

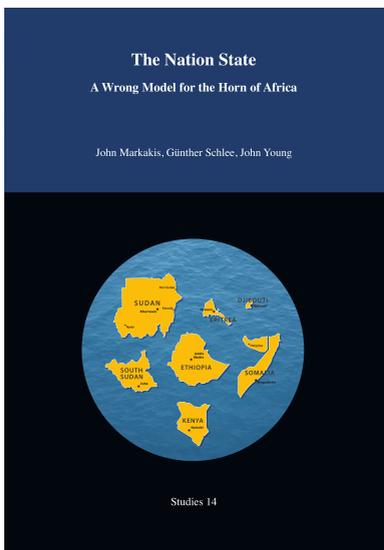
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John Young:

South Sudan: The Fractured State

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Chapter 6

South Sudan: The Fractured State

John Young

6.1 Introduction

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in 2005 claimed to end a twenty-two-year-long civil war. It also ushered in a six-year SPLM/A-led transitional government in the south, the Government of National Unity (GNU), national elections in 2010, and a referendum on the secession of southern Sudan. The GNU barely functioned, and the 2010 elections were characterized by massive fraud and the effective division of the country between the SPLM-led south and the National Congress Party (NCP) north, which placed South Sudan on a trajectory to independence (Young 2012). In the 2011 referendum, southern Sudanese voted massively for an independent state, which was officially established with much fanfare on July 9, 2011. But even during the six-year transitional period, and some would argue long before that (Young 2012), the SPLM proved incapable of governing.

However much responsibility for endemic mal-governance, corruption, and abuse of human rights lie with the SPLM, the international community, and specifically the Troika of the US, Britain, and Norway, which sponsored the peace process and agreed to, and at times even pressed for, the establishment of an independent nation-state in the clearly infertile grounds of southern Sudan. The internationals also supported the handover of power to what has not mistakenly been called the criminal SPLA by Professor Mahmood Mamdani, a member of the African Union Commission of Inquiry in South Sudan that was established in the wake of the 2013 civil war (Mamdani 2014). The CPA provided the new country with wholly unsuitable Western institutions of governance as per modernization theory and neoliberal precepts that were in free fall even before the country descended into civil war in December 2013.

More than fifty years after the first wave of decolonization in Africa, the international community oversaw the creation of another would-be nation-state patterned after the failures of the past, and it did not take long for the South Sudanese elites to make clear they could not function within this structure. South Sudan is a territory that encompasses large numbers of Nilotic, Bantu, and other peoples, is divided by pastoralist and farming communities, and is a seasonal destination for many nomads from Sudan. The people of South Sudan largely live in preindustrial rural isolation and contact between them all too often results in conflict. Some of these ethno-cultural groups like the Zande, Shilluk, and Anyaa have a history of kingship and hierarchy, but most of the inhabitants of the country have never established any system of permanent administration and instead traditional authorities are easily and frequently changed. It is also one of the poorest, most undeveloped, and most isolated territories on the planet. It is thus hard to imagine a more unlikely candidate for

the establishment of a Western modeled independent state and it could only be achieved by forcing the extreme ethnic and cultural diversity of the territory's people into the ill-fitting box of a nation-state.

6.2 Constructing a State in Southern Sudan

Isolated and having little contact with the outside world beyond slave-traders and ivory hunters (often the same people), the territory of southern Sudan only began to end its isolation in the late nineteenth century when the Sudanese Mahdiya briefly exerted a measure of control over some of its northern areas. With the overthrow of the Mahdiya in 1898, the British steadily expanded their control, but it was not until 1930 that it could claim to have defeated all resistance, and even then its administration was felt very lightly in most parts of the territory.

With no strong religious traditions locally and a colonial administration under home pressure to bring education and religion to the people for fear they would otherwise convert to Islam, Christian missionaries from various denominations were given domains in different parts of southern Sudan although their efforts, ironically, were largely paid for by Muslim taxpayers in the north. Adding to the insult, the colonial authorities made the southern and adjacent parts of the northern "closed districts" for northern Arabic-speaking Muslims, mostly traders, thus further isolating southern Sudanese from their natural links to the north and inculcating in them anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments, which in turn were reciprocated by the northern Sudanese who looked upon them as primitives. The British built major agricultural and irrigation schemes that formed the economic backbone of Sudan and gave rise to a flourishing civil society but neglected the south until the eve of independence.

British administration thus exacerbated the differences between the Arabized and Islamic north and an emerging African Christian elite in the south. This polarization came to the fore when late in the day the British dropped plans for southern Sudan to join the British colonies in East Africa and decided to link it with the north as a step towards independence. However, the British made it clear to the northern elites that independence could only be accomplished if they gained the approval of the largely traditional southern authorities. The southern elites, in turn, agreed to independence within a united Sudan on condition that federalism was accepted to ensure the inhabitants were protected from domination by a politically and economically more advanced north. The northern Sudanese duly made the required commitments, but they were not kept. Out of the 600 civil service positions that were "Sudanized" with the departure of the British in 1956, only a tiny fraction was given to southern Sudanese. The miniscule southern indigenous elite was not mistaken in concluding they were exchanging one colonial administration for another.

With the end of the colonial era, northern military regimes attempted to overcome ethnic and cultural diversity by pursuing socialism and developmentalism, but they failed because the northern Sudanese elites looked to Islam and Arabism to integrate the polyglot of peoples in the largest country in Africa and this was resisted in the south, most of whom were neither Muslims or Arabs. Meanwhile, the demand for federalism was rejected by successive northern governments because it was viewed as a way station on the road to secession. The ingredients were thus in place for rebellion in the south and there were isolated cases of armed resistance even on the eve of independence. These actions became increasingly widespread in the 1960s when Joseph Lagu formed and led the South Sudan Liberation

Army (SSLA), or *Anyanya*, which held Sudan's two units to be incompatible and called for an independent southern state.

Gaining military support from countries in the region and from Israel, always anxious to undermine its Arab neighbors, the SSLA carried out an increasingly effective insurgency that helped precipitate the military coup of Jafaar Nimeiri in 1969. Upon concluding that the rebels could not be defeated, Nimeiri supported a peaceful settlement of the conflict that took the form of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. This agreement rejected secession but accepted southern autonomy even while the north maintained a unitary structure under military rule.

The grant of autonomy ended southern unity based on opposition to the north and internal conflicts increasingly came to the fore. *Korkora*, meaning a separation into parts, became the demand of Equatorians upset at the domination of the southern state by the Dinka, the territory's largest tribe. Anxious to weaken the south and respond to the opposition of northern political parties to the Addis Ababa Agreement, Nimeiri agreed to the demands of the Equatorians and gave them their own territory. But *korkora* constituted an abrogation of the peace agreement and caused lasting bitterness between Equatorians and Dinka. Furthermore, it led to fears by the Dinka that Equatorian demands for federalism were code for secession, a position analogous to northern fears of southern demands for federalism. *Korkora* also revealed the contentious relations between the various peoples inhabiting southern Sudan, the difficulty of arbitrarily and forcefully placing them under one administration, and the domineering tendencies of the Dinka elite.

