

One Layer Down

Allan, Jim, Tom, and I are accompanied today by an able Sudanese lawyer named Deng Arop and a democracy expert from USAID Washington named Wendy Marshall.

"There has been trouble outside of town," Deng says. "The county commissioner and the regional department heads have gone off to deal with it." We had heard about clan conflict in the security briefing back in Loki.

"It's good for you in a way," Wendy says. "This way, you get to see the people one level down. Often the top layer is impressive, but the next layers are much less capable."

The county commissioner's office appears to have been tended less frequently than the teak forests. The front door is made of tin roofing. The anteroom is almost bare, with dinged up concrete and dilapidated desk. From there we go to the commissioner's office, which is now empty. We are told to have a seat while the deputy commissioner is fetched.

The office has no ceiling. The heavily pitted cement walls may last have been painted at independence in 1956. Two tables are set out in a T, and we sit in plastic chairs on the long part of the T. The desk has a much worn foot-high statue of a flat-billed crane, looking a little like a pelican. It has Arabic script on its base. Appalling dark green curtains flutter before "windows" that, at least in front of me, consist of chicken wire.

The deputy commissioner arrives. He has gray hair and a short gray beard and is about 6'7". He looks a little like a taller Morgan Freeman. He is wearing a dark blue denim shirt and pants with white shoes. Though it is the morning, his breath conveys the remnants of recent highballs.

He welcomes us. Then his gaze returns to Wendy. "Young," he says.



She smiles and gamely responds, "Yes, the youngest one here."

He knows Allan from long ago, and says that he's glad to see him again. And then the deputy commissioner welcomes us again and launches into a random ramble, from waiting for peace to local troubles in the cattle areas where young people have been fighting. He lets forth a blizzard of bromides and generalities, from the need for people to learn to produce, to the need for government to provide basic services such as education, health, and infrastructure.

Then he suddenly says, "What if I have a son? He has a cow, and he invents a song for his cow. Then he goes to where the cattle gather and sings this song, and other young men object to the song. Then there is fighting."

This tale vaporizes in a long pause, and then the deputy commissioner resumes at a different place in his memory bank.

"You are welcome," he says. "We welcome you, and we are sure that your help will be important in enabling the New Sudan to succeed."

The deputy commissioner is, alas, a familiar figure to me from other developing countries. Maundering and platitudes. His propensity for the general over the specific remind me of something I read on the plane this morning, a speech that is part of "The Draft of the SPLM Policy on Dialogue."

These general strategic campaigns are on: General Reconciliation, General Inclusiveness or Participation, General Equity and Geographical Balance, General Appeal for All Refugees and IDPs [internally displaced people] to Return, General Cementing of Unity and General Mobilization and Organization.

To be fair, this speech by James Wani Igga does contain some fascinating points. Consider this frank recognition of power and struggle (the jungle) and the abiding need for inclusiveness (the elephant is peace and freedom):

Politics is a *jungle* torn between doing the right thing and staying in office. Whether before or after the formation of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) the SPLM must take the lead to include and involve others outside its circumference in the upcoming government and related posts.

The SPLM ought to view itself like a good hunter who goes to the forest. If he kills an elephant the animal doesn't belong to him alone. The entire village has the right of taking knives and cutting the meat, though

traditionally the hunter retains the prerogative to distribute the leg, neck, ribs, etc. to whosoever he pleases.

Yet it would be totally uncustomary for him to deny inclusiveness, sharing and participation of others in this big meal. The elephant in the SPLM context is the peace and freedoms it shall certainly bring about.

The speech concludes with this:

Humans eat real bread not the metaphysical thing called peace or freedom. And so the demand to survive will continue relentlessly until physical needs are met. The damned need for satisfaction by the limited means will persist. This seriously explains how and why General Mobilization and Organization are of paramount importance.

Back to generalities.

We leave for lunch. My shirt is soaked, and along my hairline I feel pressure from the heat and the cap I've been wearing. At lunch, five or six glasses of water help. After lunch, we go to see a judge in the south Sudanese court. The venue is outdoors, under a thatched roof. The walls are woven sticks four-feet high, with a couple of feet empty at the top to let the air move. There is a slight breeze, but I can feel perspiration coagulate on my rib cage.

Justice Achol is tall, perhaps 6'3". He has been a judge for more than thirty years. He has graying short-cropped hair and beard. His teeth are remarkable. His incisors are missing, and the remaining teeth on top are large and shovel-shaped. They pitch forward radically, like the cowcatcher of a locomotive. Between his resting lips Achol's bicuspid protrude, like chicklets.

He and Deng Arop, who was a judge before and now works with the United Nations in Rumbek, tell us about the justice system. Or rather, the lack of same. Laws need writing, not just a constitution. Now, customary law takes care of ninety percent of the cases. The other ten percent must involve justices like Achol.

Achol is impressive in a distinctively mild way. During our conversation I mention the idea that judges in New Sudan should be paid well. Achol smiles. "I am paid nothing now." He explains that the fines and other payments made to the court are shared with the judges. "I have received no salary since 1984." I ask him how he supports himself and his family. "Cultivation," he smiles.

Achol is not at all slow-witted, but his style is slow and humble. He discerns my mystification that a judge can go without a salary, and he tries to explain. At the end he simply says, "This position is one of honor."

In contrast to the sentiments of the deputy commissioner (and perhaps also some of those of the Policy on Dialogue), this remark delivered by this judge rings true and noble.

Then we go to the Sudan Legal Society. Deng Samuel is the head of it, a young lawyer who is about 6'4". Another member is also present.

We go to chairs placed outside under a large tree. Before sitting down I inspect the branches above for the possibility of incoming mangos. All clear.

We learn that there are only sixty-one lawyers in Southern Sudan. The law society helps people in need, especially in human rights cases. It also does consulting work for international agencies and NGOs. Deng Samuel tells Allan about problems he's having with USAID intermediaries.



"We get a computer from them, but they don't tell us what the computer is worth. I ask, but they won't give us that information. So, in our accounts, I cannot say what the value is to depreciate as an asset. This creates suspicion."

He goes on to describe interference by the USAID intermediary in what the law

society is doing. For example, he is not allowed to pay a local consultant for two months.

"They don't answer my letters or return my calls. I have complained to some USAID program officers [he gives their names] but nothing happens."

This is part of a larger syndrome, one familiar from other countries as well. Local NGOs feel disempowered and sometimes demeaned by their relationships with international NGOs, who often function as subcontractors for the international aid agencies.

"If someone says we do not have the capacity to manage," Deng Samuel says, "then help us develop it. But we do in this organization, and yet we are

treated badly, not given the least authority. The aid is to help us. We should be asked what we need and given the opportunity to do it. Instead, the process creates resentment among us and the wider community.”

Finally, we make our way back to the tented camp. I feel drained from the heat. The camp uses a kind of broken brick rock on pathways and around the eating area. One benefit is presumably less dust. One cost is that the sun fires up the brick like a pizza oven.

The inside of my tent is unbearably hot. One flap has been open, but I had not opened the flap-to-screen windows nor turned on the fan. I unzip my bag to find shorts. Every item in the bag is hot and clammy. The moisture the clothes absorbed in Yei has become steam this afternoon, and I take everything out to hang around the cot and chair and small table. With the fan on and the window flaps open, in an hour they’ll be toasted dry.

I walk slowly over to the community bathroom. This is not usually a welcome subject for journal entries, so I will be brief. The toilet seat feels as though it has just been taken from a warming drawer. And the unheated water of the shower is hot.

Thursday, April 29

Allan, Tom, and I leave Rumbek this morning for the Nuba Mountains. We fly over miles of sandbox with lots of round trees, some bushes, and a little grass. After a while we reach the edge of As Sudd, the world’s largest swamp. It is “larger than the state of Pennsylvania. The White Nile flows into the labyrinth of marshes and papyrus grass and loses over 80 percent of its volume before emerging.”⁷

Below us, cattle communities can be seen along a snaky light green river. Still later we pass over the oil fields. Eventually the scenery becomes drier, still with plenty of trees, and we see low mountains in the distance to the north. We land at Ferish, about an hour’s dusty drive to Kauda. The airstrip at Kauda is undergoing maintenance and so is only open on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Dale Hamilton, a missionary at Samaritan’s Purse, and Jason Matus, a USAID consultant on regional strategy, pick us up. Tom, Jason, and I have to stand on the truck bed, our hands on a rail on the cab, while our

⁷ http://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/imgcat/html/object_page/g06_s65_63161.html

pilot Peter and a couple of African children have seats on the metal truck bed above the rear wheels, just in front of our stacked bags. Allan and Dale sit in the cab. The dirt road has plenty of bumps and ruts and creek beds, but Tom and I agree it's the best road we've been on in South Sudan.

Tom's watch says the temperature is one hundred two degrees, which actually seems an improvement from Rumbek. The parched feel is accentuated by recently burned fields, with their bare ashy dirt and blackened patches. We see many goats. There are also some cows, a



different and more European-looking species than in Yei and Rumbek. The leaves of the mango trees here are a lighter green than in the south, incongruously green, and they soften the landscape of rocky fields, dry dirt, and walls of scruffy bush.

On the way Jason fills me with facts about the Nuba Mountains. We arrive at the compound of the Samaritan's Purse, which consists of four or five huts on about an acre of rocky, sloping land. We unpack and then Jason gives me some documents to read. "The Nuba Mountains is inhabited by 56 ethnic groups who speak different languages, but with 10 distinct dialects," says one document, cryptically. There are some patrilineal groups and others are matrilineal, yet there are said to be no tribes but a Nuba people. Because of the war, Jason says the common identity has grown. On the other hand, the

Nuba people under GOS control have become more Muslim, the roles of men and women are different, and so forth.

