's a lot of planning going on. It's not a matter of what the planning is; it's a matter of what the execution is. Our problem in all of these conflicts is not planning. It's usually not even funding; it's the execution, because the environment in which we're working is so complicated and so unstable and so violent that's it's very difficult to get a lot of this stuff done that people think it's very simple here. You turn the light switch on here and you always assume the lights go on. That is not what happens. Or you turn the water on, the water comes out that you can drink. These seem like small things.

They are not small things when you're in certain areas of the world. I am actually sympathetic to the pressure the U.N. is under because they have four large scale deployments going on. Some of them already took place but this is the largest number of U.N. troops that have ever been in the aggregate, in peace keeping operations in the world at the same time, and we have other events around the world that have required the U.N. – the same office that is doing the deployment for Darfur, so we're working with them. We have lots of people doing planning with them. I've met with some of our planners on the military side on this. I'm not going to discuss publicly exactly what we're doing, because some of it is in the preparation stage at this point, but are being helpful.

Yes?

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. NATSIOS: How are you, Mariko (ph)? If you ask me a hard question, I will be very upset. (Laughter.) Go ahead. I'm just joking. Go ahead.

Q: Sorry. Professor, my question is something you mentioned that there's a need to include every factions of rebels, however, when I was in Darfur, when I got car jacked and then they were like –

MR. NATSIOS: Your car was hijacked in Darfur?

Q: Yes.

MR. NATSIOS: I didn't know that.

Q: Yes.

MR. NATSIOS: Okay.

Q: So they're like seven, eight armed men. They said – I don't know whether it's true or not but they said they are one faction.

MR. NATSIOS: Seven or eight men are one faction?

Q: Yes.

MR. NATSIOS: Yes.

Q: So I get this idea from that experience that so faction of rebel groups can be that small.

MR. NATSIOS: Yes. That is correct.

Q: Right? So do you have – my question is do you have any criteria in your mind to choose participants, to pick – how to say – yes, to pick participants –

MR. NATSIOS: Yes.

Q: – from rebels. You cannot include every single faction. That's my first question.

MR. NATSIOS: This is a very difficult question. Mariko is one of my students. If I had known she was asking these questions, I may not have advertised this to my class. (Laughter.) This is one of the really difficult questions that Jan Eliasson and Selim Selim are dealing with: who to invite and who not to invite. I have to say, some of what is happening in Darfur is criminality. They are looting trucks and they're selling them and they're making money. They have no political agenda. In fact, most of these groups want the thing to continue, because the more chaos there is, the more money they make, and we need to make a distinction between criminality and political movements and it gets a little grey sometimes. Sometimes the rebel groups engage in criminality to get resources to support themselves, so this is an issue I don't want to get into any details to how this is being done, but there is a very detailed analysis has been done, a mapping of what is going on. Our estimate is that there are 14 rebel factions, however, I won't tell you which regional power. A friend of mine, a senior person in the intelligence community said there are 22. I said, how do you count them? He said, Andrew, it's so complicated we have our own system for counting. So it is a difficult subject and it has

to be done properly, but including seven or eight carjackers as a negotiating team does not work very well for me.

Yes, sir?

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. NATSIOS: I know you very well. Yes.

Q: How are you going to include the Arabs, or are they going to –

MR. NATSIOS: You mean the civil society and the chiefs and women's group and all?

Q: Yes, but what you said is important to include the Arabs. Yes, there is not sustainable peace in Darfur without including the Arabs.

MR. NATSIOS: Absolutely correct.