6.3 The US and South Sudan Independence

The US government took little interest in Sudan's first civil war. This position only changed after President Jaafar Nimeiri ended his affiliation with the Eastern bloc and decisively joined the American camp at which point Sudan became a key component of the US-led Cold War in Africa. Nimeiri was there to do the bidding of Washington, be it support for an isolated Egypt in the wake of the Camp David peace accord with Israel, facilitation of the transit of Ethiopian Falashas to Israel, support for US efforts to undermine the regime of Muammar Gaddafi, or a counterweight to Eastern bloc support for the Ethiopian Derg. And the benefits were clear. The regime's human rights abuses were ignored as was its abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement that led to a resumption of the southern war in 1983 under Dr. John Garang's SPLA. Furthermore, Sudan became the biggest recipient of US aid in sub-Saharan Africa—USD 160 million of which 100 million was for military assistance (Pettersen [1999](#), 9).

But US patronage could not save Nimeiri who was overthrown by a popular insurrection in Khartoum in 1985. The Transitional Military Council took power for one year and organized national elections, which were won by Sadig Al-Mahdi who became prime minister of a highly unstable coalition government. Preoccupied with Islamic politics and unable to convince Dr. John Garang to stop the war and join the government, Sadig gained the enmity of the US because he refused to support its Cold War objectives in the region, particularly the overthrow of Gaddafi to whom he and his Umma Party were close and who had to be convinced to stop supplying weapons to the SPLA.

Opposing the US had costs, however, and Washington suspended concessionary food sales to Khartoum (African Rights [1997](#)). Even before Sadig's government was overthrown,

officials in Washington were quietly indicating they would not oppose a military coup. Meanwhile, Sadig's coalition with the Hassan Al-Turabi-led National Islamic Front (NIF) collapsed after the opposing Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) signed a framework for a peace agreement with the SPLA in Ethiopia (the Koka Dam Agreement) and pressed the government to accept it through popular mobilization and street demonstrations. The Sadig government relented, the NIF left the coalition and was replaced by the DUP. The DUP-SPLA agreement was scheduled to be accepted by the National Assembly when the NIF carried out a coup, which the Egyptians and Americans initially understood it to be of a nationalist character, similar to that carried out by Abdul Nasser.

The US tried to pursue a policy of "constructive engagement" with the NIF until it appreciated that the Omar Al-Bashir headed regime was more of a threat to its interests in the region than the hapless Sadig government. Although the NIF pressed the SPLA up to the Ugandan border, it failed to defeat the southern rebels. In the longer term, the characterization of the war as a jihad and efforts to undermine US allies in the region was a lifesaver for the rebels since it brought the US to the aid of the SPLA. As a result, Washington considered the war to be a conflict between the demonic NIF and the SPLA under its heroic leader, Dr. John Garang, a simplistic theme that would have a marked influence on US policy until the overthrow of Al-Bashir in April 2019.

In the US, Garang's supporters were largely successful in their public relations efforts to transform him from being a brutal dictator and abuser of human rights supported by international communism to a leader struggling to gain human rights for his aggrieved and abused people and an "African hero." Equally contrived was the contention that the SPLA was conducting a united struggle of the southern Sudanese for national self-determination. Garang was authoritarian, southern Sudan was deeply divided, and the SPLA was committed to a united New Sudan rather than a secessionist South Sudan until after his death. South Sudan was divided along both ethnic and political lines. The notion that the SPLA was a unifying force could only be maintained by refusing to acknowledge that much of the fighting in southern Sudan was between southern Sudanese and that many of these fighting forces were aligned with the northern army (Young 2012).

In the latter years of the war, fighting was primarily between a Dinka-dominated SPLA and a Nuer-dominated South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF), an organization of comparable size and which controlled as much territory as the SPLA (Young 2005). But the SSDF was dismissed by the West and denied a place in the peace negotiations because of its alliance with Khartoum even though agreements between southern and north groups have long been common. The SPLA was itself a member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), an association of largely northern opposition groups headed by the DUP leader and ostensibly Arab Osman Al-Mirghani, while Garang served as his deputy and was in charge of the military wing. In contrast to the notion that southern Sudanese were united behind the SPLA in a war with Khartoum, large and small ethnic-based armed groups across the territory spontaneously took up arms to defend themselves, not just against the northern Sudanese army but equally against the SPLA. The West, and particularly the US, never understood that probably most southern Sudanese viewed the SPLA as Dinka interlopers and it became the cause of endless problems and grief.

Conflicts between peasants and Dinka pastoralists reached new heights during the war after they followed the SPLA soldiers into the lands of the Equatorians in search of grazing lands and water. Meanwhile, Sudan's army provided weapons to those opposing the SPLA,

making them agents of Khartoum in the eyes of the SPLA and subject to attack. Northern Sudanese labelled as Arabs also struggled against the Khartoum clique of Islamists from the riverine core of the country, but their struggles did not fit the prevailing north-south Arab-African narrative, and they were largely discounted in the West. Instead, what took hold among Western, and particularly US legislators and their publics, was the persecution of Africans—who constituted an emerging nation-state—by Arab Muslims, a conceptualization that confused rather than explained the realities of Sudan’s multiple conflicts (Young 2019).

However, the SPLA could not overthrow the government in Khartoum despite widespread opposition to the NCP regime in every corner of the country, the early support of the Eastern bloc and the Ethiopian Derg, and (after the latter left the scene) support from the region and the US. As well as material support, the Eritrean, Ethiopian, and Ugandan armies trained the rebels, provided them with bases, and repeatedly captured territories along their borders with Sudan and turned them over to the SPLA or its NDA allies. Support also involved large components of the Eritrean and Ethiopian armies transiting East Africa to the battle fields of southern Sudan where they and the Ugandan army captured much of the liberated territory that the SPLA later claimed it had captured (Young 2004). But even with regional support, US money for weaponry, and US food provided through SPLA-friendly NGOs like Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA), the Islamist government was not overthrown. However, in 1998, just when these US supported collective efforts looked to be on the verge of success, Eritrea and Ethiopia went to war, thus ending the regional attempt to overthrow the Islamist government. In the wake of this failure, the US and its allies used a Western established, funded, and directed organization, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to launch a peace process.

6.4 International Peacemaking and the Creation of South Sudan

US support for John Garang was made possible by the end of the Cold War. At that time, Eastern bloc and Derg support for the SPLA was being forgotten, American lobbyists popularized the cause of the SPLA, and new notions like the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the US as the “indispensable nation” became the ideological underpinning for American leadership in both regime change and peacemaking.¹ Secular lobbyists who moved in and out of government and were infatuated with John Garang and demonized the Islamist regime of al-Bashir held sway under the second Clinton presidency. When George Bush became president, former officials such as Rice moved to the think tanks where they pumped out the same message. They were replaced by evangelical Christians who were a critical component of Bush’s political base and sang a similar tune but gave it a religious twist and considered the war as a biblical struggle between Muslim overlords and Christian victims.

¹ The notion that the US is the “indispensable nation” in the resolution of conflicts was first coined by Bill Clinton’s secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, in 1998. In justifying the US attack on Iraq, she said, “if we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and see further than other countries into the future, and we see the danger here to all of us.” (See Madeleine Albright, NBC’s Today Show, February 19, 1988). This notion has since been widely used by American presidents, especially Barack Obama. R2P is a quasi-legal doctrine approved by the AU in 2002 and the UN in 2006 and holds that national sovereignty can be lost and foreign intervention approved if states fail to ensure the security of their citizens. While seemingly an attractive notion, there is no agreement on when these conditions exist, who decides, and which agencies have the right to intervene. These problems give powerful states, and notably the US, the right to justify their interventions on R2P grounds.

