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SRSR PRESS CONFERENCE

Below is a near verbatim transcript of the press conference by SRSR Jan Pronk held on 26th July 2006 at UNMIS Press Briefing Room, Ramsis Building.

Spokesperson Radhia: Thank you for coming to this press conference featuring Mr. Jan Pronk, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to Sudan.

Without further ado, I give the floor to Mr. Jan Pronk.

SRSR Pronk: Thank you.

Let me start by informing you that half an hour ago, we hang the UN flag at half-mast and have also asked UNMIS offices in all of the country following the killing of four unarmed United Nations peace-keepers in the South of Lebanon. I think it is an atrocious act. United Nations peace-keepers are being sent to places on behalf of the world community as a whole. They should be safe and parties at war should keep their safety.

I can only draw your attention to the outrage expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. On behalf of all United Nations peace-keepers here in Sudan, I would like to join him in his outrage and bring our condolences to the families of our colleagues.

Nearly a year ago John Garang died and I am going to Juba on the 30th where there will be a commemoration event organized by the GoSS and SPLM. Dr. Garang died as the Vice-President of the country and the President of the Government of Southern Sudan. I could have stayed here in Khartoum in order to participate in any ceremony which the government would organize but I thought it would be more appropriate to join the people with whom he, for a very long period, felt very close. So my intention is to go to Juba.

A year after the coming into being of the Government of Southern Sudan as we have documented in our report to the Security Council, there is indeed progress in the implantation of the CPA and I really can say that we expect that peace between the north and the south is there to last.

Of course there are many problems but problems are gradually being solved. The politicians take more time than they did during the peace talks themselves. And in some fields, perhaps, you see some stalemates – Abyei is one example of such a stalemate – but in other fields there is gradual progress. There is for instance gradual progress in the redeployment of the troops – that is our main tasks to monitor.

I am going on Saturday to Kassala to attend the farewell ceremony which is being organized by the Government of Kassala State to the United Nations -that means UNMIS civilian office in Kassala, the Military Observers, the Nepalese protection force and also the UN Police-. The farewell ceremony is organized at the initiative of the Government in Khartoum and organized by the government of the state [*Kassala State*]. We highly appreciate this and we take it as a token of appreciation for our work.

We can also say that as far as the redeployment of the other troops is concerned – SAF from the South – there is progress and that targets are being met. In the CJMC which is meeting every two weeks, the usual criticism with regards to the pace of the redeployment of the troops is no longer there. There are of course many questions still being discussed: the formation of the JIUs is one of them, Abyei, but they are political questions dealt with in a political fashion.

There is of course another major problem in the South which we should not shy away from and that is the violence in the south not directly related to the conflict between the Government and the SPLM. Violence which is very often called “tribal violence” but which is more complex than that. It is also violence related to the position of other armed groups which have not yet taken sides. The majority of the Southern Sudan Defense Forces for instance has followed its chief Paulino Matib (who joined the SPLM). But there is a number of commanders in some areas who are still “in between”. They should have taken a decision; they have not done so. You can not of course fight them because that would indeed increase the violence. You have to talk and talks are taking place but they go very slowly. The problem is that some of these commanders also have contacts with community groups, tribal groups that support them in the violence. There is also a suspicion but not proof that these former SSDF commanders themselves are getting support from what I have called earlier on other occasions “forces in the dark” in Khartoum.

This is a spoiling situation in the peace process. I would like, a year after the constitution of the new Government, to repeat my call on whoever is still showing interest in destabilizing the South to refrain from doing so – either directly or indirectly by providing weapons to such groups. I also repeat my call to the commanders concerned to take a decision to join the SPLA or to leave the South since the CPA provides that they could chose to become members of the SAF.