Q: Absolutely we agree on that, however the trick is how to include them in the negotiations. Are they going to be a third party? The rebels on the one side, the government on the one side and that is going to open a kind of a forum because I know – (inaudible) in Darfur –

MR. NATSIOS: I knew, Steve, if I come here the sophisticated audience would start asking the right questions. That is another one of the critical issues. Jan has and Selim have a memo before them with different options as to how to do this. We all know it cannot be a – they're going to go and talk to them once in Darfur and then forget about them. They've got to be involved in something other than an ad-hoc way in a regularized process. This is however, extremely complicated. The more people, the more numbers that people involve in this, the greater likelihood of breakdown, so we have to balance the efficiency of the process with a limited number of people with a need for inclusivity and broad support once the agreement is reached.

One way of dealing with obstructionist rebel leaders and there are many of them at this point is to say to the people in the camps it's not what they like. Do you like this agreement? Do you support this agreement? And if I had a choice between trusting the clergy and mosques and the women's groups and the NGOs and the IDP camp leaders, who, by the way, when I talked to them they're very reasonable. They're not asking for ridiculous things and they're not being demagogues about it either. I think actually they could be a constraint on more outlandish demands that are being made for entirely political reasons, so you're right. Ian and I have discussed what the options are. They haven't made a decision yet, but they're the right options. Let me just put it that way. And we know if this is done wrong, we're going to put the talks at risk.

Yes, sir?

Q: Dimitri Ivanov with the law firm of Akin Gump.

MR. NATSIOS: I'm sorry. Could you say that again?

Q: My name is Dimitri Ivanov, the law firm of Akin Gump.

MR. NATSIOS: Okay.

Q: As you know, a number of U.S. states have passed – (unintelligible) – Divestment Act. Do you think the current administration support these divestments campaign at the state level, and you think the administration will support the – (unintelligible) – divestment bills in the House and in the Senate? And the third question: do you think the administration would be willing to target CMTC and other foreign companies operating in the Sudan's energy sector?

MR. NATSIOS: Let me put it to you this way. The purpose of all pain in diplomacy is to change the decision making processes of people participating whenever negotiations or war of conflict are involved in. That's the purpose of it. And I think there's been a huge amount of focus on exactly the nature of pain instead the purpose of it. So what we need to look at now is what are we trying to do in terms of the end? And the end is to get people on the rebel side and the government side who are being inflexible to be flexible, and so from my perspective, we should reorient the debate over all of the different sticks that are being discussed in the United States toward whether we're going too far, we're not going far enough and also the timing of it.

Timing is critically important. If you punish the rebels or the Sudanese government after they've done something constructive, they come back to me and say, wait a second, Andrew, you told me to do these things, you applied pressure on us, we did them, now you're applying more pressure. When are you going to stop applying the pressure since you did what you told us to do? That's what they say to me, and I don't actually have a very good answer to that, so my suggestion is we reorient the debate in the United States on these sorts of issues.

Yes, right here.

Q: Hi. Thank you. Nicole Finnegan from the Public International Law on Policy Group. I'd like to know what your views on the location choice of Tripoli are, what if any role will it play in the success or non-success of the talks, and beyond that, are neighboring states being given any voice in the talks, should they be?

MR. NATSIOS: I sat down, I had my small staff of four people work with me – so many of them had come from AID with me – and we analyzed the weaknesses in the Abuja process, what is it that worked, what is it that did not work, and what we're trying to do is designing a process working – and Jan Eliasson has done the same thing and so

has Selim and other peers. It's not just us that are doing it, okay? We reached very similar conclusions and we are attempting now to deal with that issue.

One of the weaknesses was not including the regional players that have a profound geo-strategic interest in what happens to Sudan in the process last year. They may have been there, but they weren't – (unintelligible) – and so we made a decision early on that we were going to work constructively, but these are the conditions: it's got to be transparent, it's got to be open, it's got to be constructive, and some of the regional powers have been transparent and constructive and we appreciate that. Some of them have not been. They go back and forth.