The Bush administration threw its weight behind the IGAD peace process, but it was not there to reap the political rewards of its apparent success with the signing of the CPA. When President Barack Obama came into office, some of the same pro-SPLM officials like Susan Rice returned, which ensured continuity of US policy on Sudan and South Sudan. Her views were reinforced by Obama's UN Envoy, Samantha Power, who had gained a reputation as an academic for her espousal of notions like the R2P and was equally misinformed about the realities in southern Sudan.

In the face of competing peace processes that needed US assistance to ensure their legitimacy, the Americans opted to support IGAD, which in turn subcontracted the peacemaking to the Kenyan dictator, Daniel Arap Moi. He further pushed it down the chain to General Lazarus Sumbeiywo who was trusted by the US because he had received his university education in the US, had close relations with the CIA while in charge of Kenyan security, and had spent much of his later career devoted to keeping the aging dictator and key American ally in the region, Moi, in power (Young 2012). But this was not enough: a Troika made up of the US, the UK, and Norway was formed, which directly participated in all the IGAD-led negotiations and an IGAD support group was established by Western countries to fund these efforts.

There was a quick agreement between IGAD, the Troika, the NCP, and the SPLM to restrict negotiations to the latter two parties, and that decision amounted to accepting that the principal conflict afflicting Sudan was rooted in north-south, Arab-African, Muslim-Christian contradictions not compatible with the desired nation-state. Once these contradictions were resolved, the other conflicts in the country could readily be overcome using the same model of peacemaking, or so it was argued by the army of diplomats. The negotiations began with acceptance of a statement of principles—the Machakos Protocol—which emphasized the goodwill of the parties and a commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, national unity, and democratic transformation. In practice, there was no goodwill and both parties subsequently acknowledged that they had no intention of carrying out their commitments.

The focus of the negotiations centered on power-sharing and security arrangements and made little progress until the mediators arranged for Sudanese Vice-President Ali Osman Taha and the SPLM leader, Dr. John Garang, to conduct their own secret negotiations. What was privately decided between the two men will never be known because Garang died shortly after signing the CPA in a helicopter crash and Ali Osman, who the mediators assumed to be the strong man in Khartoum, did not actually have that power. He was subsequently demoted and removed from office for putting his signature to the CPA.

The process based on a commitment to democratic transformation was itself centralized, secretive, and exclusive. It denied representation to civil society and other disaffected groups, reaffirmed the power of an Islamist military dictatorship in Khartoum, and handed over power to an armed, largely Dinka military cabal in the south. The US and its allies mistakenly concluded that these actions represented the will of the disparate peoples of southern Sudan. The SPLA only controlled a small portion of the territory it was given to rule by the international community's peace agreement and was feared and hated by a large section of the non-Dinka population. Like the Nuer, however, the Dinka can be considered a multi-tribal nation. The various components are often in tense relations with one another and only unite when they collectively face an existential threat. But by denying participation to the

SSDF in the negotiations and handing over monopoly power to the Dinka SPLA, the CPA laid the basis for future conflict in the newly born state.

The death of Garang on July 30, 2005 only postponed that war because Salva needed the Nuer of the SSDF to undermine Garang's Bor domination of the SPLA and thus reached an agreement in January 2006 with its leader, Paulino Matieb, to integrate his forces into the SPLA. Salva's agreement with Paulino—the Juba Declaration—not only secured Salva's hold on the presidency but crucially had the potential of bringing peace to much of the country. In that light, the agreement was more important than the international community-brokered CPA, which did not bring peace and instead raised the specter of an intensification of the existing war between the SPLA and the SSDF. The primary focus of the Juba Declaration was the integration of the SSDF into the SPLA, which was achieved without the international peace brigade who view themselves as indispensable in the resolution of conflicts (Young 2006b).

For a brief period, the Dinka Salva was a hero to the Nuer of the SSDF who had wanted to rejoin the SPLA after southern secession—which they nominally fought for even though allied to Khartoum—but were refused by Garang and his supporters who feared they would dominate the army. Indeed, the Juba Declaration challenged Dinka dominance in the army and integration by giving the Nuer a numerical majority in the SPLA, even though they constituted at most 25 percent of the South Sudanese population.

But if the Dinka, and particularly those from Bor, Garang's home area, could not stop the signing of the Juba Declaration, they could ensure that it was not fully implemented. Dinka-Nuer tensions came to the fore again and ended Salva's brief status as a hero among the Nuer since he did little to protect his new allies. The Nuer officers were forced to take unpaid retirements, denied training available to Dinka, were not equally promoted, and were forced to assume unpleasant tasks. Because they were constantly made aware of the Dinka character of the central state, they became increasingly radicalized. Deputy SPLA leader and head of the then disbanded SSDF, Paulino Matieb, was guarded at his house in Juba by 1700 soldiers who were nominally in the SPLA but were almost all Nuer and only loyal to him. Although Paulino was technically senior to the SPLA chief of staff, James Hoth, his advanced years, poor health, inability to communicate in either Arabic or English, and failure to make his power felt or serve the interests of the Nuer who followed him into the SPLA significantly reduced his effectiveness. He was also bitterly resented by the Garangists who, with the cooperation of Unity State governor, Taban Deng, burned down his house in Unity and killed twelve of his guards. Following this incident, the UN flew the remaining guards to Juba. Paulino's death shortly thereafter left a void that was never filled. Increasingly, the former SSDF officers lost their corporate identity, even if they did not lose their distrust of the Dinka.

The fact that the Dinka-dominated state was little more than a heavily armed agency for directing the considerable oil resources into the hands of Dinka politicians, generals, and associates that had to be bought off to maintain a modicum of stability led the former SSDF Nuer in the SPLA to demand that the Dinka be replaced by the Nuer as rulers. There was a weakly constructed narrative that held the Nuer to be more democratic and less greedy, but essentially the appeal was simply a claim that the Dinka had failed at government, so it was the turn of the Nuer to rule.

The CPA was underpinned by three assumptions that would soon prove false. First, the various peoples that made up southern Sudan constituted a nation for purposes of na-

tional self-determination and statehood. Second, the central contradiction afflicting Sudan, and thus the cause of the war, was conflict between an Arab Muslim north and an African and religiously heterogeneous south. And third, it assumed the SPLA—to whom the international mediators handed over complete power in the fledgling state—was capable of administering the territory.

The peacemakers' conclusion that southern Sudan constituted a nation followed from their conviction that the SPLA alone represented the collective will and interests of southern Sudanese and that was reflected in their refusal to permit other groups to participate in the CPA negotiations. It was also sometimes claimed that adding more participants would increase the complexity of the negotiations and undermine the secrecy that the security-minded General Sumbeiywo considered crucial. Without other voices heard in the negotiations, it proved easy to deny they existed or had legitimacy. Indeed, it was the international community and not South Sudanese who bestowed legitimacy on political and military actors. The mediators concluded that the manifold conflicts in Sudan could be resolved by overcoming the central conflict, which was held to be the result of a racial and religious divide. But conflicts were taking place all over Sudan that could not be explained in these terms because most were between groups who were both Arab and Muslim. Indeed, it is likely that more people died in the south due to conflicts between indigenous peoples than between southern and northern Sudanese armed forces. Moreover, as noted, alliances between northern and southern Sudanese to fight other northerners or southerners had long been the rule in Sudan, not the exception.