The GoSS is dealing with big problems also relating to this spoiling situation. They have the obligation to establish law and order in various States. And those groups who do not want to deliver the arms which they still have from the war in the past, they have to be taken to task. It is the obligation of the GoSS to disarm people who are not allowed to have weapons. That has been the case in Jonglei and in that disarmament process people have been killed and also civilians. That is greatly to be regretted. In cooperation with United Nations Mission in Sudan, the government, through its civilian authorities, bearing in mind its experience in the beginning, is now doing a much better job in the eastern part of Jonglei around the city of Akobo. The disarmament process there is going on quite well because it is not being carried

out by the GoSS military but by the GoSS civilian authorities in close cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Sudan officials – we have a DDR component. That augurs well for the future.

But at the same time, I say that all situations are region-specific. The violence which we saw in Upper Blue Nile was region-specific because it was related to economic interests of other armed groups which were also of a tribal character. We saw also some tribal conflict in Bentiu which did lead to civilians fleeing the city. The situation is now calm also with the help of the monitoring activities of the United Nations Mission in Sudan together with the Government.

There is of course also the problem in that part of the State of the oil companies who do have their own militia and which create unrest not only in that region but also in the other States. That is a specific problem which has to be solved also in the interest of the people who were living over there and were returning to those areas.

I did say there are region-specific problems in Southern Sudan. Around Rumbek there have been major clashes of a tribal character but very often related to economic interests – nomads versus pastoralists, for instance.

We are quite concerned about all these clashes. It is not our task to prevent it; it is not in the mandate of our military. But we do have the obligation as the UN to talk, to mediate, and to draw the attention of the authorities well in advance of possible violence and destruction of peace in the South. And I consider that a very important task.

We can not – that is not our task; we didn't get that in the CPA – protect civilians against attacks by those groups who are not related to the war between the North and the South, tribal and other clashes. We don't have the capacity to do so; we don't have the mandate to do so. To a great extent, it is a law and order problem in a new State. But we will continue to help the authorities to address the problems concerned.

It is not only in the South where such clashes are taking place. Let me draw your attention to South Darfur where the clashes between the Government and the SLA has been brought to nil now. How long it will last, nobody knows but Mini Minnawi and the Government are talking in South Darfur, they are not fighting. And Mini Minnawi is not fighting AbdulWahid in South Darfur and there are no strong splinter groups of the various movements acting in South Darfur and that is a great step forward in South Darfur.

But against this positive development in South Darfur, there is a negative one. And that is, increased tribal militia against civilians after the signing of the Peace Agreement in May. The situation in this regard has further deteriorated in July. Around Gereida for instance, but not only there, between the Habbania and the Rizeigat as just one major example, a fight took place about a week ago amongst the tribal militia whereby hundreds of militia fought with hundreds of an other militia . The total is about 2,000 fighters who were fighting because of a conflict over water, land and trekking. It all started with a conflict between one nomadic herder and one local farmer and went completely out of hand. Two people in southern Lebanon who were taken captive did lead to hundreds of people dead in Lebanon. Two people fighting in South Darfur did lead, in one week, to a hundred and fifty people being killed in a tribal war on the basis of an economic problem. It is one example; there are other examples also in South Darfur leading to dozens of people who have been killed.

It is not related to the war between the Government and the rebel movements. It is to a great extent inter-tribal; it is to a great extent economic; it has historic roots and these fights took place also decades and centuries ago. But nowadays they are much more violent than in the past because all the groups have much more weapons and heavy weapons and that means that it also results in many more people being killed than before.

We - and I had a discussion with the *Wali* of South Darfur - after the Peace Agreement are very much interested in participating – not taking over but participating – in all tribal reconciliation meetings and conferences which are being organized by the Government. They are doing a good job but it should not be only tribal reconciliations of past conflicts in order to condemn what has happened. It should also be forward-looking in order to create a kind of a peace climate beyond the war in Darfur amongst all the tribes. That is very strongly related of course to the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue. I had discussions in Nyala about such possibilities. It has to be led by the African Union. But the sooner the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue starts, the more inclusive it is – everybody has to participate in it – and the more it is also being decentralized – not one big jamboree in el-Fasher but in particular localized and regionalized to discuss also the conflict in the region itself, the more promising such a dialogue will be. That is South Darfur.