Perhaps a million and a half people live in the Nuba Mountains, perhaps two-thirds in the GOS areas. At least six hundred thousand more Nuba people are residing outside the mountains. Many of them will want to return after the peace.

A new “comprehensive development strategy” for the region⁸ observes that little planning has taken place:

Cognizant of the increase in demand and need to provide tangible economic and social benefits following an agreement, international support (capital and technical) will increase significantly. However, the current capacity of SPLM/A’s civil administration to manage this support is low. Much of the planning is not futuristic (does not anticipate the changes that will arise from the agreement) and appears ad hoc and poorly coordinated. There is still low trust between the two parties to consensually make fair and common decisions (p. 2).

The strategy emphasizes governance. The third of the “ten guiding principles and values” is “zero tolerance to corruption.”⁹ Moreover, the sixth guiding principle and value is “transparency and accountability,” and the ninth is “good governance.”

The more you read this “strategy,” the more you suspect it’s just a list of every possible item that every possible stakeholder could want. The education strategy calls for everything from pre-school (nonexistent today) through the establishment of a university for the Nuba Mountains. The health sector also needs everything:

Other than the weak capacity of the department in areas such as skilled personnel, equipment and facilities to effectively and efficiently

⁸ Policy and Advisory Committee, Nuba Mountains Region, New Sudan, *A Comprehensive 6-year Development Strategy*, draft version, February/March 2004, processed.

⁹ “There is a clear understanding of corruption by the people of the Nuba Mountains. They define corruption as grabbing public property, fraudulently securing ownership of public assets, unprocedural employment of relatives in the public service (nepotism) and use of public office to access and utilize public property such as forests and minerals. The people are determined to prevent the vice from entrenching itself into the public and private sector. It is therefore recommended that stringent anticorruption laws should be put into practice” (p. 5).

undertake their mandate, problems such as poor drug supply, unqualified care providers in the primary health care centres and units, absence of referral systems for conditions that require specialized management or treatment, inadequate incentives for volunteer community health workers as majority work on voluntary basis for payment in kind, the facilities are inequitably distributed, poor transport and communication systems in the Region, making access to the facilities difficult (patients walk for between 2 and 8 hours or even more) and inadequate capacity of primary health care centres/units to provide epidemiological services. (pp. 15-16)

Evidently, copyediting is another priority.

The economic driver will be agriculture and livestock. The crops include sorghum, maize, sesame, groundnuts, cowpeas, and fruits. The hills around Kauda are shaped like the hills in California. Here, too, they are covered with golden grasses, as it is the end of the dry season; but dry here means baked and abused by the African sun. The valleys have so-called black cotton soil. They say this soil is rich but when wet becomes thoroughly sticky and unmanageable.

"You wouldn't believe the transformation here when it rains," Dale says. "The grass comes up like this, in three days. Later today you'll see lots of terraced hillsides, and they all become so green."

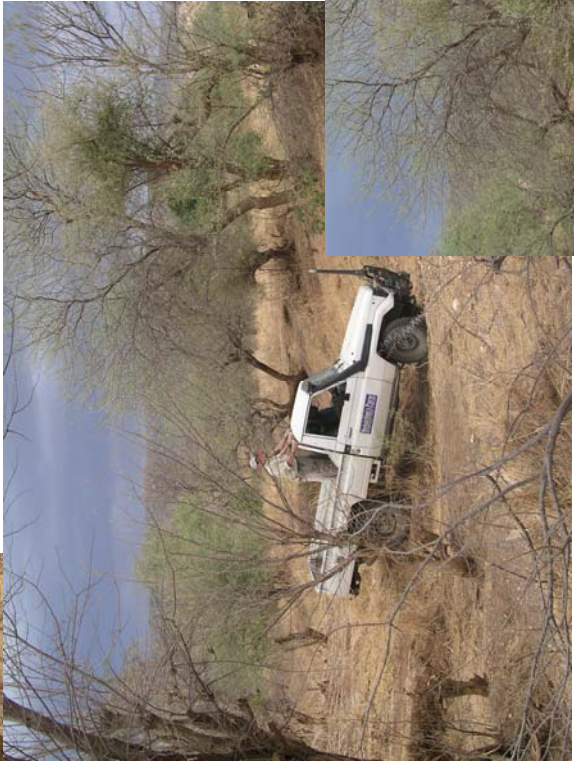
Dale's son Josh is the acting director of Samaritan's Purse here. They work in agriculture, with five tractors stationed over the space of ten hours' drive in one direction and twelve hours in another. Luckily, they have recently obtained a small plane, so they can check on the equipment and the farmers much more easily.

We have a simple lunch with Josh, Dale, Jason, and Clint, the young head of logistics. They tell us about their project. They emphasize the absence of a cash economy. The conflict, the remoteness, the poverty: all have resulted in the prevalence of barter and voluntary exchanges of work. The Samaritan's Purse project uses a form of sharecropping, where the use of the tractor is recompensed with twenty percent of the crop.

Queries on Corruption

Later we drive to the town of Lueri. Our route is unorthodox. We drop off Clint at one place, and this takes us off the usual course to Lueri. Josh thinks he knows another way to get there. Soon we are banging across fields and

creek beds. This becomes real four-wheeling, and we enjoy it. Isn't the journey half the fun? And doesn't it seem like ages ago that the UN briefer in Loki warned us to watch out in the Nuba Mountains for landmines and unexploded ordinance, to "stay on the roads"?



The only paved patch of road we saw in Southern Sudan



Eventually we do find a road. We ascend a steep valley, and the terraces begin. It is still dry here, but you can imagine what it must be like in springtime. This valley, with its many huts and dramatic heights, must be spectacular in green. At Lueri, in a compound at the top of a hillock, a group of local leaders awaits inside a large hut.¹⁰ The governor is away, but acting governor Simon Kato is here. Most of the leaders do not speak English, so there is a translation into southern Arabic—a softer, less guttural Arabic than say the Saudi version.

The hut's walls are three feet thick. Sunlight and breezes stream in through five windows and two open doors. We sit on white plastic chairs. A tiny puppy lurks beneath a long metal table. Jason thanks everyone for coming. Allan goes through his usual information about Tom and me, including as he always does all our stops and the planned workshops. With the translation, a lot of time goes by. Then the acting governor says a few words of welcome in English. And then there are questions.

One man asks me why there is corruption. The lone woman wants to know more—what types of corruption exist? A senior leader asks what can be done—are there rules for fighting corruption? Later he asks if some kinds of corruption are the most serious, to which priority should be given.

The acting governor asks how you can compare corruption across countries. Didn't Allan say in his remarks that the United States is one of the most corrupt countries? (He didn't, but he did say there was corruption, especially in business.)

One man wonders, "Why is it that a person will not report a theft or a bribe when he sees it, but later that same person will go on and on about how corrupt the system is?"

I answer each question as best I can. Then the conversation becomes more

¹⁰ Odai [?] Ibrahim, Rashad County Secretary; Mosa Abelu Abugi, RNLC Chairman; Hamed Al-Nil, Water, Dams and Environment Department; Sedig Mansur, Culture and Information; Kassim [?] Mohamed Saad, President High Court, Nuba Mountains; Tigani Tima, RRDO; Koja Tut, Director of Women, Gender, and Child Welfare; Jacob Alamin, SRRC, Nuba Mountains; Samuel Adlan [Sarid?], Regional Secretary, Finance Office; Hassan Abd Alla, NRRDO staff; Simon Kato, acting governor and Education Director.

two-sided.

One man says, "Peace if it comes will come because of international pressure. But the government of Sudan doesn't want peace really. They are forced into it. For us in Nuba, we face a big problem if this peace is signed. Money will flow into these mountains from there. Our people, they are still suffering from the war and are ignorant. Yes, the money will flow. If we haven't a system to organize the flow of money to the Nuba Mountains, it will cause problems."

He goes on in this vein. His concern becomes clearer—Arabs and others from the north will take advantage of the freedom to move to come here. Outsiders will gain power.

I tell them about a study of successful and unsuccessful Indian tribes in the United States. I use a lot of examples, but the gist is this. The successful tribes (in terms of economics, education, and avoiding alcoholism) are tribes that don't think traditional clothes are required for being, say, a true Apache...that welcome back their young people who go off the reservation for a college education...and that don't mind working for people who are not from their tribe, or even not Indians.

Sadiq says, "This part of ours is only half of the Nuba. The other half has been under Bashir, and their culture has changed. They will come back to this area with a different culture, a different religion, and a different language. Some of them will probably be sent here, even to cause trouble as agents. Bad trouble will ensue. What can we do?"

Others chime in. Their messages are less paranoid. But in this room there is no trust of the north, and much worry about the unforeseen consequences of peace.

Scorpion Bowl

We drive a half hour back to Samaritan's Purse, this time staying on the road. Now, as I write these notes at an outdoor table at the compound, the sun is setting over the hills behind me. I can hear children laughing and playing. A soccer game is underway about a hundred meters below, with various ages of boys having a wonderful time. They have just paused in their play for a large black and white bull to pass through. Outside a hut nearer by, some littler children are playing by their mother. I love their squeals of delight. It's a universal language.

Acting Governor Simon Kato is on my left. Allan Reed is at the far left of the picture, and Jason Matus is standing second from the right. Maulana Saad is in the dark blue shirt.