What all the parties to the negotiations—IGAD, Troika, NCP, and SPLM—agreed upon was the need to ensure that there would be no democratic participation in the process, which might threaten the power that these armed groups wanted to monopolize. In the case of the SPLM this even included their allies in the NDA, and they sided with the NCP to deny them participation in the negotiations. This was a process restricted to elites recognized by the international community and the entire exercise was designed to ensure that they, and not the people of northern and southern Sudan, would be satisfied with the outcome.

The last assumption that the SPLA was capable of governing an independent state was belied by a twenty-two-year history of the movement's inability to administer its liberated territories and its dependence on the international community for the provision of even the most basic services. Against that record, it is impossible to believe that the same organization could soon, if ever, acquire the ability to administer an independent state. The Western backed peace process set the diverse peoples of southern Sudan on the path to a statehood that could never meet their needs, and worse, was a recipe for disaster. If the internationals did not know this, it was a result of willful ignorance or because the primary objective of the peace process and the outcome was not about meeting the needs of the people of either Sudan or southern Sudan, but of responding to the needs of constituencies in the West, IGAD rulers, and the preselected indigenous elites.

On July 30, 2006, just before he was to become the president of South Sudan and vice president of Sudan under the CPA, Garang died in a helicopter crash under circumstances that have never been fully understood. Under Garang, the SPLA had fought for a united reformed Sudan as affirmed in numerous statements and party resolutions, as well as in the Machakos Protocol of the CPA. But his successor, Salva Kiir, and the SPLA leadership then directed their followers to support secession, which was achieved in an internationally supervised referendum on July 9, 2011. Secretary of State, John Kerry, was not mistaken

in claiming that the United States helped “midwife the birth of this new nation,” except that people of South Sudan never constituted a nation and that would soon be made abundantly clear.

Indeed, the CPA never met any of its stated objectives of a united Sudan, democratic transformation, sustainable peace, or the later add-on (because of Thabo Mbeki’s AU mediation) of viable successor states after South Sudanese opted for independence in the 2011 referendum. The independence of South Sudan served as a powerful signal to intensify fighting between the various peoples in the territory and their armed groups for control of the state and its rich resources in the otherwise poverty-stricken country. Despite growing evidence that the South Sudanese were not united under the SPLA, up until the eve of the country’s civil war the US government claimed that the CPA and the establishment of the independent state was a success, represented a major foreign policy achievement, and provided evidence that the US was indeed the exceptional nation needed for the resolution of the conflict. But this would soon prove mistaken, and the US government’s involvement in the tribal politics of South Sudan would negatively affect the country’s trajectory.

A cynic might conclude that the Western mediators could not have been so ignorant, and their excessively loud applause for the “world’s newest nation” was to position themselves so that when the whole project came crashing down—and there was no shortage of doom predictors at the time—that the failure could be attributed to the local actors and not the altruistic West that had devoted so much time, political capital, and hard cash to the realization of South Sudan’s independence. But it is also possible that the Americans believed their own narrative. Perhaps the notion of the southern Sudanese collectively and bravely struggling against incredible odds and finally—with US help—achieving success, reminded Americans of their own history, or at least their idealized understanding of it.

The fantasy did not end with South Sudan’s independence and the Western-dominated peacemakers went on to impose a whole set of institutions of governance transplanted from the West without modification to the alien environment of South Sudan. Following the script of an ideologically driven and Eurocentric modernization theory, the peacemakers started from a model of the nation-state that evolved in the West over hundreds of years and applied it to South Sudan. The European nation-state assumed a measure of ethnic homogeneity that was absent in multi-ethnic South Sudan where ethnic identities figure more prominently than the kind of individualism that characterizes Western societies, and there was a complete absence of a supra-ethnic South Sudanese nationalism. Indeed, the Dinkaled SPLA insurgency fostered ethnic fracturing, and the new state was more divided and less prepared for self-governance than the state bequeathed by the Addis Ababa Agreement almost four decades earlier.

And despite enormous economic and regional disparities, the CPA committed to a democracy that—befitting the dominance of neoliberalism—did not include any notions of economic justice or overcoming the inequalities that abounded in the country. It was assumed (but never stated) that, to the extent these were matters of concern, they would be resolved by the market, which South Sudanese leaders made a great show of endorsing to impress the West with their ideological soundness. But apart from a handful of farmers in Equatoria that produced for the market, most South Sudanese were largely self-sufficient peasants, herders whose animals were raised to meet traditional needs, or were supported by the international aid agencies or their relatives in the West. The market did not figure significantly in their lives and if the country was to develop, it needed an activist state. Yet, such

a state was not in the cards in an international context where the new economic orthodoxy held states to be obstacles to development.

During the six-year transitional period stipulated by the CPA and the ensuing period of independence the SPLM proved incapable of governing even with enormous financial resources based on oil, considerable international good will, the support of countless aid agencies, and the return of educated members of the diaspora. The SPLM began constructing a state in the model of Khartoum that privileged an ethnic elite who looted the country's resources and used its party-army to contain the increasing revolts and lawlessness in the peripheries, while its ruthless intelligence services identified rebels and suppressed any expressions of dissent that challenged official government narratives. With the exception of the churches, civil society was largely a foreign construct and weak and with the 2010 elections, many church leaders joined the SPLM and were elected to office in the 2010 elections. The marginalization of Sudan's periphery that the SPLA and its foreign backers loudly complained about during their war with Khartoum was soon replicated in South Sudan. Fifteen years after the CPA was signed and despite the oil wealth, the only inter-city paved road in the country was between Juba and Nimule. It had been paid for and constructed entirely by USAID and had the chief function of providing the SPLM elite a link to Uganda, the regime's chief political supporter and the source of most of the goods that the country's urban population needed to survive.

The limited unity achieved during the SPLA-led war with Khartoum quickly broke down and ethnic consciousness, rivalries, and conflict reached new heights. Continuing their pre-independence struggle for dominance, the main conflict was initially between the Dinka and Nuer elites. But conflicts between the government and its Dinka followers and the Equatorians, whose city, Juba, had become a center for land-grabbing while its farming lands were over-run by Dinka herders, ran a close second. Meanwhile, the Fertit peoples of Western Bahr al Ghazel had resisted the SPLA during Sudan's civil war, and they continued to oppose the SPLA and the Dinka who came in their wake after independence.

6.5 South Sudanese State: Divided Against Itself

The only indigenous institution that functioned in the CPA-created fledgling state and was not completely dependent on the international community was the SPLA, but it never operated as a national army (Young 2008). Its ranks were repeatedly supplemented by absorbing ethnic based militias, which still retained loyalties to their particular leaders. Even President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar surrounded themselves with guards from their own tribes. In the field, SPLA soldiers usually went to officers of their tribe to deal with their problems, and army divisions frequently had four or more generals from different tribes to ensure they could overcome internal conflicts. Instead of soldiers living in barracks where they would mix with those from other tribes, they usually resided in their own homes or settlements and thus identified with their families and hosts. Even when the barracks were shared, Nuer and Dinka usually kept apart. Going into battle posed the threat of disintegration if the tribal militia to be attacked had a large ethnic component in the ranks of the SPLA. Targeted tribal cohorts were frequently provided with illicit SPLA weaponry to defend themselves and sometimes defections to the "enemy" occurred before battles took place.

Corruption was endemic in the SPLA with salaries issued in cash to commanders who grossly inflated the number of soldiers under them and creamed off the top. The problem was so bad that repeated attempts to come up with the number of soldiers in the SPLA failed. While 200,000 soldiers were on the books, as few as 100,000 were estimated to be capable of fighting, and it was not unusual to find underfed soldiers without shoes going into battle. As a result, soldiers often set up road barricades to extort tolls, sold their weapons, and carried out brigandage to supplement their incomes (or to serve as their sole source of income). Efforts by the UN to oversee an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) campaign were opposed by SPLA officers because it threatened their interests. The UN was also bedeviled by corruption within its own ranks, which led to the dismissal of a number of senior officials (Young 2010).