In North Darfur, the fighting has continued – it is not yet over. There are more and more splinter groups. I foresee more fighting and at the same time I know that there are secret contacts between the various groups and I very much hope that these contacts will bare fruit. I know that there are statements by politicians of a very high rank that there should not be any discussions with groups who have not signed the Darfur Agreement. That is not wise. You have to continue to talk; you have to continue to bring others on board; you have to engage yourself in talking with other groups. If you don't want to do so, then you are fooling yourself. Then you think that the big hurdle which was taken in Abuja is already the finish. It was only a hurdle on the track towards the finish – nothing more than that. We all knew that that would be the case and everybody who thinks that the hurdle is equal to the finish is fooling himself and that is why it is so necessary to talk with everybody.

At the same time you have to condemn those who attack – and attacks have taken place in North Darfur and also, as you may remember, in North Kordofan. I hope it will not result in new attacks in West Darfur.

I know that talks are taking place at the moment in Geneina also beyond the parties who did sign. And wherever we are being invited to mediate and to facilitate, we are willing to do so also with Arab militia, also with Janjaweed, provided that indeed the outcome of the DPA will be indeed the disarmament of the Janjaweed. You can talk with them; you can talk with militia as much as you are willing to talk also with militia on the other side of the conflict, but the ultimate aim should be disarmament; should be stopping attacks.

We can only assist. We are not in the lead. We have not been given any lead task in Abuja. All lead tasks in Abuja have been given to the African Union. They have to do that job. We can assist wherever we are being asked to do so.

This afternoon I will have a meeting at the invitation of Mr. Kingibe together with the here of the Ambassadors representatives of the international community to discuss the implementation of the DPA. It is very important that that will get a higher priority. It can get

a higher priority after the meeting in Brussels last week. I attended that meeting which resulted in two important outcomes.

The first important outcome of that meeting is that the African Union, has now the guarantee of more resources than before and can continue after the originally intended deadline of the 1st of October. They can go beyond the 1st of October and, in my view, until the 1st of January. That was a political guarantee given by all countries concerned and adequate amounts of money have been made available – not exactly the amount of money which was asked for by the African Union, but more than two-third of the original budgetary request. That is a step forward and I hope that the resources promised would be provided in cash as soon as possible so that the African Union can become stronger and better than on the basis of the limited and short-term resources with which they have had to live with until now.

There is a second step forward. The President had said to the mission of Mr. Guehenno and Mr. Djinnit that UN troops could not be deployed because UN peace-keeping was out of the question; this is final, he said. The Minister of Foreign Affairs declared in Brussels meeting that a decision had not yet been taken. And the international community has seen this as an opening. It may be a very tiny opening, I don't know how big it is, but anyway an opening. The decision has not yet been taken and the Government has committed itself to present to the Secretary-General of the UN in early August a plan on the role of the UN in Darfur as was promised already by President Bashir in Banjul to Secretary-General Kofi Annan. I do not know the content of that plan – the plan still has to be submitted.

As far as the UN is concerned, we continue to do whatever is in our present mandate and that is humanitarian, it is mediation, it is political, it is civilian, it is human rights monitoring,. And we will not only stretch that mandate as creatively as possible to work in the interest of the people in Darfur as long as possible together with the African Union, which is tasked to monitor and support the implementation the DPA and to chair the institutions be it the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue, the Ceasefire Commission or the Joint Commission. We are only members. We will assist as members on the basis of the mandate which we have.

Thank you very much.

Q & A

Q: Two questions: one: you mentioned that oil companies in the south have their own militias. Could you elaborate on that? Who are these oil companies; are they foreign or national and is anyone negotiating with them on their militias?

Secondly; how seriously do you take the threats from AlQaeda that they will move in Sudan if the UN deployed in Darfur and what has the Government said to you about these threats?