Universal, too, is the beauty of the big black rain clouds that lurk beyond the hills on the other side of the valley. Standing on the truck bed on the drive back, Tom and Allan and I saw some dramatic sunbeams fire forth from behind the storm clouds. Allan related that once in Sri Lanka, he and his wife and youngest daughter were at the beach. The sky had many clouds. Suddenly, a beautiful sunbeam broke through like a celestial spotlight. Allan's little daughter said, "Look at what God is doing!"

For dinner this evening, the main course is spaghetti with camel meat. Afterward we continue to sit in the main hut and enjoy some wine Allan brought to celebrate Jason's birthday. The wine leads to stories. It has begun to rain outside. Excellent, it will cool things off. But Jason says, "The rain also brings out the scorpions, you know."

Dale says, "They climb in your shoes at night. Tomorrow, make sure you shake out your shoes when you get up."

Scorpion stories flow forth. Dale and Josh take out a machine they call a snakebite and scorpion-bite zapper. You crank a handle and generate electricity through a zapper at the end of a wire. You can hear the zapper crackle.

"Yeah, they say if you zap the snakebite with this, it takes out the poison."

Dale and Josh offer free samples, jokingly I think. There are no takers.

Jason tells a story about a mischievous friend at the UN. He accumulated scorpions and cut off the poisonous tips of their tails, without which they are harmless. In the UN office, he put five of the scorpions inside a mug. He asked a colleague, "Would you like some tea?"

"Surely," the colleague replied.

Jason's friend then handed him the mug full of scorpions.

Jason impersonated the colleague lifting the cup to his lips, and then screaming as he tossed soft-tail scorpions all over the office.

Friday, April 30

At seven in the morning the temperature in our hut is eighty-eight degrees. The flimsy foam mattress on the traditional charpai bed creates a swayback effect. During the night the thatch roof sheds on me several times. But there

are no mosquitoes and no scorpions, and I sleep well.

As I grab some water in the main hut, I notice the handwritten quotations that are stuck with magnets on the refrigerator. Here's one I especially like:

Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do that. For what the world needs is more people who have come alive.

After breakfast Allan departs on his trip back to Nairobi, and Jason, Tom, and I visit the market in Kauda. A group of traders gathers on and around three charpai under a huge tree. All of them are men. They range from very old and traditionally dressed to quite young in t-shirts. Only a couple of them speak any English, so a young man named Nur translates. After a half hour's discussion of market conditions, the nascent traders' association, and what may happen when peace comes, we tour the market.

The merchants tell us that the market used to have about fifty shops before it was bombed by the north. We watch thick chapattis being baked, a goat being filleted, and bags of rice being parceled into packs the size of sandwich bags. The other consumer goods in this market are decidedly limited: soap, tea, and some food. We are shown one man who has just started making the market's first appliance. It is a burner to put over your fire—a foot high, two feet wide, with a carved grid in the middle, all created from a sheet of thin metal with the words USAID on the outside.

Dam Statistics

Later, back at the Samaritan's Purse, Hamed Al-Nil, regional director for water, dams and environment, stops by. He brings a project document for Lumon Dam Development, which he has recently written. I read it quickly. It says there are five hundred thirty thousand people in the SPLM area of the Nuba Mountains. The area has no irrigation. Much of its water goes to the Blue Nile—about a quarter of the total in that river.

In response to questions, Hamed says, "We want to construct three hundred dams and also watersheds. Many of the eleven dams that now exist have just been built. They are check dams, which enable the water to be absorbed and enter the aquifer."

Does his office have a map of the aquifers?

"We have no pictures and no plan, as our department was only founded in the middle of 2003. We are now going to establish a real department so we can do planning, so we need capacity building for our staff."

The market in Kauda



In our hut at Samaritan's Purse



His proposal is well done. I'm surprised by the budget at the end: only seven thousand dollars. This sum covers cement, money for supervisors and masons, but no general labor. I ask him about this omission.

Hamed says, "There is voluntary labor by the community." Later he says, "We know that America will be our right hand in the development process. You have solved a big problem for us in Nuba: Iraq. They came here in 1992, you know, two thousand Iraqi troops to help the government of Sudan. Over a thousand of them died in ambush by SPLA. We know how to fight in the mountains, they only know how to fight in the desert."

Before he leaves, Hamed asks, "Do you think these dams will have any bad consequences?" Yesterday Tom and I heard that some local dams had had adverse effects such as stagnant water and mosquitoes. But we just say we don't know, this subject is far from our areas of knowledge. Hamed's question is a little troubling, a little touching. After building eleven small dams and planning others, after getting his office going, Hamed is worried that the dams might have some bad effects, and he's not averse to admitting to two strangers his vague concerns.

Women Leaders

At one thirty, we drive to Lueri for meetings with acting governor Simon Kato and some women's groups. The route proves much easier when one is ostensibly on the road. It's one hundred four degrees on Tom's thermometer, and he and I stand at the back of the truck, baked and blasted. I forget to bring water. In the hut where we meet there are large urns of water. Two cupfuls help me recover. But as we're talking with Simon, I find my eyes blinking and my mind wishing for sleep.

Simon's main responsibility is education. He fears what may happen after the unification of the Government of Sudan part of the Nuba Mountains and the part he helps govern. "Their education system is completely Islamic," he said. "Ours is not. We cannot have that system." He describes their current patchwork of some syllabi from Kenya and others from Uganda. Some teachers have come from Kenya, too. Norwegian Church Aid has set up a center in Kauda that's now training sixty teachers. I ask if the educational system after peace couldn't allow for different kinds of schools.

"No, we have to have one unified school program," Simon replies. "It's important for our unity."

I tell him about the worldwide movement toward school choice. There is one common system of funding and examinations and so forth, but people are allowed to choose different kinds of schools. Might something like that work also for Nuba? Simon asks a few questions. At the end I think the conceptual point of unity is what matters to him, and that curricular diversity might be allowed. I hope so.

The women's leaders arrive. The poor things have to sit in the sun while Simon finishes talking with us. More plastic chairs are brought in. And then the ladies enter, resplendent with color. I serve them some water, which two of them quaff. It is hot outside.

The ladies appear to be in their twenties and thirties, except for one more senior woman who may be forty-five.¹¹ Most are wearing long dresses that include a wraparound part on top, which can be drawn up over their heads to shield them from the sun or from unwanted glances. The dresses are varied, with the common denominator of vivid color. One dress is bright yellow with orange tropical flowers. Another dress is orange, and the others are pink, red, blue, dark green, and light green. The oldest lady has an orange African print dress with a matching headpiece. One other woman has a more modern-looking get-up: a black bottom, a red top, and a blue do-rag.

Up to the ceasefire a couple of years ago, we're told, the women of Nuba didn't wear these highly colored, Arab-style wraparounds. "They have adopted the dress but are keeping their own culture," someone tells us.

We ask them to introduce themselves and tell what they do. Only two understand English, so an assistant to Simon named Cornelius does the translating. The women are shy at first. They are all volunteers. One is working in education. Others are working in what is translated as mother and child care. Several give tailoring classes. Two are leaders in the women's organization. Tom asks about the purpose of this organization. It was founded in 1989 to help the victims of the war, including widows and their families. They have branched into educational activities to help women enter livelihoods and to assist schools.

¹¹ They include Zenb Ahamed Jalab, agricultural development; Martha Kodi Atebero, school (tailoring); Nahala Mohamed Arabi, child care; Mary Ibrahim Tia, child care; Rashida Basonda, tailor; Nadia Afsus, tailor; Husha Anur Tutu, child care; Samira Jama, D/Chir.La [sic], Women's Association; Mariam Abushuk, director of finance, Women's Association.

Jason tells them we'll be seeing the Chairman and other leaders next week. What message would they like us to convey? The women burst forth with suggestions, which turn out to be a proverbial laundry list of development needs. More schools. Hospitals and clinics. Water. Improvement in agriculture. Transportation. Electricity. Then a couple of items closer to where they live: radio communications for the women's organizations, more grinding mills they can help run, and more classes in tailoring.

After a while I indulge in a pep talk about how important is their role, the role of women in general, in creating the new government of the New Sudan. In particular, how corruption can be such a threat to development, and how civil society and its eyes and ears can be such a deterrent to corruption. The ladies describe some of the corruption they experience, and we joke half-seriously about how around the world it always seems that women are less corrupt than men.

Then we offer to answer any questions they have, about America say or anything they like.

"Do women in America have freedom, or are they under the control of the men as they are in Nuba?"

This occasions laughter all around. I tell them that my wife is free but Tom's is under his thumb. Tom jokes, "The opposite...I'm under her thumb," and the ladies laugh. "I'm fighting for *my* rights," he says, and they laugh some more.

I offer them more water. More of them drink now, as do I.

They ask about women's careers in America. Tom tells them about his daughters—how they illustrate that some women work at a career without having a family, others have a career and a family, and still others set aside careers after having children. Jason tells about his own experience following his wife's job, and doing the household chores and childcare until he found his own job. The women are fascinated.



Great Big Globbs

Eventually, our conversation is over, and we take some photos and say goodbye. I have an hour and a half to enjoy the sights and sounds of the village. Then at dusk about twenty men start arriving for a dinner in our honor, given by the acting governor. We sit outside on white plastic chairs. Maulana Saad is the judge I met yesterday, the President of the High Court of the Nuba Mountains. He'll attend the workshop in Rumbek. He's smart and jolly, and we have a great time. He tells me about customary law.