From its inception, the SPLA was designed to meet the needs of John Garang. It ensured that his Bor Dinka section dominated decision-making, and institution building was deliberately undermined to maintain his personal power over the army. Although Salva loyally served as Garang's chief of defense staff, he admitted that the SPLA never operated under a formal military hierarchy and that Garang often directly controlled particular officers. Defense officials in Eritrea and Ethiopia who trained SPLA units told the author that the structures they created were deliberately destroyed by Garang to ensure his personal control (Young 2012). After independence, the SPLA refused to accept southern officers who had served in the Sudanese army because of a lack of trust. Retired lieutenant general Joseph Lagu, former head of Anyanya and later a president of the autonomous southern Sudan, said these officers were superior to their southern-trained counterparts in the SPLA (Young 2010).² But they were marginalized and embittered. Many Nuer would go on to join the insurgency.

Government ministries were ethnically divided with each department or section bearing the imprint of its senior official. In the country's National Assembly, ethnic groups caucused across party lines. These divisions emerged at all levels of the government. Salva barely had contact with his own vice president, Riek Machar, and each had staff largely drawn from their own tribes. In contradiction to this practice and in alignment with the latest Western liberal values, the National Assembly implemented a quota that ensured 25 percent female membership and established a gender ministry. But these provisions were subverted by male politicians who ensured that their wives and female relatives took up the positions. Therefore, male domination of the government and society was never truly challenged. Other popular Western imports included a human rights commission that did nothing while the government arrested people at random, shut down newspapers, arrested and killed journalists, and viewed any public demonstration as a threat to the state and responded accordingly. An anticorruption commission was staffed with highly educated young people who were provided with the latest technology by Western countries, but despite endemic and blatant corruption it never led to any convictions.

Juba had been the capital since British times, but the Dinka-dominated governments from the first period of autonomy had made themselves so unwelcome by their bad behavior and abuse of the local Equatorian inhabitants that Garang initially wanted Rumbek in the Dinka heartland in the state of Lakes to serve as the capital. However, even that selection was problematic because Rumbek has long had a reputation for violence between competing

² Interview with retired Lt.- General Joseph Lagu, September 10, 2010, Juba.

Dinka clans. In light of these circumstances, Garang reached an agreement with Major General Clement Wani, leader of the powerful Mundari militia of cattle herders and a former member of the SSDF. Clement Wani and his militia largely controlled the Juba area of Central Equatoria and that made it possible for Juba to become the capital of the fledgling state. There were, however, tensions that occasionally became violent between the Mundari and the Bari speakers who were settled farmers and made up most of the residents of Juba.

But it did not take long for the Dinka officials in the new government, the Dinka dominated SPLA officers and men who moved to the city, and all their camp followers to gain the enmity of another generation of Juba inhabitants. Apart from resentment at what the locals considered their crude rustic manners, the main area of conflict was over land-grabbing by powerful Dinka generals and politicians. With the establishment of Juba as the capital of an oil rich state—even if it turned out to only be for a short period—money flowed in and a ready market developed in illegal land claims that saw purchases made sometimes at the point of a gun. Ethnic tensions soared, but the local inhabitants were effectively powerless before the Dinka who enjoyed considerable influence in the government and SPLA.

Overnight, the small town in the bush, long ignored by Khartoum, attracted thousands of politically ambitious people who wanted to be close to the center of power. Many others came to Juba to take up jobs as builders or workers in the rapidly expanding service industry. And others just came to be near rich and powerful relatives. But the preindustrial South Sudanese were ill-equipped to meet the needs of the rapidly developing modern town being built on top of the largely tukul strewn village that constituted old Juba.

As a result, the South Sudanese usually stood aside while Ethiopians and especially Eritreans fronting for powerful Dinka (or sometimes Nuer or another group) politicians and generals built and staffed the luxury hotels and restaurants that blossomed throughout the city. Kenyans moved into banking and operated at the high end of the financial industry. They set up sales offices for SUVs and expensive vehicles that were increasingly in demand by the elite. Ugandans controlled most of the petty trade, the transport industry, and operated the *boda bodas* that served as taxis for the poor. They were also responsible for most of the imports that came from near-by Ugandan cities. Somalis controlled the important retail petroleum industry and, as in other East African countries, they owned important currency exchanges. They also dominated the supply of water pumped from the Nile and carried on trucks to the city's inhabitants—reputedly the largest private industry in the country—since the government was never able to resurrect or replace the British colonial system.

As an aside, the Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI), the explicitly political component of USAID, approached the author to lead a team of engineers to Juba and get the water and electricity system functioning quickly after the SPLM government established itself in 2005 so that it could reap the political capital. That proposal never worked out and fifteen years later, as these words are being written, Juba's water and electricity systems are as inadequate as they were then. The South Sudanese were only in government, the security services, small trade, and the low end of the building trades. Prostitutes flooded the city from neighboring countries, while more traditionally minded South Sudanese women were slow to move into this new market opportunity. But their numbers increased with the subsequent decline in the economy.

Juba was a city of rich politicians and generals, mostly Dinka, fly-by-night East African capitalists, poor Ugandans who hated the city and were frequently the subjects of attacks, and a massive presence of UN and international NGO workers who provided most of the services.

What passed for civil society were Western created agencies needed as intermediaries in the supply of goods, services, and programs. Soon a class of young, educated South Sudanese emerged, speaking an international language of NGOs comprehensible only to themselves and disconnected from their own society. In the evenings, four-wheel drives with an alphabet soup of NGO initials competed for space on Juba's few paved roads with the latest SUVs driven by SPLM politicians and SPLA generals as they flocked to the hotels, night clubs, bars, and upmarket restaurants to eat imported food, served by waiters and prepared by cooks from East Africa.

The provision for good schools, clinics, and social services was not a major concern of the government and military elites whose own families resided in East Africa, Europe, North America, and Australia. These members of the military elite were only in the country to loot the state and serve as patrons for their extended families, and multiple wives and girlfriends. At the height of the oil boom, they stole USD 4 billion, according to President Salva Kiir (Young 2012). The thefts were on such a scale that a leading member of the SPLM lobby group in the US, Ted Dagne, left his position as director of research for the US Congress to become a minister in Salva's government. In that role, he penned a letter in the president's name, which was later leaked to the public asking 75 present and former ministers to return their ill-gotten gains to a secret bank account in Nairobi, after which their crimes would be forgotten.³ Dagne, however, did not appreciate how dangerous the people whose praises he had been singing in Washington for many years actually were, and he was forced to flee the country in fear of his life. Indeed, appeals to decency or the seemingly sophisticated anticorruption measures pressed on the government by the West did little to reduce the graft and crime that only let up when the oil boondoggle crashed.