SRSB Pronk: No details about the oil companies and those militias. I see it as a problem and today I am not going further than that. I am highlighting the complexity of the violence in the South. Many people say it is more than tribal, it is economic. Economic not only in the traditional sense of the word - that is the fight for water and all that – but also fight for other resources; fight for land which has been occupied for security reasons for instance by oil companies. People returning to the places where they came from find that the land has been occupied by the oil companies sometimes a decade or fifteen years after they had left and

they are being denied access to their title by people in uniform. It is a problem and it will have to be discussed.

I don't know about new [*AlQaeda*] threats ...

Q: I am talking about the same old threats that you've had before. What has the Government said to you about it? Are they reassuring you?

SRSB Pronk: I take those threats as seriously as I took them at the time. But sometimes it is better not to talk about threats. But at the time there were those threats and you have to take such threats seriously of course. I don't want to play that down at all.

Thirdly; there has been no discussion at all with the Government about such threats. My representatives do have regular talks with the national security and I also have my regular but less frequent talks with Mr. Salah Gosh and we speak about threats. Of course I can not disclose the contents of such discussions but we have those discussions from a security and not from a political point of view.

So politically it has not yet been discussed with the Government.

Q: On the oil companies, you must know these oil companies working in the area ... are they foreign or national?

SRSB Pronk: No company is either completely foreign or completely national in the present globalized economy – I will come back to that later.

Q: The Minister of Defence, in a press briefing two day ago, said that the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) must go back to their barracks and not engage in disarmament in the South. He said that disarmament is the responsibility of the DDR Commission. What are your comments on this?

Second question; there are some who believe that the post-DPA security situation in Darfur is worse than before the agreement was signed.

SRSB Pronk: There is a major task for the DDR institutions following the CPA. But there are two limitations: firstly the DDR institutions hardly function following the very slow decision-making process between the two Governments on JIUs. It means that it is not yet known which soldiers will have to be disarmed, which will be in the JIUs, which in the armies, which are going to be taken care of in other security units such as police or prison guards or whatever, so it is going very slowly. So I agree with those that say it is a task for DDR institutions but then I would like to translate my agreement into an appeal to both Governments to be much faster in the building up of the institutions, their own institutions for DDR, which is basically a task for the two parties themselves. We monitor and assist; we don't disarm; we don't demobilize; we don't reintegrate. They have to do it; we assist and we monitor. That is one limitation.

The second limitation; according to the CPA, the disarmament in the framework of the DDR program is basically related to the official armies. They have to be reduced from the big numbers to a smaller number – that is the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) and not the SSDF because it doesn't exist anymore – SSDF is either

Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) or SPLM because, according to the CPA, the deadline of the 9th of January is over (for other armed groups to decide who they want to join SAF or SPLA or disarm) and that was also underwritten by the Juba Declaration by Paulino Matib.

That means that everybody who is now using arms and is not a member of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) or the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA), whether former or not former member of the SSDF is just a bandit. He is not a former soldier who is now part of an official army to be demobilized. And that means that it is a law and order issue for the authority in the State. If there is a law and order issue in Jonglei it is for the Jonglei Governor and the Commissioner over there with their police, with their security system over there, to do the job to disarm. For instance, in Jonglei it is necessary to disarm the White Army. The White Army is a group of civilians who have taken up arms. They have received arms of course from the Government in the past, from the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) in the past, from the SSDF in the past. It is a group of civilians to some extent tribal, to some extent political and to some extent economic. They have to be disarmed. The task of the Government in the South and of the State of Jonglei is to disarm people who are not allowed to use arms; who are not part of an overall disarmament campaign between the the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA). That is the legal theoretical position.