"You have to learn it from other people, as it is not written. It is very important, and customary law is different here from say the Dinka customary law. What is an example? Well, one is blood money. They pay one cow, we pay eleven cows."

Sitting by him is a policeman. He and the judge tell me about crime, which is mostly murder and theft. And most of the murders are because of adultery.

"Who is killed, the man or the woman?" I ask.

"Sometimes both," laughs Maulana.

The thefts, too, often involve women. Are there many property disputes? Not now, but after peace when many displaced people and refugees return, there will be many disputes. Maulana says they haven't made plans for this onslaught of legal activity.

Like every other official except imported teachers, the judge and the policeman work as volunteers. How does the policeman feed his family? "From cultivation." Do you get bonuses for recovering stolen property? "No, just from cultivation."

I meet two educational officials. One is an inspector of schools. He cannot get around to inspect.

"We have no transportation, and it is twelve hours' walk over here to that school" (he motions to the east) "and perhaps ten hours walk over there to another school."

This gentleman is at least fifty, so it's an even more arduous trek for him.

"We have to *inspect* while sitting in our offices. This is no good."

The other man is a coordinator of education. Both of them tell me about the "bush teachers" that work in one hundred twenty local schools. They get no pay but are supported by the community with food and lodging, perhaps the

equivalent of forty dollars per month per teacher.

“But last year we had a bad rain and a bad harvest,” the coordinator says, “so this year there is little food. Consequently, some communities cannot feed their teachers. Some schools stop.”

After a few questions, they reckon that this is seventy of the hundred and twenty schools this year, averaging five teachers each, so you might be talking about one hundred forty thousand dollars per month to take care of the problem for schools serving a population of half a million people. Jason says that the World Food Program has provisions for food for teachers. The two educators say that nothing has come from this source.

For dinner we have rice, thick chapatti, and goat. One pot contains globs of goat meat and bones. Another pot contains the goat’s innards, with an intestine floating like a wiggly eel. After conversations with several other officials over dinner and tea, we depart for the dark drive home, which seems even more daring because you can’t see the bumps coming.

Saturday, May 1

The wakeup call is a goat’s bleat just outside the window of the hut. We have breakfast with Dale, Josh, Clint, and Jason. After a while, six relatively senior men arrive. They’ve been walking in the hot sun to come see us. One tells us he’s walked two hours to get here. The six have this in common: all have worked with the Government of Sudan. In other words, with the north.¹²

They express great distrust of the north. One man who worked in the Royal Palace as a protocol officer says, “They train people to be corrupt. They will send them here.” Another is the former Governor of Darfur, where all the trouble is now raging; he has been here only a week. The conversations reinforce pessimism about true north-south unity.

At two we are at the Kauda airstrip for our flight. Tom and I wander over to a crashed plane. In its cargo hold we find people sitting and sleeping, as if in

¹² It is hard to make out their names on the scrap of paper I circulated. Ammad Mansour, ex police officer; Salih Hamid Nuba Eldood, Lt. Col. [?] retired; Osman Z. Zerkeuh-Kuur; Ibrahim Yahia Ab Rahman; Mosa Kuwa Idris; Ahmed Bhao Hajana, retired brigadier.

a very informal lounge in a passenger terminal. One of them is Maulana. He laughs, "Remember you promised me a cold beer in Rumbek!" To him – and now, after a few days, to Tom and me – the idea of a cold beer is exotic.

A rare break from the action (Samaritan's Purse)



At Kauda Airstrip



The UN relief plane arrives. We get our bags and proceed to the back end of the plane. An official can't find our names on the passenger manifest. Then he says, "The flight to Rumbek was this morning. This one goes to Loki."

Once again you think of how Allan summarizes aid work in Southern Sudan: "Logistics, logistics, logistics."

Jason wheels out his satellite phone. But there's no time for negotiation. This is a cargo plane, with a tight deadline. It has to be at its final destination, Lokichoggio, by an hour before dusk.



One of the pilots boards. The rear cargo doors close. The engines start, and dust kicks up on us as we stand behind the tail. Then the other pilot runs over from where he was calling or radioing. "You're on." So, we scurry aboard with our bags, the door closes ten seconds later, and the plane starts moving. A minute later we are airborne.

Maulana can't join us. He has no passport, and so he can't go to Lokichoggio, Kenya. There won't be a flight tomorrow to Rumbek. Maulana will miss the workshop—and the cold beer.

The engines are loud. I put in radio earphones that are really earplugs. This brings relief. I put on a sleep mask from the flight over, and doze off.

The UN plane makes two stops to drop bags of food and barrels of fuel. At the first stop, a hundred children stream out from all around the tiny airstrip, and stand beneath the wings of the plane. We're on the ground for five minutes and then zoom off. The same at the second stop. And then, on the last, two-and-a-half-hour leg to Loki, the pilot comes back and says, "We now have orders to take you to Rumbek." Why, we don't know. Soon, we're in Rumbek. The bar serves cold beers, and we glory in one or two. I think of poor Maulana. Then a shower. Then a full dinner. Wow, this is civilization.

Sunday, May 2

Sunday is hot. On the inside of my right wrist a nasty patch of prickly heat breaks out. Most of the day I work in a large open-sided tent by the bar. I revise materials for the workshop tomorrow and Tuesday. At three o'clock, I take a shower to cool off, but just before that I stupidly lift some weights in the great heat. The result is that even after cooling off in the warm shower, when I come back over to the open-sided tent my body is streaming sweat. So, I take three drinks of water, and after a while I go to the camp office. It has a rudimentary air conditioner. I sit in the far office on an empty chair and finish my work. About five o'clock I go to the thatch-roofed, open-sided bar. It has just begun to rain.



Alates

I order a beer. The downpour gets heavier. The camp manager runs across the rain-sloshed broken brick to the bar, his hair wet as a muskrat's.

"This is the heaviest rain this year," he says.

The rain blows sideways and lasts a long time. A short while after it ends, a horde of flying termites, or alates, suddenly appears. They come forth every

year just after the first big rain. They swarm to lights.

Another insect appears after the first rain, a tiny creature in phosphorescent red-orange. “When we see him,” one Sudanese tells me, “we know it’s time to plant.”



When he comes out, it’s time to plant.

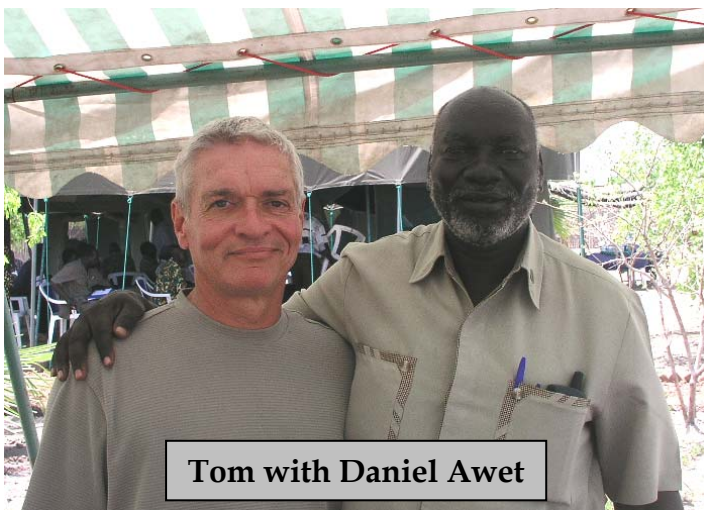
Monday, May 3

As I shave this morning, I find the sink layered with the wings of flying termites. This is part of what alates do in their first days of life—fly around, find light (or in this case the bright white of the sink, lit up at night), and shed their wings. From there, it’s presumably back to the good earth, on foot.

Our workshop begins at ten. People began arriving yesterday, but a couple of small planes don’t arrive till nine or so this morning. Logistics, logistics, logistics.

About forty people attend the workshop. They include traditional leaders, judges, commissioners, prison wardens, and civil servants. Also a few members of civil society—only four women, though. The participants include several members of the SPLM leadership. Commander Daniel Awet is the most senior. He makes a speech to kick off the workshop. David Deng is also a major figure, and he has a word later. I am pleased to see that Francis the Undersecretary of Finance from Yei is here, and also Michael the Customs Director. I am less delighted to see the Rumbek deputy commissioner sitting in the back row, his posture suggesting the prior consumption of a morning tot.

The workshop is a mixture of case studies, breakout groups, and lectures. Plus plenty of breaks for water. (The workshop's agenda is in Annex 1, at the end of these notes.)



Tom with Daniel Awet

In spite of the rain, the temperature is over ninety degrees. Because of the rain, it is humid. The group is diligent despite the discomforts. For the breakout sessions, each set of ten participants goes off to a table under the shade of a tarp or a thatched roof or a tree. They figure out what they'd do if they

were the mayor of La Paz or the leader of a town in the Philippines—places brought to their knees by inflation or decay, places characterized by inefficient or absent government, places threatened by corruption. Then they come back under the big open-sided tent, where each group presents its recommendations. Then I show them with slides what actually happened.

I chose success stories, where governance was improved and poverty was reduced—at least, for a good while. After they hear the “solutions,” they comment on the applicability to Southern Sudan. At first, the tendency is always to say, “We’re not like Bolivia” or “The Philippine situation is very different.” But later they find lessons, or inspiration.

“What I take away from this case,” Commander Daniel Awet says about the mayor of La Paz, “is how much difference a person can make who has will

power. That is what we need, dedication and will power.”