The state capitals, particularly those of Greater Upper Nile, experienced similar contradictory problems that beset Juba, but each reflected their distinct ethnic compositions. Thus, Bor was the largely Dinka inhabited capital of the Nuer majority state of Jonglei. Nuer felt reasonably secure in the town (until the 2013 civil war broke out) albeit aggrieved that the capital was in the area of the minority Bor Dinka with whom they had long competed. Although from an area near Bor, the Murle had tense relations with both the Nuer and especially the Dinka. They largely avoided the city and played a minimal role in the state government. Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile, was a center of ethnic competition and conflict between the three tribes that inhabited the city—Dinka, Shilluk, and Nuer—and the first two were equally vehement in claiming possession. On the eve of independence, and in the presence of President Salva Kiir and President Omar al-Bashir, these rivalries broke out between Dinka and Shilluk dancing groups, resulting in citywide rioting in which a dozen people were killed. Malakal would remain a major point of contestation during the civil war between the Shilluk and the Dinka Padang. Bentiu was the capital of Unity with 70 percent of its population belonging to the Nuer, but it too was divided, mostly between the Nuer clans and the different political alliances they formed. Some of the most vicious fighting of the entire civil war took place in Bentiu and vicinity.

Collectively these Upper Nile capitals formed a powder keg, and when war broke out in December 2013 they exploded in repeated rounds of ethnic slaughter. The legendary Nuer militia leader, Peter Gadet, concluded that the north-south fighting of Sudan's civil war was never as destructive as that between South Sudanese, often between members of the same

³ Alan Boswell (2012). No money was ever reported to be deposited in the Nairobi account.

tribe.⁴ Not only was this an indictment of those who carried out the killings but also of those who created the political circumstances under which such people were in a position to carry out these deeds.

Tribal sensitivities may have been only marginally more acute in South Sudan than in other African countries (until the civil war broke out), but in those countries the ruling parties usually endeavored to dampen ethnic divisions and make some concessions to their countries' ethnic diversity, particularly if the ruling parties rose to power in the context of armed struggles. That was not the case with the SPLA in South Sudan and indeed ethnic based conflicts intensified with independence and fostered endemic corruption and kleptocracy that became enduring characteristics of the fledgling state. As a result, well before the civil war broke out the party had ceased to function as an instrument of governance in large parts of the country. What passed for civil administration was in practice an extension of the security apparatus. It was rare for state governors or county commissioners not to also hold an army or police rank and collect salaries from both positions. As befitting their backgrounds, these officials were not concerned with developing the country, providing services, dispensing justice, or engaging in what could be called nation-building. Instead, they had been appointed to ensure security, and in practice they usually spent most of their time pursuing private interests. In South Sudan, however, the greater the emphasis on security, the more insecurity became endemic because the security organs were the principal cause of violence, social dislocation, and ethnic tensions.

6.6 Count-Down to War

On the eve of the secession referendum and out of a desire to build unity, the SPLM promised the opposition parties a major role in the formulation of the transitional constitution and post-referendum government. Significantly, however, this did not apply to southern Sudanese living in the north and fearing NCP manipulation the SPLM pressed to deny them a vote (Young 2012). The fact that the SPLM endorsement of separation amounted to a refutation of its long-held commitment to a united reformed Sudan was of little concern in a party where ideological issues were never a major interest. In an indicative example, the SPLM passed almost seamlessly from parroting the slogans of Soviet state socialism to the liberal democratic rhetoric of its new American patrons and the powerful lobbyists linked to the Clinton and Obama presidencies. Under the Derg, SPLM leaders were atheists but became devout Christians as a means to reach out to the evangelicals that formed an important component of President George Bush's constituency.

The massive vote in favor of South Sudanese secession was considered by observers to be evidence that the people had overcome their many ethnic divides and were constructing a nation-state. They also saw it as an endorsement of the SPLM. Both conclusions were mistaken. The vote was an affirmation of the people's African character in a Sudanese state that gave primacy to Arabism. But in no way did the vote represent any overcoming of ethnic identities. Indeed, the SPLM remained an object of hatred in much of the non-Dinka inhabited areas of the country and it only made common cause with the masses over the issue of secession. If the SPLM could have fulfilled the people's aspirations, then attitudes might have changed. But the leopard could not change its spots. In any case, it is highly unlikely the ruling party could have constructed a viable state in the hostile environment of South

⁴ Author interview with Lt.-Gen. Peter Gadet, Khartoum, May 23, 2017.

Sudan. Instead of establishing a liberal democratic state, the SPLM set about constructing a Dinka ethnocracy.

This development was not a surprise to scholars of the SPLA and those familiar with conditions in South Sudan, but it was a shock to the American sponsors of the project who imagined a liberal democratic regime taking form in a preindustrial society rife with ethnic based conflicts and overseen by the SPLA. Likewise, Salva's use of tribalism to maintain power cannot be a surprise since what passed for politics in southern Sudan was always tribal and survival depended on how well the game was played. The game did not suddenly conform to Western precepts and values just because politicians made lofty commitments to democracy and introduced Western institutions of governance. Although not a highly educated man, Salva was better at tribal politics than his opponent, Riek Machar, who held a Western PhD and would eventually become the opposition leader. While Riek could never decide whether he was a tribal chief or a politician in the Western sense, a model that could never fit in South Sudan, Salva garnered much support through his adeptness in tribal politics.

The experience bears comparison with Eritrea where, fourteen years earlier, Western supporters celebrated what they assumed to be the emergence of a liberal democratic government and an "African Singapore." However, the authoritarian tendencies of the ruling Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) were evident long before it assumed power (indeed, the highly effective EPLF security organization had eliminated any potential dissidents before Asmara was opened to the international community) and liberalism was hardly the byword upon which the ruling party hung its legitimacy. No matter, Western liberals are always looking for African heroes and applauded the election of EPLF champion Isias Aferworki in the wake of the 99.99 percent vote for secession in 1993, as witnessed by the author. Although neither Singapore nor liberal democracy were on Eritrea's horizon, the EPLF came to power with significant advantages: it had gained valuable experience in administration during the long insurgency, Eritrea had acquired many material advances from Italian and British colonialism, it had a rudimentary infrastructure and some industrialization, and the EPLF had carried out wide-ranging mobilization. South Sudan had none of the advantages of Eritrea and all its disadvantages. Its experience of colonialism was one of benign neglect and there was almost no infrastructure or industrial development, even in the capital Juba. What passed for mobilization under the SPLA served to intensify ethnic conflicts. The SPLA was authoritarian and focused on military pursuits and left matters of administration to the international community, thus ensuring its incompetence once it was catapulted into power by the international community.

South Sudan also had another major disadvantage: oil. Eritrea did not have a valuable commodity over which its politicians and generals could fight and corrupt themselves. Instead, Eritrea extracted capital from the meager surplus of the peasants through close administration, the use of army conscripts as a party labor force, and taxing their nationals abroad. In South Sudan, the ruling elite saw the demand for development and services as an obstacle to pocketing oil rents upon which the state depended for 95 percent of its revenues. With few in the country participating in a modern economy, the only people who could be taxed were the wealthy urban elite and as friends of the government or members of the government they were ignored. Party leaders and generals concentrated on looting the state, filling government positions with relatives and tribesmen, and directing the rest

of the country's surplus to the security services to protect their ill-gotten gains, fight other rent-seekers, and keep the country in a high state of alert for fear of an invasion from Sudan.

The collapse of the state into warring factions broadly corresponded with the decline of the international oil market although the trend toward war was evident long before. It was even precipitated by the decision to stop oil production to pressure Khartoum to reduce the transit fees. That gambit failed, Juba backed down, and its limited reserves were all but depleted. In the face of the country's impending collapse, the foreign backers of the SPLM launched a campaign to shift the blame to the US, which was accused of not providing sufficient support to the government. In fact, the state was nothing more than a shell bequeathed by the international community and even the powerful United States did not have the capacity to stop the belligerents from going to war or, as events would prove, end the self-destructive conflict.