I am quite ready as the UN also to assist in that field though it is not the official disarmament program concerning the SAF and the SPLA. I think it is useful also because despite what I said, legally, there is a relation between the two processes because all groups were fighting a war which to a great extent was a civil guerilla and counter-guerilla war. And we can give advice on the basis of the UN's experience also in other countries. And I just said that the Jonglei thing didn't go very well – too many civilians were killed. I think that the figures which have been mentioned in particular by representatives of the people of Jonglei in the Diaspora, Canada for instance, are too high. Not that many people had been killed as they mentioned but too many people have been killed. Villages have also been destroyed. We have seen on our monitoring two villages destroyed and a number of houses which had been burnt down. We do not know exactly who did it. But it means the people have to be disarmed. And if the disarmament campaign being carried out by Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) – mistakes have definitely been made but they have to learn the lesson. And that is why I said that in Akobo it is going on better because police and civilian authorities are being used to carry out the job.

It has also to be carried out in balance: if you have one group to be disarmed who is afraid of another group that still have their arms and don't want to be disarmed then they fight back. You have to have a well-organized, balanced disarmament approach whereby you build up mutual confidence also in the framework of talking and reconciliation conferences.

So in the end, it is nobody's unique task; it is again here a wholistic task which has to be carried out by anybody who can contribute.

On your other question on the DPA, we see waves. I have been very critical about the increase in violence. As I said, it is a bit differentiated. In South Darfur, there are less fights between DPA and non-DPA parties but more tribal fighting. In West Darfur, the situation is a bit calm but very tense. I did not mention that because I issued a press statement a day ago, about the killing of the Government aid workers working with NGOs and working with the UN system. And there is a lot of tension in the camps. There is polarization – tribal and also political, people in favor and people against the DPA. And a number of these camps are near

explosion. The African Union has withdrawn from most of the camps which is a great pity. They lack the capacity at the moment to be there. They were attacked, that was in Zalingei, for instance, I think on the 6th or the 8th of May, and they have withdrawn. I think they should be there and the international community should make it possible for them to be there.

Absence does result in more violence; presence can help to prevent violence and to contain violence. We do not have the troops. We do not have the police; the UN has not been given the task to do so – has not been asked to do so. We can only note, criticize, make appeals. I am sending missions to the camps to discuss with the Government, with sheikhs, with AMIS, how to solve the problem though we are not in the lead but we have to do that job.

In Kalma, I was there, it is a big problem. There are weapons in the camp. So many that it has become quite a dangerous place. People use the camp also to loot outside the camp and to steal cattle. And of course you know that where cattle are being stolen the retaliation is great. And there was two days ago the danger that hundreds of nomads would attack Karma camp. They wanted to take revenge for whatever had been stolen and that would result in a bloodbath. It hasn't happened. They are still around. I am very pleased with the activities of the *Wali* in Nyala who did do his best in order to prevent this. You have to continue to be present and to talk. But also to talk to people in the camps to behave. Because in the camps there are many people who take law and order in their own hands and that is not acceptable.

I am just elaborating on a number of developments which are taking place different from the ones I mentioned two weeks ago.

I am far from satisfied with regards to the present stage of affairs. Sometimes it is a couple of days calm in some parts of Darfur but it is not structured; it is not systematic.

Q: Mr. Pronk, could you say something about the Janjaweed disarmament plan which you said is one of the major issues and is the UN involved at any stage in the contacts, I would say, on this matter which concerns the Darfur community?

The second thing is about the presence of only Muslim troops in a UN force. Are you aware that the government in Sudan has been approached on this because there has been some talk and some statements actually by the ex-President of the US Mr. Clinton and the press in Sudan has mentioned it several times? Do you think that the government in Sudan could be more favorable to such a solution – i.e. having only Muslim troops in a UN force?

Third small question; we are aware that the special envoy of the Slovenian president was arrested last Wednesday one week ago now in Darfur. Are you aware that he actually is incarcerated in el-Fasher and that he should be tried pretty soon and have you been asked to intervene in his issue so that he can return to his country?

SRSG Pronk: The Janjaweed disarmament plan has now been tabled by the Government to the Ceasefire Commission. It is being discussed because it will have to be commented upon by the parties in the Ceasefire Commission. That means that the countries who are members in the Ceasefire Commission – quite a number of them including the US – and also the UN. There will be a meeting on this, I understand, in Addis which is understandable because there is the military expertise of the African Union in Addis.