Tom kids him later with a new nickname: Captain Willpower. He likes it. My two lectures today deal with corruption as a policy problem and with some of the particular corruption problems Southern Sudan will face, such as a possible “resource curse” from all the oil and aid money, procurement and contracting for public works, revenue agencies, and creating a civil service. (The slides for these lectures appear in Annexes 2 and 3 at the end of these notes.)

After dinner, participants are invited to join a reception being sponsored by a UN dignitary visiting separately. He is off at a long table with Daniel, David, and some other domos. I have a chance to move among several other tables and chat with the participants. They freely express their impressions of widespread corruption in the NGOs, the SPLA, and the nascent agencies of the New Sudan.

It’s getting late as eight of us talk at a table under the stars. On an impulse I tell them about a custom our family has with the two smallest children. After saying prayers at night, they say what they are thankful for that day – and the parent saying the goodnight does the same. I tell them that I tried this out at the end of a small dinner with Chinese professors last September in Beijing. It was remarkable how interesting and moving it was. Would they like to try it now? I’ll start.

I say I’m thankful for their dedication and for my children’s hugs. We go around the group. The first three say in various ways that they are thankful for what they’ve learned today.

“I learned that we can do something about corruption, that it’s a problem of systems and not people,” one says.

“I’m thankful for the chance to be here and share the professor’s wisdom,” says another. (I knew I’d like this.)

Eventually we arrive at Francis the undersecretary, who was stellar today. He expresses his thanks in an eloquent prayer, with this basic text: Dear God, We have suffered so much as a people, we have fought for so long, and we are thankful that peace is almost here. May our efforts make worthwhile the sacrifices of all those who have died in search of freedom and justice. You have always been faithful to us. Amen.

Tuesday, May 4

It seems hotter than ever today. The rain of two nights ago has created the effect of a steam bath. The sun rules in a cloudless sky, and all day I drink glass after glass of lukewarm water.

A group at work (distance) and other guests at the bar (foreground).



In the workshop we start homing in on Southern Sudan. The participants are eager. They consider an imaginary news story from 2007 (it appears on the next page). The story describes great success in Southern Sudan: peace, agricultural revival, the good use of oil money and aid, and an effective government that cares. I ask the participants to read it aloud, one person per paragraph. We begin in the front row, where the senior leaders sit. Reading glasses must be borrowed, and the passing of the glasses from one reader to another is accompanied by good-natured whoops of laughter. Some of the participants

Southern Sudan's Remarkable Success

Southern Sudan, April 2007 (AP) - Last week someone asked former World Bank President James Wolfensohn what has been the developing world's most remarkable turnaround. His answer began: "Southern Sudan."

What a change from three years ago. Skeptics said the accord between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Sudanese government would not last. They predicted that the region would soon erupt again in civil strife.

Even if peace prevailed, development was thought to be almost impossible. Continuous conflict had devastated the infrastructure and towns. Thousands of displaced persons were pouring back across the borders. The civil service was archaic. Foreign investment was virtually nil. Although there would be foreign aid, skeptics worried that the money would be wasted or lost to corruption.

But Southern Sudan has surprised the skeptics. It has made the most of its advantages. The economy has grown at almost 10 percent per year. Conflict has not erupted. Foreign aid has been effectively utilized to meet the most urgent development needs. A highly motivated, comparatively well-paid civil service is in place, working well with international experts. Transparency International rates Southern Sudan one of the least corrupt countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

As Wolfensohn said, "The most important thing is that new government in Southern Sudan has been committed to development on behalf of all the people."

Agriculture, a Solid Success

Even from an elevated 2003 base, Sudan has enjoyed large increases. Agriculture production rose another 25% in 2004 and then 30% more in 2005. Southern Sudan has instituted a satellite-based surveillance

system to track acreage in production, with an annual target of 10% growth.

Minister of Agriculture William Abu credits "strong regional programs, the spirit and vigor of the Sudanese farmers, and outside productive investment."

"We have employed some very capable regional managers, trained them with outside help, paid them well, and provided additional compensation based on their region's performance," Abu says. "Once peace prevailed, many of our citizen farmers applied new vigor to their fields, feeling confident that their efforts would go to fruition."

Oil Development

Petroleum is dangerous for development. George Soros says, "The 'resource curse' afflicts most countries rich in oil and other extractive resources. It distorts the economy. Corruption flourishes when natural resources are abundant."

But Southern Sudan acted early to avoid these problems. As Timothy French, of *World Oil and Gas*, notes, "The government made many good decisions: their use of outside experts to help negotiate sound oil development agreements, their progress in developing their reserves, and especially the transparency in their petroleum business. It is clear that the cash flow from these reserves is building the country's base economy."

Today, revenues from the Southern Sudan oil reserves are approaching the three-year annual target of \$1.2 billion.

Foreign Aid

In 2004, donors were poised to enter, but only if the new leadership could develop both a strategic plan and an administrative structure that would guarantee the aid would be well used.

"Our government employs relatively few people, compared to other parts of Africa. We have emphasized quality," notes Edward Luk, Minister of the Interior. "They are well paid, carefully evaluated, and they care deeply about their work. We have taken advantage of foreign aid, not only to get the resources we needed but also to train Southern Sudanese to take over."

"They used foreign experts ruthlessly," agrees the UNDP's Jurgen Frommer. "They took advantage of strategic help in areas like oil and social audits. They reconceptualized the whole idea of foreign advisers, instead thinking of them as teachers and capacity builders."

Serving the People's Interests

After decades of civil war, the population's spirit was depleted. Some still had a warfare mentality. Chairman John Garang adopted a communications program to the people, deploying radios and newspapers to convey and create new expectations.

In particular, the government emphasized the legal system and property rights. "This was critically important in supporting investment in agriculture," notes Jean-Louis Perrin of the French Cooperation. "It was also important in beginning to resolve thousands of local and regional disputes, thereby slowly diminishing some historic sources of conflict."

don't read that well, but they all are game; and as the story is read, the audience enters into its hopeful future.

How might Southern Sudan get from now to then? They break into their four groups. Each person has ten or fifteen minutes to write down what steps might get us from the current situation to that nice success. Then, within the group the various steps are shared, one person after another. The job of the group is to come up with a kind of collective scenario.

The participants seem undaunted by the heat and the hard work. Tom and Cheryl move from group to group, making sure things move along; sometimes I do, too. After a tea and water break, a rapporteur from each group presents its findings. After each presentation there are questions and comments, and then applause. Critical voices are not absent. Questioners wonder if success is possible without A, B, or C. Several themes emerge, including this workshop's focus: setting up a government that works.

The tasks get more pointed after lunch. What should the new government do in its first year to make these scenarios more likely? Group work, then report back, then a break for tea and water.

And then comes the conclusion of the workshop. We all stay together in plenary session, with this question: Given what we've learned, what specifically should we do now, what should each of us do?

The first answers are provided by the big shots. Daniel Awet calls for renewal and willpower. David Deng talks about how he is helping set up

the new government structure.

But then many other people direct their remarks at what I should do, or what USAID should do. One says, "The professor should come back and give these workshops for the grassroots, too." Others follow suit. The professor should return for anti-corruption training for all the leadership, for the private sector, for the liberation army commanders, and so forth. The professor should tell the Chairman about the group's conclusions: gently, indirectly, "you suggest to him." The spell is broken by Achol Cyier, the young leader of the women's association of this region. Achol is about 6'2" and fit as a cheetah. She says, "This is not what we are asked, to tell others what to do. We should say what each of us will do. We should examine ourselves and then say what we should do. We should pledge ourselves."

Her remark wakes us up. But the next person in the queue to speak had his hand up before Achol's reminder, and he comes back to the need for more training.

But then Francis speaks.

"When I came here, I was nervous that this workshop would be looking at us. Then I was glad it was about other countries—Bolivia, Philippines." Several people laugh. "But now I'm thinking about what the sister just said, that we have to begin by cleaning our own houses. We live around corruption, and the first thing we must do is go back and clean up our own houses."

He goes on to say some things about finance and its problems, coming close to confession. No one is laughing now. Francis closes with a call to self-examination and rededication, and promises he will clean house as soon as he returns to Yei.

The declarations continue. At the end, Daniel Awet speaks, assuming his role as the senior person. He affirms Francis's call to self-examination. He closes effusively. "Your principles, which we have learned at this workshop, are lights all around. They will help us see, see the obstacles of something bad over here, and then how we can avoid it."

To provide formal closure, there is a short speech by a Rumbek dignitary and then some remarks by Cheryl, including logistics for the trip home tomorrow.

Then I invite everyone to have a drink at the bar, one each. The barman sets it up and keeps track of each person's name and choice of soft drink, beer, or

wine. (Later he tells me that four people tried to get two drinks—that one judge later insisted that he be allowed to have some more wine, and the barman was browbeaten into charging it.)

As we mingle together in the dusk, the mood is convivial but not ebullient. We are tired and stimulated, drained and inspired, confused and celebratory. We have dinner. I have a drink at the bar with Yvonne, the young American camp manager. She has heard from the bartender about the attempts to get more drinks, and about some other guests trying to get free drinks by saying they were in the seminar.

"They'll take it as far as they can," Yvonne says. She tells stories to convey that "many are taking money, the big men, the commanders and the commissioners and so forth." But her big message is, "I love the people here."

I wander from table to table, sitting for a while with the participants. They are talking about government and corruption and the tasks ahead. At one table the elderly head of the prisons looks at me and says, "What if one has to be the big fish?"