It was not a surprise that the state split on ethnic lines between the Dinka and Nuer, but it was a surprise that the Dinka leadership would use the crisis to launch an attack on the Nuer civilian population of Juba. This attack, carried out between December 15–18, 2013, precipitated the insurgency by Nuer youth. It was not merely a competition of elites that the international peacemakers claimed was the cause. Instead of standing above the fray, closely analyzing conditions in the country and recognizing that the conflict had its origins in granting the disparate peoples of southern Sudan national self-determination, some of the IGAD peacemakers became active participants. Meanwhile, the organization exacerbated the conflict by assuming it could be resolved by ignoring the structural contradictions and concentrating on elite power-sharing. This approach served to increase elite demands in a zero-sum context. It also encouraged other ethnic communities who feared a carve up of the state between the Dinka and Nuer to launch their own insurgencies as they understood that an uprising would be the only way to gain a place at the negotiating table.

While the international community regularly preached that war was not the answer to South Sudan's problems, not taking up arms was a sure way to be ignored. In any case, for the martially minded leaders of the Dinka and Nuer the first response to political grievances was war and that produced tit-for-tat ethnic killings in Greater Upper Nile that were later to be replicated in Equatoria and Western Bahr al Ghazal. But despite their considerably larger numbers, the Dinka government might well have fallen to the Nuer were it not for the timely arrival of the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) of President Yoweri Museveni, almost certainly with the approval of his patron, the US.

Museveni did not like either Salva or Riek, but the latter—as per the narrative ascribed to by the Americans as well—was the cat's paw for his Islamist enemies in Khartoum. He was further accused of aiding the Lord's Resistance Army, when he oversaw a process that had the objective of reconciling the LRA and the Ugandan government. The governments of Museveni and Salva were also the funders of armed groups in Sudan, the SPLA-North and the Justice and Equality Movement, who were likewise employed to fight the rebel SPLM-IO (In Opposition) of Dr. Riek Machar. But with the defection of more than half of the SPLA soldiers to the rebels, Salva and his chief of defense staff, Paul Malong, also developed and utilized tribal militias from their home areas. While better at abusing civilians and looting than actually fighting, they nonetheless had the advantage of loyalty.

Meanwhile, Riek was initially dependent on a Nuer youth white army over which he had little control. Furthermore, he did not want to be closely associated with them because they abused Dinka civilians. Although SSDF generals and their forces aligned with the SPLM-

IO distrusted him and strongly opposed the SPLM which Riek still claimed to be loyal. He might still have excelled if he had a ready supply of weapons, but almost his only source was Khartoum and it just provided enough to ensure he was not defeated. While the US permitted the UPDF to serve as the backbone for the weak government in Juba, Khartoum suffered sanctions from Washington. Given the weak state of the Sudanese economy, made weaker by the substantial allocation of the national budget to security, it was only permitted to provide the most meager support for the rebels.⁵ Meanwhile, Riek had limited political abilities and the only thing that saved the SPLM-IO from total defeat was the growing dissent in the country with the government's brutality and opposition to Dinka hegemony.

But the government's conclusion that it stood to gain more from war than a peace agreement meant that while it was pressured to sign the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) in August 2015, it had no intention of implementing the agreement. Shortly thereafter, they realized the peacemakers lacked any force to implement it. Instead, the US pressured Riek to return to Juba and assume his peace agreement designated position as first vice president even though the government was in flagrant violation of the security arrangements of the agreement, did not accept the ten state arrangement provided in the agreement and the entire process was only one small spark away from an explosion and collapse. These efforts were thoroughly endorsed by the US, particularly Secretary of State John Kerry, who told Riek he would be taken before the International Criminal Court if he did not return to Juba. The imminent explosion occurred when Salva and Riek met in the Presidential Palace on July 8, 2016, to discuss the growing number of their respective soldiers killed at SPLA check points in the capital. As was the case in December 2013, the SPLA and militia forces loyal to Salva attacked Nuer civilians and forced the vastly outnumbered SPLM-IO forces to leave the city. They continued to attack them over the next month as they fled to sanctuary in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

To any rational observer, these events marked the collapse of the peace process, but the international community pretended otherwise. Under the influence of the US, they recognized the bogus election of Riek's dissident lieutenant, Taban Deng Gai, as leader of the SPLM-IO and his subsequent appointment by Salva as the country's first vice president to replace Riek. By blackmailing Khartoum with promises to ease Washington's sanctions and bringing pressure to bear on Ethiopia, the US managed to keep him out of the region. Meanwhile, after visiting South Africa for health reasons Riek was placed under house detention, apparently in the belief that his marginalization would bring peace to South Sudan. Suffice to say, that assumption proved false, the war spread, famine developed, fear was increasingly expressed that much of the country's population might become refugees in neighboring states. Meanwhile, Taban never gained national legitimacy and Riek continued to serve as leader of the SPLM-IO, which remained the premier rebel force in the country. Although the US took the initiative in accepting Taban's appointment and marginalizing Riek, the Obama administration took no further action and the incoming Trump administration took little interest in South Sudan and its deepening humanitarian crisis.

⁵ In the final days of his presidency in 2017, Barack Obama issued a presidential order to end economic sanctions against Sudan in six months, but did not end Sudan's designation as a terrorist state. He insisted, however, that Sudan continue to cooperate with the US in fighting terrorism as defined by the US and that it not support South Sudanese rebels. Having bent over backwards for many years to end US sanctions, the regime of President Omar Al-Bashir quickly ended its limited support for the rebels.

6.7 Conclusion

US interest in Sudan developed in the context of the Cold War. It counted on Jafaar Nimeiri to do its bidding in the region, support Israel, and stand up to the Derg, as well as assist in efforts to overthrow the Gadaffi regime, which it eventually accomplished in 1989. There was little concern with the welfare of the southern Sudanese who would later garner considerable attention of three American presidents. The democratically elected government of Sadig Al-Mahdi was viewed as an obstacle to the pursuit of US Cold War interests and thus Washington indicated it would not oppose a military coup. This facilitated the rise to power of the NCP, which became a thorn in the side of the US for the next three decades.

The end of the Cold War, US triumphalism, and the conviction that the US had the responsibility and even right to intervene in the affairs of virtually all countries that did not have the capacity to protect themselves, together with a hypocritical moral high-mindedness that has always figured in American foreign policy, laid the basis for the deepening and destructive engagement in Sudan and later South Sudan by presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama. This engagement led to the conviction that southern Sudan could only overcome its problem by the establishment of an independent nation-state in similar fashion and with a similar design as that of the West. But the state bequeathed to the peoples of South Sudan could never meet their needs and instead set them on a path to destruction. Moreover, the political party the Americans placed its faith in—the SPLM—never corresponded to their unrealistic and saintly-like conceptions.

A consideration of solutions for the South Sudan tragedy is beyond the scope of this chapter, but they must begin with the people of the country in whose name the state was created and for whom the peace processes were conducted. The views of the people were never determined and never figured in the decision-making of either the domestic or international power brokers. An initial and admittedly cursory attempt to determine the views of a small sample of eastern Nuer civilian residents and refugees in Gambella, Ethiopia, in December 2016 on issues such as war, peace, and leadership reached the conclusion that in the wake of its failures at peacemaking and peace implementation the stature of the international community has been radically diminished. Although there was no consensus on the way forward or how South Sudan should be administered, the people interviewed were clear that they did not want those decisions to again be made by outsiders or unaccountable indigenous elites. Western engagement in countries like South Sudan proceeded from the assumed lack of agency of Africans, but the cooperation almost exclusively with elites by Western-led peacemakers ensured that the voices of ordinary people were not heard and their interests not represented directly.