I only can tell you if – my first trip to Libya was this year. I've gone to Libya I think four times now, three or four time. Ali Turaiki is my counterpart. He is the minister for Africa, he's the former foreign minister. Ali Turaiki and I talk all he time. When I've asked him to do things that I thought were constructive, Ali Turaiki has done them or his government has done them. And I only can tell you in the two big meetings we've had one of which, the second of which made a critical difference in Tripoli which was in July, Ali Turaiki at critical moments intervened when things were getting off track to work with the Western powers and the African Union and the U.N. to get them back on track. So I'm going to go by that. What counts to me is how they act now. What's happened in the past, I'm not going to go by that. I'm going to go by what's happened since I got involved, and as long as countries in the region are constructive in the process, we want them included, we want them included however constructively and transparently, and that goes for all of them. So we'll see how things unfold. There's a lot of controversy over the venue, a lot of controversy.

Yes, sir?

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. NATSIOS: You know, if you ask me a hard question, it's going to damage Canadian-American relations. (Laughter.)

Q: I'll try not to.

MR. NATSIOS: I'm just joking. I'm just joking.

Q: You were speaking of obstructionist rebel leaders. I was wondering if you could tell me how from your experience in the camps how important do you think Abdul Wahid is to the process and whether he's somebody who has to be dealt with or can be worked around.

MR. NATSIOS: One, let me first say that we need to have all of the invited rebel leaders attend. It's very important that they attend. I don't expect all of them will for various reasons, some of which are directly related to the talks themselves, others related to timing and internal problems within the movements. What happens when a civil war

goes on for too long, is the very weak control leaders have over followers and commanders begins to atomize and deteriorate, and so you have in many of the movements like JEM which was the most disciplined and militant and aggressive and organized of all of movement now has a big split in it and these are internal dynamics that we don't have much control over. We have little understanding, but not complete understand. They had something to do sometimes with ethnicity, control over wealth, the operating style of the leader. If you look at the history of the SPLA, SPLM in Southern Sudan, John Garang dealt with this for 22 years. He became however highly skilled at dealing with them, and by the end, he had a hierarchy where he was the head of it and he was able to negotiate as one person. That facilitated substantially the arrival or the talks that we had between the (unintelligible) that led to the CPA.

Abdul Wahid has a following in Darfur. He is a Fur, it's the largest tribe in Darfur. I have to say, if you talk to people in the camps, Abdul Wahid is not their first interest. It is getting back to their homes and their farms and everything else, and I think what's important particularly when we have a discussion about the participation of civil society and of women's groups and NGOs and professional associations and the religious community and the traditional leaders, the reason they're there is to be a transparency force, because sometimes people say things at press conferences, at any peace conference that may not have anything to do with what's really happening with the negotiations. They may do it for other reasons, and we need an objective, respected outside force of leaders from Darfur who are a check on everybody participating, and I think that's very important to remember, but Abdul Wahid is going to be invited, and we urge him very strongly to attend so that his people and his movement are representative to talks. Yes, sir.

Q: Andy Sullivan with Reuters. You've mentioned several times that rebels are making unreasonable demands.

MR. NATSIOS: No. I said, some people are making I didn't say who.

Q: Okay, some.

MR. NATSIOS: But it happens to be some rebel groups, yes.

Q: Can you characterize those demands, what –

MR. NATSIOS: I'd rather not. You can read them. They're public statements. I'm not going to repeat them because it just makes things worse.

Q: Can you say what would be a more reasonable approach? (Laughter.)

MR. NATSIOS: Then that would get me into the negotiations which I don't want to do. This is not between the United States and the government of Sudan and the rebels. It's between the rebels. Let them deal with that. Yes. The lady here and – yes.

Q: Hi. Thank you very much for addressing this. My name is Laura Turner. I'm with the United Nations. I just wanted to ask –

MR. NATSIOS: Which office of the United Nations?

Q: The World Food Program.

MR. NATSIOS: My favorite.

Q: I just wanted to ask – I'm heartened to hear that your analysis is that the CPA is not on the brink of collapse –

MR. NATSIOS: No.