This term "big fish" is one we've used throughout the seminar. An anti-corruption campaign must catch big fish, not just small fry; otherwise, people don't believe anything has changed.

Puzzled, I ask the head of prisons what he means.

He inquires softly, "How did you pay for the drinks you invited us to tonight?"

I paid for it out of my own pocket.

"What if you didn't have a deep enough pocket?"

Then I get it. Like other leaders, his role creates expectations. He must occasionally or even often provide hospitality or more—help or support or subsistence. Where should he, as a volunteer now or as a lowly paid government official in the future, come up with the resources? Unsaid is the add-on "without in some sense being corrupt."

Others at the table address his concerns before I have to. I'm grateful for that, because I don't have a good answer for the head of prisons. At the end of the rambling conversation, all I can manage to say is that there are realities that have to be faced. Like ourselves, our starting points are always imperfect. I relate the story of a president who told me that he understood

that corruption constrained his country but that his party's finances were based on corruption, at least for now. "If I fight this sort of corruption, I will fall, or perhaps even be killed," he said. "How should I begin?" And I relate what I said in response, the themes I sounded. Have a strategy. Do things in a sequence: don't try everything at once. Begin with something easy to correct. Then build political support and isolate enemies. Embedded in these themes is a sad message for naïve idealists: We have to begin where we are, acknowledging the imperfections in our situations and in ourselves.

I ask the head of prisons and the others at the table if that advice shocks them. Does it seem impure? Would it be better to say, "Well, if that's what expectations are, you can't do anything"?

They answer only indirectly, or perhaps don't answer at all. I suppose it's too abstract a question, and it's getting late.

I say goodnight to everyone and wander off for a shower and bed. Tonight there is a partial lunar eclipse, which adds a note of the ethereal to a day of hopes and promises, of self-examination and realities that hurt. In the heat and with all the questions buzzing in my head, I find it hard to sleep.

Wednesday, May 5

At breakfast Commander Daniel Awet sits down alongside.

"I have two things for you," he says. "Here is something I worked on last night and today."

He hands me a handwritten letter. It is his declaration of what he will do.

4/5/2004

Proff. Robert Klitgaard

Thank you very much for your inspiring, lively and enthusiastic training workshop that could allow participants [not?!--RK] to sleep in a hot climate of Southern Sudan. I have taken the principles as my guidance, security, power and wisdom to educate that follows me. I will use them in the approach, methods and preventive measures throughout my life to the people who have been exploited, oppressed and dominated for many years. I say I will do, nothing will prevent me. I will use your tools as follows in three months

- Prepare good governance policy development with inspired principles I have

learnt.

- *Explain to the lower level the better ways to prevent corruption to individuals, groups and systems by will power.*
- *Encourage the empowerment of the civil society so as to give the necessary information about corruption and check the executive.*
- *There will be no impunity to those who misuse the public fund and enrich themselves without sweat.*
- *Share with groups that hate corruption.*

CDR Daniel Awet Akir

"Awesome, Daniel," I say. Then Daniel gives me something else. Each of the members of the senior leadership wears a lapel pin that is a flag of Southern Sudan. Daniel gives me one. I give him a hug.

Throughout the morning people depart for various places in various small planes, so there are many goodbyes. Our aircraft finally arrives, a small ten-passenger job. Six Sudanese leaders, Tom, Cheryl, and I clamber aboard and bake in its tiny, airless confines.

Tom looks at the temperature gauge on his watch. "One zero zero," he says. A few minutes later, it has fallen to ninety-five. But with all the sweat now charging our microcosm, the humidity has risen. Five minutes later, the pilot finally makes his way gymnastically over us and our bags and gets to his seat. He turns on the motors, and at last air starts to circulate. We are all mopping our faces.

Finally we are airborne. We watch as the dry, hot surface of Rumbek recedes. After a while, the circulating air is cool. The air conditioning is working. As I type these notes, my skin is dry, except for behind my knees.

But a little later, a stream of steam suddenly flies out of the pilot's area. He precipitously drops the plane from twenty-one thousand feet down to thirteen thousand feet. In a minute he takes off his headphones and peers back into the cabin.

"We just lost our pressurization," he tells us. "So, we have to reduce our altitude. This means that we'll use more fuel, and that we'll have to stop in Loki to get more. Then we'll go on to Nairobi."

So, we fly to Lokichoggio, deplane, and get a bottle of water. We clear

immigration at Loki. It is hot. We spend about a half hour on the ground, as the plane bakes in the sun. We're dreading getting back in, another "one zero zero" container experience. I drink some more water in preparation.

We get back on the plane. Again the sweat streams forth. The pilot is



quicker to board this time, and in a few minutes we're off again, the air conditioning is on, and we're on our way to Nairobi, in the cool Kenyan highlands.

We arrive in Nairobi at about five. Everyone says goodbye, and the Sudanese depart in taxis. Our USAID ride did not materialize, so Cheryl, Tom, and I share a taxi. Tom and I arrive at the hotel about five thirty. A cold beer and then a hot shower have seldom been more welcome.

Later we have dinner with Allan Reed, another USAID official, and three people who provide technical assistance on governance, under a contract with USAID. The meal is at an Italian restaurant, with delicacies we have not enjoyed for a while, such as salad and pizza. Tom and I are feeling a little giddy. We laugh when lightning bolts strike nearby. Two blackouts fail to dim our enjoyment. The three technical assistants are from England (two) and Ireland (one), with long experience of Sudan. Their sights are set

low, I think—giving grants to small organizations so as not to start conflict, and as one puts it, “helping the bicycles get to the right judges.” But they are out there, grinding it out for weeks at a time in Southern Sudan, then returning to Nairobi and their families for write-ups and respite. I admire their dedication.

Back in the hotel, I admire Nairobi’s temperate climate and the room’s overhead fan—and the novelty of sleeping without sweat.

Thursday, May 6

After breakfast we leave for Naivasha. Our destination is the Lake Naivasha Country Club, where the leadership of the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement has congregated...and where Chairman John Garang and his team are trying to finalize that elusive peace agreement with the Government of Sudan.

Last night’s rain came on top of a week of downpours. Some flooding has occurred. We descend the great rift down to Naivasha. On the flat land below, the road to the Country Club has a rapid rivulet running across it, tearing out the blacktop. First one way of traffic, then the other, is allowed slowly to proceed across the dangerous twenty-meter stretch. Our four-



wheel drive has no trouble, and finally we arrive at the Country Club.

The British do some things brilliantly, and the colonial club is one of them. The spectacular grounds feature huge trees and immense lawns that run to the edge of the lake, where hippos abound and cranes are frequent. Small gray monkeys play in the trees, and they try to invade the tea table on the lawn, their eyes on the sweet cakes assembled there. Our meeting will take place in a large clubroom. I check out the scene. One side of the room is set with two U's of tables, one inside the other. The other side of the room has the comfortable sofas and seats that invite the reading of a magazine on, say, duck hunting.

The participants begin to assemble on the lawn outside. We greet these future ministers and secretaries. Eventually the group moves inside, and more eventually still, Chairman John Garang arrives. Everyone stands. He greets Tom. He greets me. He greets everyone around the table, and then he sits down. Allan Reed opens the meeting with a short set of remarks. Then the Chairman reads a three-page speech. He talks about the importance of good government. He describes corruption he's seen in Southern Sudan and how it must be removed. Then he says he must go back to the talks, it's a crucial moment. (Later in the day, Secretary of State Colin Powell calls both sides, to urge them on.) Everyone stands, and Dr. Garang departs.

And then the workshop begins. I give a talk on corruption—what it is, how devastating it can be to development, and the particular problems caused by natural resources. There are many good questions.

Then we go to the imaginary future news story about Southern Sudan's great success. The participants take turn reading the paragraphs aloud. At the point where it says that in 2007 Southern Sudan will be rated one of the least corrupt countries in Africa, someone quips, "I don't believe it!" and everyone laughs. At the end of the news story, everyone applauds. Then comes their assignment: "What is a chain of events that would get us from now to then?" Three groups are formed, and they dive in. A half hour later it's time for lunch, but everyone continues working for a half hour more. They're into it.



Tom and Cheryl leave for Nairobi, where Tom will give a talk to a business organization and Cheryl will catch up on work missed when she was with us in Rumbek.

We have a buffet lunch. After lunch, the groups present their results (these appear in Annex 4 at the end of these notes). I give another lecture, this one on what to do about corruption in key areas such as natural resources, roads, taxes and customs, and credit systems.

Then there are questions, which turn into comments, and suddenly into revelations. Commander Pagan Amom opens the proverbial floodgates with a surprising and impassioned speech.

“Our discussion has talked about preventing corruption, and we have been pretending that we have a clean slate. But I want to say right now that we are already corrupt. In fact, we are full of corruption.”

The room is dead still. Pagan starts illustrating.

“Let me give you an example. I led a delegation on a trip to Khartoum and got thirty thousand dollars for the expenses and so forth. I paid for the travel and the hotel and all of that. I gave three hundred dollars to someone with a health problem. Now, after the trip I have five thousand left over. No one asks me about it. That is the way we are. But then, watch this. One day a colleague in the SPLM is after me for something else. He is angry with me, and then he raises the question in front of others, ‘What ever happened to that thirty thousand dollars?’ and I become furious with him. ‘How dare you ask me?’ I say. And this is our attitude, after all the war.”