The peacemakers' response to the collapse of their peace process was to conclude that it was not due to any fault of the peace agreement, the exclusion of the South Sudanese from the peace process, or the fact that South Sudan could not be expected to conform to the stipulations of a peace process designed for a functioning nation-state, which it was clearly not. Instead, the peacemakers concluded that the failures were due to a lack of pressure brought to bear on the belligerents. And thus, the number of international mediators was vastly increased. Because the war had spread, more rebel groups were brought to the table, largely at the expense of the SPLM-IO. These efforts proved successful, if success is understood to mean the acceptance of the agreement by the government in 2018. By late 2019, the conflict had dissipated, yet Riek Machar had not returned to Juba to take up his position as first vice

president, cantonment centers had not been established for the opposition forces, and there was no settlement on the number of states as pursuant to the agreement. As a result, there were increasing fears that this impasse could continue for a long time.

The first step in sorting out the conundrum that is South Sudan today must begin with giving a voice to its citizens, and not just its elites. In both the Naivasha peace process that resulted in the CPA and the Addis Ababa process to end the war in southern Sudan that produced ARCSS, the primary focus was on gaining the approval of internationally selected elites to various forms of power-sharing. This emphasis assumed that the problems of Sudan and then South Sudan could be equated with the concerns of these elites who could then build a peaceful nation-state. From the perspective of the international community, the highlight of the Naivasha process, was the behind-closed-doors talks between SPLM leader John Garang and Sudan's Vice President Ali Osman Taha. Meanwhile, the backers of the South Sudan peace process understood the conflict to be between opposition leader Dr. Riek Machar and President Salva Kiir, and almost all the negotiations were concerned with how much power each should hold in the post-conflict government. This assumed that not only were these two individuals in complete control of their respective organizations, but also that they reflected the interests of the principal groups in society and neither of those assumptions were true. Riek did not organize, control, or lead the Nuer white army, which was the major armed group in opposition to the government during the first phase of the war. Likewise, Salva did not control the misnamed national army he claimed at crucial times, and as a result he relied on tribal militias. Legitimizing elites and permitting them to dominate internationally led peace negotiations or threatening to have them removed or marginalized when they do not act according to the dictates of their sponsor—as was the case with Riek—demonstrates the peace-makers' power over the actors. However, even when the international community can dictate the terms of the peace agreement—as they did in South Sudan—they cannot ensure sustainable peace, much less make an ungovernable country governable.

As well as exerting their economic power through financial institutions and trade agreements, war and the threat of war, peacemaking has become a favored instrument by which the US led West ensures its interests are protected. These peace processes are informed by neoliberal precepts and are sometimes led by the West, but more often are pursued through regional development-security organizations that are funded, supplied, and dominated by the West, such as IGAD, which was the West's chosen vehicle to pursue peace processes in Sudan and South Sudan.

However, instead of such institutions being instruments to realize African solutions to African problems—as is claimed—they deepen the role of the West in the continent, undermine the sovereignty of the weak states of Africa, and increasingly make them dependent on the West. And as the peacemaking efforts in Sudan and South Sudan demonstrate, they have proven to be not only failures, but have exacerbated the conflicts. In Alejandro Bendaña's analyses of supposedly successful internationally led peace processes in Central America (that is, they stopped the wars), the weak and disenfranchised majorities frequently gained little and often lost significantly from processes that did not address, much less overcome, the social injustices that produced the insurrections in the first place (Bendaña 2003). While internationally sponsored peace agreements in Central America changed the forms in which the poor experienced violence, they did not end the violence and instead produced states better equipped to withstand demands from below. In Sudan and South Sudan, peace agreements did not even end the overt forms of violence associated with negative peace. Instead,

by affirming the rule of oppressive and dysfunctional elites the culmination of one peace process produced the conditions for further violence and the need for more peacemaking.

While the West and its human rights advocates contend that weak or predatory African states alone produce conditions that necessitate international interventions, it was precisely the failures of the CPA that shaped South Sudan's civil war, or as the subtitle of my book on that peace process would have it—"consequences of a flawed peace process." But in a context where no lessons are learned from past failures, the failures themselves are held as providing evidence of the need for further and intensified interventions.

6.8 Addendum, December 30, 2020

Under the 2005 CPA the international community handed over power to the SPLM and set the stage for the establishment of the South Sudanese state in 2011 and the ensuing disasters. Two years later that state was at war with itself and the international community responded with more peace-making and the signing of a peace agreement in 2015. When that agreement collapsed the international community oversaw a 'revitalized' peace agreement that was signed by the government of Salva Kiir and most of the rebel groups in September 2018. More than two years later when this is being written the security situation in South Sudan has marginally improved but fighting continues between the holdout National Salvation Front and government forces in Central Equatoria while inter and intra-communal fighting is endemic. The fact that communal conflicts are not addressed by the peace process speaks powerfully of its inadequacy and the failure of the present forms of governance that are a product of the peace process.

Since 1983 various components of the international community have been involved in trying to bring peace, defined negatively as the absence of war, to the territory. But each failed peace-making effort led to further peace-making by an ever-changing international community on the one hand and local elites that showed remarkable continuity on the other. The approach to peace-making and the models employed have not changed and nor has there been any consideration whether the state that the international community and the local elites are committed to can meet the needs of the people of South Sudan for security and development.

The debate on whether South Sudan should be placed under a trusteeship has largely withered. Not because state capacity has improved or because the government has demonstrated an interest in the welfare of its people. But because the international community led by the UN has moved beyond the provision of humanitarian assistance and is increasingly delivering basic government services. A powerful argument against the imposition of an international trusteeship was that it breached South Sudan's sovereignty, but in daily practice the UN and a host of other agencies do precisely that. Nonetheless, the West and the African Union want to preserve the illusion that a dysfunctional South Sudan state is a sovereign unit of the so-called international global order.

South Sudan was created to free itself from Sudanese overlordship and its SPLM government endeavored to replace its extensive ties with Sudan with those of its East African neighbors. But the government is finding that the historical, cultural, linguistic, geographical, and familial links with Sudan are stronger than was imagined and in the wake of the coming to power of the post-Al-Bashir transitional government in 2019 the establishment of formal linkages between the two countries cannot be discounted. Also driving renewed ties

to the motherland is the failure of the secessionist project and refusal of the Salva Kiir to devolve powers which has replicated the centralized administration that southern nationalists fought against in the old Sudan.

Unlike other parts of Africa where wars of liberation sometimes served to unify the various ethnic communities, in South Sudan the conflicts exacerbated existing antagonisms. Likewise, the efforts of the international community over 37 years have not succeeded in overcoming the divisions between the 80+ ethnic communities that reside in the territory. To the frustration of the West the South Sudanese state remains not only a threat to the security of its own people but endangers the security of client states in the region, and despite an abundance of natural resources it has not become an investment destination for Western capital. These were precisely the reasons the US and its allies first became involved in Sudan peace-making. Constrained by the West's neo-colonial and Eurocentric conviction that all states must bend to its model of the nation-state, South Sudan continues to be dysfunctional, only elites linked to the artificial state benefit, and its peoples suffer untold miseries.