Q: – that not everyone feels –

MR. NATSIOS: I understand that.

Q: – so heartened by or feels so positive about it and I'm just wondering the U.S. was a driving force through Mr. Danforth in the CPA and some people think that if the U.S. or the other lead government that were in the CPA process took as much as an interest now as they did back then, that perhaps things would get on track again. Do you have any advice not only for your government but in general what the international community should do?

MR. NATSIOS: Well, as opposed to when I was in the aid community where public statements were very useful frequently, I've learned in diplomacy sometimes it is better not to say things publicly. Some of diplomacy is conducted very quietly. There is an intense discussion now among the Western powers, the North and the South on the CPA. There's a heavy focus in the international system because all of us realize – I personally was involved in negotiating the CPA. Colin Powell asked me because I was close to the southerners to participate, and so I have a personal interest in this having been close to the southerners for 18 years now. Garang was a friend of mine that it succeed. It is something we already have. It's not something we're trying to get.

It's taken me a long time to understand why certain provisions of the CPA are not implemented. What I used to do was go in – I've raised these issues with President Bashir and the entire leadership in the North each time. It's like a broken record. Jan Eliasson mentions it, Selim Selim mentions it over and over again. The question is which I'm not going to deal with publicly is to why they're resisting things, and it's a very complex set or rationales on their part, some of which, when you start to understand, you understand they could have very serious political consequences in the North depending in how the compromises have worked out in the remaining parts of the CPA.

And the government is not a strong government now. It's not a strong government. Contrary to how Westerners see it, the regional powers and my friends in

Africa say they're not in a strong position at all, because there's a real risk of state fragility here, and so we need to think thorough and I've been doing that and I've realized now I miscalculated why they were resisting some of these, and we're trying to now take different diplomatic roots to influence the resolution of these issues because they're under certain pressures, the Sudanese government, and unless we deal with those pressures, they're not going to change their reason for not implementing the CPA, they're not going to become more cooperative unless we change the pressures they're under and that's what we're beginning to look like at at this point. It's not easy.

The Sudanese do not sit there and say, well, the reason we're not doing this is the following five reasons, we'll give you a paper on it and help us with this. That's not how it works. You have to sort of discover how it is by good intelligence and analysis and that's what we're doing. I'm being vague now because it's a very complicated subject, but we know there's a connection, is a lot of international effort going into now and it is being conducted, this diplomacy at the highest levels of our governments. Yes. Yes, please.

Q: Getting the recalcitrant rebel leaders to the table requires also denying them their external support and reducing their external support – (off mike) – making it more difficult – (off mike). Can you talk a little bit about what's happening with the Sarkozy government, the deployments in the Chad and – (off mike) – the threat of sanctions that Gordon Brown and Sarkozy put forward, and Ban Ki-moon engagements and the efforts to get the Libyans to be less of a – (off mike) – and more of a facilitator of peace. These seem to be –

MR. NATSIOS: The last sentence.

Q: Gaddafi – (off mike).

MR. NATSIOS: Yes, yes.

Q: These seem to be some of the major big turning points in the last 60 days, 90 days, that have brought us to this point along with the Chinese.

MR. NATSIOS: The election of President Sarkozy in France has changed the European calculus on this and there appears to be a new energy along with – it was not that the French government or the British government before were not interested in this, but Sarkozy put in a particular person who I've known for many years as the foreign minister Bernard Kouchner who of course knows Africa, knows conflicts because that's what he did for much of his adult life, and I've talked with him and had breakfast with and met with and talked with at length with Kouchner about these issues.

We think in the U.S. government that the French proposal which is now – I don't think it's quite an European proposal, but it's on the edge of that happening as I understand it is a constructive major new initiative that will send several important messages. One is that attacks on civilians are going to have consequences, and we think

the message that will send will be very powerful. Two, the border area between Chad and Sudan was an area of conflict for a year and a half which complicated our ability to deal with the political problems in Darfur. There was in fact, a war between Sudan and Chad for a year and a half that was quite violent, a lot of people got killed in it and they used each other's rebel movements as fronts for their national conflict.