Pagan condemns this attitude, using himself as the first object of criticism. He goes on to describe how SPLA commanders get money in unorthodox ways, and how they are not accountable for what they do with it. Lax or absent systems can lead to corruption. Pagan says people who collect revenue may think, “Well, I’ll take a little of this for myself. Then, since no one asks me about it, next time I take a little more, or even all of it, and no one ever asks.”

Pagan is a brilliant talker—a winning combination of storyteller and analyst. He concludes with a challenge to his colleagues to clean up their collective act. I think to myself if outsiders said these things to this group, they’d be rejected and condemned. But Commander Pagan’s speech opens windows of recognition.

Governor Deng Alor confirms Pagan’s description, giving his own examples.

The SPLM's number two man Dr. Riak Machar adds his voice in agreement. I'm amazed. These are three of the heaviest figures in the SPLM, and they're basically confessing a sad reality they all know about and can no longer pretend doesn't exist. Pagan had concluded, "We really have two choices. We can become a modern government, with free markets and open borders and democracy. Or we can become a kleptocracy, where everyone steals. There is no middle position." Riak says he agrees, and then he addresses Allan and me. He asks for our help—really, the international community's—in moving from a traditional system to a modern one.

Another leader speaks. What will become of commanders used to autonomous authority when peace leads to rules and accountability systems? I am amazed at the boldness of his question, because many of his listeners are commanders. Then someone gets even bolder. Most leaders of the SPLA should be decommissioned, he says. Could they be given a kind of pension-in-advance and some other help in setting up a life outside the military?

How frank these points are. How vital they are to supplement the valid but more conventional recommendations the three groups made in their exercises. There, they talked about creating a policy about X and setting up a procedure about Y and promoting Z. Now, they're talking about the Movement itself—transforming it from a wartime, ad hoc system of governance to one that might make possible their dreams. The shift from the analytical and declaratory mode of the group reports is striking and, I conjecture, therapeutic. The mode is now confession and commitment.

Their animated and sometimes emotional conversation goes on and on. Suddenly, they realize that they've gone twenty-five minutes past the planned ending time. I tell the group we have to miss what was supposed to be the last part of the workshop: what they propose to do to promote good governance and anti-corruption in the first year after they take power. Moved by the moment and perhaps wanting to contribute to some sort of closure, I find myself asking if they'd like me to take the last five minutes to give them an outline of my own tentative thoughts about priorities in good governance and anti-corruption. They are enthusiastic. I tick off some of the vulnerable areas they've already discussed. Oil revenues. Public works. Taxes and customs. Credit. And some themes to keep in mind. Get the best international advice—then you make the decisions. Get the people to participate, to have oversight. Invite transparency from outside and from below. Worry about incentives. I conclude by telling them how impressed I am by their struggle, by their honesty, and by their ambition—and how their

foreign friends will do anything we can to help them.

There is applause and the shaking of hands. Then Allan makes a few final remarks, and Riak draws things to a formal close with a remarkable short talk that recaps the day's most important points.



Governor Malek and the economist Anna Ito, at Naivasha

I'm given another of the special lapel pins with the Sudanese flag—this one can be for Tom. Then more shaking of hands. Noisily, we go outside. A professional photographer has been snapping away much of the day, and now out come a dozen other cameras owned by the participants. In the soft light of late afternoon, group photos are accompanied by laughter.

Fifteen minutes later, it is over, and Allan and I are on the way back to Nairobi.

Friday, May 7

In the grand plan of this visit, Allan hoped I would on this last official day give a talk to the donors—the people from the World Bank and the European Community, from Oxfam and CARE, from Norway and Britain, as well as from USAID. Allan asked me to make a presentation about how donors could insure that aid to Southern Sudan “do no harm.” And then in Rumbek and Naivasha, Allan asked the SPLM to send representatives if they wished. This they did: this morning a two-hour meeting is attended by five or six SPLM leaders along with about forty representatives of donor organizations and NGOs.

The venue is the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology, located next to USAID. As you enter you pass a statue with a huge bug. My knowledge of ichthyology is limited. Wait, that's fish. Anyway, in my ignorance I don't try to figure out which six- or eight-legged creature is memorialized, except to notice in a passing glance that it's not one of my new friends—not the flying termite nor the little red bug that tells you when to plant.

Inside the insect research building is a small auditorium, in which a large square of tables seats many of the participants, with others in three rows of seats at the back and a row on the side. I've thought about the topic Allan has in mind, “do no harm.” It is an intriguing way to think about helping someone, expressing an assumption or at least a recognition that aid can do damage. But it also seems too negative to fit the plans and the passion of the Southern Sudanese I've been meeting. How might we think more boldly and more positively?

Do No Harm

That trying to help can hurt is a standard argument of reactionaries.¹³ This does not of course mean that it is a false argument. Indeed, in foreign aid there are classic examples of aid doing harm, or at least being perceived that way. In many countries, a large influx of relief and development assistance tends to be associated with:

- Local resentment about the NGOs and technical assistance people (their relative wages, lifestyles, and influence), and
- Poor planning and coordination among donors and recipients leading to such phenomena as collocated clinics, imbalance, and even contradictory policies.

These are already issues in Southern Sudan, and they may grow in importance after the peace. But after mentioning them in passing, this morning I focus on two rarer but not unknown issues.

1. The Resource Curse

A large inflow of aid money may resemble the resource curse—especially when the aid is combined with the large oil revenues that Southern Sudan will receive after the peace. Perhaps surprisingly, recent research argues that developing countries that seem to be blessed with large natural resource revenues turn out to be cursed by them. The natural resources can cause distorted fiscal policies, inappropriate social spending, excessively low income taxes, and bloated military budgets. In addition, abundant natural resources can trigger rent-seeking behavior by policymakers, which eventually leads to weakened, unrepresentative, or corrupt governments. What can Southern Sudan do to avoid the resource curse, both from aid and from oil?

One idea is to establish a fund that invests the potentially cursed revenues. An example is the Alaska Permanent Fund. At least twenty-five percent of oil revenues must be deposited into the fund, after which only the real return on the fund can be disbursed every year. All Alaskan residents, including children, typically receive a one thousand dollar annual check from the Fund. The Fund is independent of the state legislature, and the statutes that govern the Fund's management can be changed only by popular vote. The

¹³ Albert O. Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1991).

Fund invests conservatively. Its operating expenses are only one and a half percent of total revenue. By 2010, the income from the Fund is expected to reach the value of state oil revenues at their peak in 1981.

Some experts have proposed innovative versions of such funds. For example, one author calls for “virtual distribution” or “direct distribution” of oil revenues so that oil money “passes through the hands” of the population. The government would distribute the fund’s revenue as dividends to the population. These dividends would be taxable, so that the government would retain some of the revenue. But there would be transparency – and no big pot of money for government leaders to raid.

Might such ideas help in Sudan? What lessons might the Sudanese learn from the experiences of Alaska, Norway, Kuwait, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, and others? What are the advantages and disadvantages of different schemes?

2. Aid strategy and management

The second topic we discuss is the relationship between donors and the Southern Sudanese leadership, and the session becomes less a lecture and more a dialogue.

I tell the audience that in meetings with Southern Sudanese I have heard a surprising amount of negative feedback about aid. There are perceptions of corruption and mismanagement among the NGOs and the contractors. There is unhappiness with a lack of transparency in the donor agencies – for example, in their budgets, their strategic plans, and their background documents about Southern Sudan.

After relating this impression, I ask the most senior of the Sudanese leaders to comment. He didn’t know I was going to put him on the spot. But after a moment’s pause to group his thoughts, he eloquently and politely describes and explains these negative perceptions. Two other SPLM leaders embellish the story, sometimes a bit less than diplomatically.

Then some of the donors respond, a bit defensively. The most argumentative is the leader of one of the relief organizations. She complains that the donors aren’t to blame; the situation and the SPLA/M are. There has been relief but not aid; the former requires much less collaboration and ownership than the latter. And anyway, the relief organizations are required to be impartial between the north and the south. The south doesn’t have a government, not yet; and the NGOs can’t act as if the SPLA/M is a legitimate government.

Tom describes another problem through analogy from business. He holds up a picture he has drawn that looks like an aerial view of pick-up-sticks. The left-hand border has a column of small boxes, as in an organization chart, and so does the right-hand border – and the pick-up sticks connect the boxes on the two sides. Tom explains. The left side is his firm, the right side the U.S. Navy. The Navy was his firm's main client. But as the picture shows, when Tom took over the lines of communication went from about every box in Tom's organization chart to about ten boxes in the Navy's organization chart. The result: wasted energy.

Tom gently asks the group, "Recognize this picture? Could the left-hand side be the SPLM and the right-hand side the donors?"

Two people burst forth with examples. Then Tom describes his solution in the business case. He named a single person to communicate with the Navy ("I couldn't fix the Navy side, of course"). The result: focused energy. He asks the Sudanese, "Might you do something similar?"

A dialogue is now underway between the Sudanese and the donors—one I later learn is unprecedented. Tom and I are quiet as a healthy debate proceeds. When it slows, I ask if they agree with two points.

First, relief aid has been the norm till now. Some of the tensions and problems perceived so far will be reduced in the transition from relief aid to development assistance.

Second, will they agree to a few principles for recipient-donor relations in the future? One is that donors should fit their contributions into the plans of the Southern Sudanese government. Another is that when donors and their experts interview Sudanese, those interviewed should receive copies of the reports eventually produced. (They rarely do now.) Another principle: the donors should be as transparent with their plans, budgets, and evaluations as they expect the Southern Sudanese to be.