That now, for at least eight months – six months has been quiet. The cease fire that Libya helped negotiate has worked. There were several other attempts before of cease fires that were a failure. This one appears to be working. We pray it will continue. We encourage the Chadian and Sudanese government to continue the current cease fire. If the fight starts again, we've got a big problem, because while that war is going on, there aren't going to be any resolutions in the Darfur crisis. So that's very important.

We think that the introduction of these European troops will in fact stabilize that situation between Chad and Sudan, and make it more difficult for uncontrolled rebel movements on either side of the border, sort of misuse, or using their influence over either of those two governments that could draw them into a conflict again, so I think this stabilizes that, so there are two very good reasons to support it. I think this is a good idea, it comes from the Europeans and we support it, we compliment President Sarkozy for doing this. I've talked with other European leaders at senior levels about this idea and it looks like it's got legs on it. Yes.

Q: Ken Bacon, Refugees International. Thank you for these comments. I wanted to go back to what you called a crucial issue which was the return of property and the ability to return to villages. Right now, as you pointed out, Arab groups are fighting over the spoils so to speak. The government in Khartoum is very weak, and even though the U.N. is putting in a much larger force, I ask this question, who can enforce the return to villages, who can enforce the return of property? Do you see a mechanism for that on the horizon and how will that be ratified in any sort of peace agreements coming out of Libya or elsewhere?

MR. NATSIOS: Whenever I go to Darfur, I meet with the new political leaders but I also meet with the traditional leaders, the sheikhs, the chiefs, the mekdum, the nasirs (ph), and they have some influence over their tribe, some of them have great influence. The nasir of the Southern Rizigot (ph), the highest tribal traditional leader kept the Southern Rizigot tribe out of the conflict because he said, you're going to destroy the province –Bashir asked him to provide troops for the Janjaweed and he said, absolutely not, I'm not doing it. So these men have influence, substantial influence, and we believe if the interests of the Arab tribes are considered in all these that they can be a force of restraint to deal with some of these traditional land issues. These land issues I have to say are one the critical issues. If it isn't dealt with privately, we won't have a peace agreement.

Now, I might add that there's been a discovery by an Egyptian-American hydrologist at Boston University of much more extensive underground aquifers in Northern, the arid area of Darfur, Northern, I think it's 1,000 meters down – I don't know

how far down is. Is quite deep, but it can be reached. It's apparently a huge supply of water. We all know that there's been the largest underground aquifer or water in the world, it's called the Great Nubian Sandstone Aquifer. It's in Southwestern Egypt, Southeastern Libya and Northern Sudan. We did not know until the professor at BU did his surveys that this is much more an extensive underground reservoir than we've realized.

President Bashir has announced – we have to see whether it actually happens of course – the digging of 1,000 wells. Now, this doesn't create enormous confidence in me, however the United Nations has brought in what is called deep well-drilling equipment and they are beginning to prospect, and USAID I know was working with some private hydrologists with the Sudanese government, they were part of this process, to begin to do the aerial surveys of what areas the wells – because you can tell from the air when you're deal with fractured bedrock and underground reservoir to decide where to dig the wells. So research has been done and studies that could open up areas of land in the North that are now really not very usable, even by some of the camel herders because it's basically desert. So it's possible that some of the land issues could be dealt with by the water development in the North, but that remains to be seen. It's simply promising, it's simply promising, and there isn't international effort working on that now.

Q: But I guess it raises the question of – this is a long time scheme for both of these. We're not going to have water instantly and you're tying the outcome of peace talks to the development of this aquifer, we could be talking years, maybe –

MR. NATSIOS: No, no. I'm just telling you that –

Q: I understand but I just – going back to the land, I'm sure that developing the aquifer will be a major solution to the land return problem so I just wanted you to address –

MR. NATSIOS: It won't in the immediate term, Ken, but it will in the longer – it could in longer term. It could, depending on what the surveys show and the drilling shows. Without going into enormous detail, I've been through personally, in the NGO community and AID return efforts before. The great bulk of returns in all post-conflict situations are not organized by the – Fred Cuny did extensive studies of this and published a couple of book before he died on this subject. We all think that we organize the returns of people after conflict. That's really not true. We do maybe 20 percent of the most difficult, people who are not ambulatory, they're elderly, but most people go back on their own. Our job is to make sure they get back safely to their villages.

There's no one else there when they get there, so we don't have another war, and that there is some kinds of services like wells drilled – these are shallow wells now – so that they can leave in those villages, and that is something the U.N. has done with the NGOs and the ICRC and IOM around the world in several dozen cases. So we know how to do this, and there's so much interest in this internationally that I think the money will be there for the returns to be done. The question is getting the political agreement so

we can make it safe for people to return, because no one's going to return if they think they're going to get killed on the way. Yes.

Q: (Unintelligible) – Georgetown University. I have two questions for you, professor. First is what is going to be the basis of the talks? Is the DPA going to be the basis and then second of all, can you please comment on the JEM leader today statement or yesterday said that if the talks go through or do not go through, they will call for an independent country of Darfur?

MR. NATSIOS: Khalil Ibrahim was sanctioned by President Bush because he has been making some we think irresponsible statements and doing some things that are obstructionist. He's the head of JEM. He was the head of JEM. His movement has divided in half and his field commanders have separated from him, many of his field commanders. He's the one that made the comment that you just referred to, which I don't think was very helpful. What was the first question?

The basis of the talks will be according to the November 16th Addis Ababa agreement which was – I was there leading the U.S. delegation, Kofi Annan chaired it with Konaré and there were 30 countries there. It was a big international – we basically created a plan that we're now we've been carrying out and we've finally been making some progress, the last 90 days of this, substantial progress. The basis we've all agreed would be the DPA. The rebels resisted this at the beginning and now they're talking more reasonably. Many people who are the most vociferously opposed to the DPA being the base have never read the DPA. Many of these issues are dealt with in the DPA I don't think adequately, and I think that's why some thoughtful rebel leaders have resisted the DPA.

But the government of Sudan has indicated to me privately they're willing to compromise on some of these issues in writing some amendments of codicils or annexes to the DPA. I think we may have to use our diplomatic skills to reframe exactly what we're doing, but we have a basis which is a document that has a lot of stuff in it that's very useful, and the rebels have now admitted that that there's parts of the DPA that are constructive. We need to build on that. It's taken a lot of conversation with diplomats and the rebels and the government to try to get where we're moving a little bit closer to a common base for negotiation. Yes, sir.

Q: Okay. Ibrahim Elbadawi from the World Bank. I'd like to ask a couple of questions. One, to the extent that democratic transition to democracy is very important for the CPA as well as any resolution for Darfur, and in view of the fact that many observers of Sudan believe that the group that is now in power within the ruling party they are likely to be the most concerned about being able to leave to – (unintelligible) – or whether because of potential atrocities that they might have been involved in. Is there any (chance ?) for giving them assurances, to promote them to actually to cooperate in terms of the transition to democracy? That's my first question. My second question regards the political opposition in the North, especially the Umma Party. On view that the Arabs component of Darfur are important to be involved, do you see any role for the

Umma Party to promote that kind of cooperation especially since just 20 years ago, this party has taken all of Darfur in the last free election in 1986? Thank you.