No one objects to these principles. The lady from the relief organization does have a sour face, though.

Do Great Good

Apart from doing no harm, I suggest that donors and Southern Sudanese should also think together about how to do great good. The challenges in Sudan are not (just) incremental ones—not just a few more roads and a few more agricultural rehabilitation projects. There is the cardinal challenge of building effective self-government.

The broadest vision of the challenge facing Southern Sudan might be expressed in the framework of Max Weber: the transition from a traditional form (or forms) of governance to what Weber called a rational form. The former includes customary leaders as well as the SPLA. Over the period of the war, these traditional forms of authority have not had to be accountable. Their methods for raising and spending revenues have often been driven by emergency needs. These conditions breed mismanagement and worse. In the new Sudan, the SPLM leaders have said that a priority is moving to more accountability, predictability, and “rationality.”

Doing this will not be easy, but I have been heartened by the sincerity of Sudanese leaders. The donors are also keen to enable good governance. The question is, how?

One way—a more-or-less conventional way—is capacity building. This strategy emphasizes training, technical assistance, more computers, more record-keeping, and new rules and regulations. These steps can be important. But to promote good government, shouldn't a strategy for Southern Sudan also include these objectives?

- Sideline the SPLA from government and involve them in productive activities;
- Inject cash into an almost cashless economy;
- Demonstrate to citizens that things have changed and they are benefiting—in particular from the oil revenues and the international aid; and
- Create a core of qualified, well-paid government leaders who are financially able to withstand “forced corruption” (that is, corruption based on sheer need because of punitively low salaries).

In a slide, I show them two extreme scenarios:

Undesirable Results after 3 Years

Role of SPLA SPLA leaders are widely involved in government, including informally. Ex-soldiers, resentful about lack of opportunities, turn to crime.

Cashless economy retards growth. Still a lack of liquidity. People perceive that only rich people and foreigners have cash.

Perceptions of self-government. Nothing has really changed. Local economies are still stagnant. Leaders are distant and perceived as concerned with their own infighting. Oil revenues are pilfered or misspent.

Top civil service. Cannot attract or retain highly qualified people. Government employment becomes bloated. Salaries are so low that people are forced to moonlight or be corrupt. Foreign advisers are resented, in part because their main job is not capacity building.

Desirable Results after 3 Years

Role of SPLA. Many leaders are pensioned off from the SPLA and with their nest eggs are engaged in farming and small businesses. Ex-soldiers are soaked up in public works (and private economic activity).

Cashless economy retards growth. Infusions of cash through transfer payments, credit programs, and public works.

Perceptions of self-government. A lot has changed: people see public works and enjoy ample communication with their leaders. Oil revenues are transparently “locked up” on behalf of the people.

Top civil service. Excellent pay and oversight create a cadre of highly qualified top officials. Government is lean. No one has to steal to feed his or her family. Foreign advisers focus on capacity building and are therefore valued.

Then I ask the participants how they might collaborate to get the good results of the second column. I float several ideas from Rumbek and from Naivasha, as well as some suggested by the experience of other countries.

- **Pensions and buyouts for the SPLA.** Would it be possible to decommission many or most SPLA leaders and soldiers with attractive, service-based pensions, training funds, and investment funds?
- **Direct assistance to civil society.** The idea is to give local organizations financial help with the sole conditions that (1) they agree to decide what to do with the money in open meetings and (2) they agree to an open evaluation after one year of how the money is spent. Which organizations? One might begin with indigenous groups involved in economic activities. Herdsmen’s associations. Women’s coops. Traders’ groups. Rotating credit associations. And so forth. One might include the women’s organizations originally formed to help families afflicted by war deaths.
- **Social Funds.** Many countries have created Emergency Social Funds, which finance public works that local people say they need—roads

and schools and clinics and the like.

- **Attracting and retaining talent.** A classic, failed pattern in other countries is a bloated civil service with low-level people earning salaries above wage levels in the private sector—and high-level people earning salaries well below those in the private sector. The civil service should avoid the temptation of becoming an employer of last resort. Equally vital, top jobs require top pay; otherwise, the risk is poor performance and corruption.

A valuable discussion ensues. The end of the workshop is approaching. Quickly, I show slides that review four areas of priority for anti-corruption work in Southern Sudan: oil revenues, road building and other infrastructure programs, revenues, and credit. The lady from the relief organization is after me. How can I say these are priorities? What about education and health? She argues that you can't single out one area over another without a full and proper national plan. In response I say my remarks are limited to governance, but if she's hearing me her grimace doesn't show much appreciation.

A Final Question

There are some other questions, and then some nice closing remarks by Allan and by Riak Machar, who arrived late. Riak apologizes for missing much of the discussion, but he makes the essential point: it's time to refurbish the donor-recipient relationship.

The workshop concludes. Many of the participants come up to say hello. The local leader of Transparency International is introduced to me. There are cordial goodbyes with the Sudanese—indeed, almost nostalgic goodbyes.

The lady from the relief organization has waited her turn in line. She says she hopes I'll have a longer time to spend in Sudan and will talk to more people. She wonders whether anyone can say anything useful after a visit of only a couple of weeks. Her answer, conveyed in her expression and in her question itself, is "No."

Sequel

In late May, the peace accord was signed. Here's how CNN's website reported the news:

Sudan peace deal signed

Agreement does not include embattled Darfur

Thursday, May 27, 2004

NAIVASHA, Kenya (CNN) -- Sudan's government and main rebel group have signed historic agreements, paving the way for a final deal to end 21 years of civil war.

U.N. Secretary-General hailed the news as a "major step forward."

The government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army signed three protocols on power-sharing and administering three disputed areas of the country.



Both sides hope to meet again to iron out further details in late June or early July.

But the deal signed Wednesday did not address conflict in western Sudan's Darfur region, where human rights groups accuse government forces and Arab militia of conducting a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" against that region's black Muslim population.

At the United Nations, Annan issued a statement, saying he "welcomes this development and believes it is a major step forward" in the peace process.

On June 5, Chairman John Garang gave a speech to mark on the occasion of signing of the Nairobi Declaration that "launched the final phase of peace in Sudan." Here is an excerpt:

The six protocols, for those who had the opportunity to read them, reflect an intricate web of governmental institutions and mind-boggling calculus of power sharing, wealth sharing and security arrangements during the Interim Period. This intricacy is a function of the intricate and

complex Sudanese situation. But behind the architecture of power and the calculus of wealth peace has an inner meaning. So what does peace mean to us in the SPLM? What does it mean to me personally not as a leader but as a brother, an uncle, a father and a child of God? There are many – here and elsewhere – who think that peace is about job allocation, is about apportionment of positions of authority, is about lining pockets through misuse or abuse of public assets, or is about lording it over others. Those who thus think must be reading from a different script than mine. We have more supreme goals and loftier ideals and alternatives. My script reads that peace is what people think and believe peace should hold for them. Peace to my mind and in the depth of my soul is a promise of better living to the young, the middle aged and the aged, to each individual, to the unemployed and the destitute, to the sick and the unlettered, all over Sudan. It is also a promise to the men and women of Southern Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, Southern Blue Nile, Abyei, Eastern Sudan and other marginalized areas of Sudan who suffered in dignified silence the loss of their dear ones in the war of liberation or who felt and still do feel a sense of helplessness and hopelessness, a promise that we shall never betray the cause for which those martyrs have made the ultimate sacrifice. And theirs is a cause for better and more honourable living. It is also a promise to martyrs and to those who lost their dear ones on the other side, a promise that just and honorable peace shall heal all the wounds that we have inflicted on ourselves on both sides.

And as I finish compiling these notes, Allan Reed sends the following email:

June 12, 2004

Hi Bob,

I just returned from Southern Sudan, where I accompanied Chairman John Garang on parts of his tour of the South where he explained, in clear detail, the provisions of all the protocols of the Framework Peace Agreement at Yei, Mundri, and Rumbek. It was thrilling to see the rapturous reception he received everywhere he went, including Padak where we made a stop for him to be able to inspect the infrastructure program we're financing, together with the Germans and the World Food Program (it involves some wonderful work being done of building dikes—that also function as roads—to hold back the serious flooding of the Nile in that area and enable people to more easily cultivate in that

very fertile soil).

The Chairman was in excellent form, speaking in public addresses at each location to throngs of thousands. He spoke eloquently in English, Arabic and Dinka, moving fluently back and forth, reiterating each point in the smooth way so many Southerners use to mix languages to ensure complete understanding of the complexities and seriousness of the framework peace protocol provisions. He stressed that the 6 year interim period will culminate in the referendum on self-determination which will allow Southern Sudanese the choice of remaining in a unified Sudan, or opting for separation and independence. He said that for the referendum's choices to be meaningful, the Government of Sudan must work hard to make unity a choice that is at least equally attractive as independence is now to so many Southerners—a tall order, but one that the GOS must take seriously. Garang also said that the SPLM and the Southern Sudanese people are poised for a great transition to peace, but one that will require the SPLM to make specific important steps in that transformation which, as he said, “begins with the SPLM becoming a transparent government which is accountable to the people. You (Southern Sudanese) must make us accountable to you.” He also stressed that the fight against corruption should not be limited to the SPLM, which has not had to deal with budgetary accountability until now, but that it is critical that the North and the Unity government embrace this challenge as well. He is very serious about this....

With warm regards to you and to Tom (including from so many of the SPLM leadership folks you met here, from John Garang to Commander Scopo to Riak Machar and many others)

Allan