MR. NATSIOS: You must be Sudanese if you know all this about Darfur. The first question, I would just answer I think what happens between now and the elections will influence the answer to your first question. If the government is cooperative, the elections are open and free and fair, I think people will be more favorably disposed. If they're not and the elections are – there's an abusive process, I think there's going to be reluctance for people to be flexible on these issues, and finally, it's very important that the Sudanese people be consulted in all of this. It's not our country, and some of these arrangements post election are going to have to be dealt with by the Sudanese people, by any election that takes place in any new parliament.

The Umma Party is of course the party of Sadiq al-Mahdi who was the prime minister in 1989, who was overthrown by the current government, and Sadiq al-Mahdi's great grandfather, of course, was Mahdi in 1870s, a major religious figure in the country. It's a celebrated name, an old family, a powerful family that still is very influential. When I went on my last trip in July I met with Umma Party members and the other two or three parties in Darfur and actually some of the most interesting conversations I had about what was happening in the province economically and politically were from the traditional party leaders because they have a lot of insight, they're shrewd people, they're very thoughtful people, they know what's going on.

Do I think the traditional parties in Sudan, not just the Umma Party, but the other parties can play a role in the peace process? Yes, I do. Two, do they – I'm sure all of them they're going to run for office in 2009 I expect. I think though that there has been such a cataclysmic, catastrophic trauma that Darfur has gone through that it's very difficult to predict whether the Umma Party will pick up seats or lose seats or become more powerful, I don't know. It's certainly people – wars and atrocities change people's calculation, so we can't predict that now, but they have a role to play because they're a moderating force, they are traditional parties that go back for decades, and they do have a base of support particularly among the middle age and the older people. The younger people may not know them as well, because there have been no real elections in Darfur or Sudan for 20 years now.

Yes, sir?

Q: Thank you, Mr. Natsios. Alex Meister (ph) from Save Darfur. You mentioned a few minutes ago the importance of refugees and IDPs being able to return to their homes. Can you comment a bit on the reports we've been hearing of forces resettlement or government sponsored resettlement of non-Darfuris from Chad and Nigeria to those villages?

MR. NATSIOS: I would not use the term force resettlement. That's the problem. They'd be given very good land, at least the reporting we've seen indicates that. There are conflicting reports on how high the volume is of people. One reports says it's 30,000,

in another report it's 90,000 and then another report said that the movement was 30,000 only a portion of those were resettled onto land that belonged to other tribes, and there are various theories as to what's happening. We are analyzing this right now, Alex, and when we get a little bit better feel for how extensive this is as a problem, I'll get back to you.

I keep raising the issue because I believe my comments which are widely read in Sudan may act, I hope as a constraint on any further settlement of this kind, because if you take very good agricultural land that belonged to the tribes that are in the camps and you give that land to people who come from other countries, even they're nomadic people who may at some point 30 years ago lived in Sudan, it's simply going to increase the risk of failure of the peace talks. And we know this is going on. The question is the degree to which is going on. When we get a better handle on that, I'll make more comments publicly, but I urge the Sudanese government and other local government officials to cease and desist from this kind of resettlement because it would make the peace settlement more difficult.

One more back here because you did – you asked – yes, sir.

Q: Hi. I'm Scott – (unintelligible) – with Oxfam. As you know, there have been multiple cease fire agreements that have been signed through the years at – (off mike) – the DPA itself, and either failed to – (off mike). My first question is what is the U.S. going to do to ensure that parties do not attack each other during the peace agreements other than sanctions, because I'm not sure of how sanctions will affect a group of men running around the desert with guns in any other way except from preventing them for traveling outside the country. Is there a carrot to this stick, in other words? Are there incentives?

The other question relates to the relationship between Chad and Sudan. As you already said, the relation between these two countries is essential for peace in Darfur. As you may know, the Congress this week is debating the Defense Authorization Bill, the Senate is which has a provision that would allow the U.S. to upgrade the Abeche Air Base in Chad (foreseeably ?) to enforce a no fly zone of some sort of attacks in Chad. How do you think this would affect the relationship between the government of Chad and Sudan and whether that it's helpful. Thank you.

MR. NATSIOS: Well, to call the Abeche runway an air base would be a slight exaggeration. Having landed on it just barely when I went to speak with the rebels in January I am personally aware of it. I kept saying, so where's the air base? And they said, you're on the air base, so I said, I thought there was a giant French military base here. They said, that's the military base, the little house other there. So it's not an air base. It's a little strip. I'm not going to comment on that specific piece of legislation except to say I think when we do stuff in the United States or in Europe, we need to look at the consequences of what we're doing, just to make this as a general request. The likely consequences in the country in which we're actually doing the work, it's one thing

how we see it from here, it's quite another how is received in the field, and it may well be.

I haven't thought about exactly the consequence, but I think anything that destabilizes the relationship between Sudan and Chad right now is a very bad idea. I don't know if this would have that effect, I have to think about. But that's the standard we should use and I'm not sure we always use that standard when we do advocacy things, and we think through. People are trying to be helpful and I understand that. People from Congress ask me, what should we do, Andrew, and I think it's not just what we do, it's also when we do it. It's one thing to have done that when the two sides are fighting, but now that there's a cease fire that's actually holding and it looks like it's going to continue, we don't want to disrupt it, we don't want to kill the goose that laid the golden egg, so to speak, a peace keeping egg.

What was the first question? Carrots and sticks with the rebels. That's the other thing is people made lots of comments on the president's sanctions, back and forth. It's irrelevant what we think of them. What's relevant is how they think of them and I can tell you we know from experience, even people out in the desert, they ask us, if we do this are we going to be sanctioned by name? They ask us that. We had – during the Arusha talks rebel leaders would not go unless they were sure they were not going to be sanctioned.

Now, I don't think they know for sure what that means. All they know is that they asked us repeatedly as to what was going to happen to them if the sanctions went to effect or didn't go into effect. So it does have an effect particularly since most of the rebels see the United States as having carried their moral cause to the extent that the people who they represent had a cause in terms of the atrocities that were committed against them. You may disagree with whether that's true or not, but the people in the camps think their protector was the United States, and I took some very cynical reporters with me, went through the camps to disprove what I just said and they came back and said they were astonished of the comment they were hearing.

So we have a lot of sway with the rebels. Before the Arusha talks, Jan Eliasson gave me a list of people who were not planning to attend and said, Andrew, they won't come. I said okay, and I sat and called them from vacation in Maine, and they went. So I think we can influence, that we can use our moral suasion and leverage, which has a limit to, but it does have an effect when you talk to them, when you explain to them, and they get upset over things – they say, why did you make this decision, I say I didn't make that decision. It was made by one other country we didn't even agree with. That calms them down. A lot of the decision making calculus is based on information, and if they have the wrong information, a fraction of the wrong information, they make wrong decisions sometimes, so find just talking with them has an effect.

One last question for someone who didn't ask one. Yes?

Q: (Off mike.)

MR. NATSIOS: I think the Chinese election is sort of like a locomotive that it started a little slowly and is speeding up, and really they're actually thinking of new things to do that we aren't even asking them to do, and so, Ambassador Lu was here and he went over some of the things that I said, I don't remember – he said, we thought of this in Beijing, do you think it's helpful? I said, it's very helpful, please do it. So I think the Chinese are making an effort. Now, some people in this country may not think it's enough, they may have other objections. I am very happy with the role the Chinese are playing. I think it's constructive, we have constant conversations with each other, Ambassador Lu, I forgot how many time I've met with him now. So it is a constructive role and there's much more deep involvement by them in what is going on. It's not simply answer and making public statements or making a call. It's much more extensive than that. They're operationally getting involved in facilitating the arrival of the U.N. troops which we think is very helpful.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. MORRISON: Let me remind everyone here, President Mogae from Botswana will be here on Friday morning at 9:30 for a public address on a range of issues. Please join us if you care to. Thank you.

(END)