We have sent our preliminary comments today to the African Union Ceasefire Commission Chairman. They are the result of a meeting which I chaired yesterday with all my experts. I do not know whether the Janjaweed plan has been made public but I don't think that is the case; and I can not make my comments public.

But anyway there is some progress now – we can discuss a plan and that is a step forward.

If you speak about UN troops, you speak about UN troops who are not yet there. I thought you were speaking of the UN troops who are already in the South.

Well, there are no troops over there and I can only say the following: In January, when the African Union took a decision in favor of a transition to the UN – not at the request of the UN as you know and each time I repeat that – at that time, the first reactions of the Government were not so negative but they were worries expressed. There were two major issues. Firstly there was the mandate –the UN Charter Chapter VI or Chapter VII question; ICC or not ICC. The second worry was the composition of a UN mission.

I have said at one of these press conferences – and I think I am speaking now of January or February – that that meant that at that time the Government was willing to speak about modalities. They didn't say “no” to the idea – it was modalities that they were concerned about. Later there was a “No”. The “No” is still there.

I would say that as soon as there is no “No” anymore and as soon as the Government is willing to discuss modalities, I am certain that members of the Security Council who have expressed their willingness to have consultations with the Government already in their statement of the 5th of February, reaffirmed by the Security Council during its visit here in June, will be willing to discuss mandate and composition and I am not going further than that – you understand how cautiously I am formulating my language.

Yes, I am aware of the presence of the Slovenian envoy. Can I say that diplomacy best takes place in secrecy?

Q: Up to date, the pledges for the reconstruction and development of southern Sudan are not yet 50% or 70% completed. You have been to Brussels and the African Union has been given guarantees for the resources to be transformed to cash. What is the guarantee that will make these come in as quick as possible in order to make the African Union stronger on the ground? What are the criteria for getting it so that it does not delay/

Second; can you clarify to me about the discussion between Bashir and Kofi Annan on the transition?

SRSB Pronk: The African Union has requested in the Brussels meeting an amount of money which, dependent on the option with regard to the mandate, was somewhere between 270 and 335 million dollars until the end of this year.

The official figure of the pledges has not yet been made known. I made my own calculations and I was cautious because sometimes you hear a figure which reminds you of another figure so that you do not know what is new or not. So my own calculation was 216 new pledges. Others came to 245. So let's say that the request was between 270 and 335 while the estimates of what have been made available is between 216 and 245.

I think you mentioned a figure of 70%. It is a bit more than 70%. Which is not 100% but that this means that they will stay and that is my political intuition.

The spirit of Brussels was they have to stay until the 31st of December to make it possible to have further discussions with the Government on the basis of the opening the Government made – “We have not yet made a final decision” – which is not much but something.

That opening is related, and that comes to your second question, to the outcome of the meeting in Banjul between Kofi Annan and President Bashir. President Bashir said – and that was the outcome of the meeting and I can not say what went on between the two – that early August, the Government of Sudan will submit a plan with regard to the role of the UN in the implementation of the DPA in Darfur. Kofi Annan has said, “I am looking forward to your plan then we can continue our discussions”. I don’t know more than that. But that is the opening. I am waiting for the plan and I hope that the plan would be submitted to the Secretary-General before the next meeting of the Security Council which I expect, at this moment, to take place on the second week of August on the basis of the proposals of the Secretary-General. And I know that the Secretary-General is going to propose to the Secretary-General to continue to prepare for a UN peace-keeping mission – of course on the basis of consultations with the Government of Sudan – in Darfur.

Q: I am very much concerned about the disarmament of the militias in the south. You said that they are no longer SSDF in the south. That they are either part of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) or the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA). But to the best of my knowledge and belief, there are still some groups that are still existing under the command of someone called Gordon Kong and el-Toum Daldoum in Bahr-el-Ghazal and in other areas. You have never elaborated on this. They are neither part of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) nor of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA).

And someone like el-Toum Daldoum continues to insist that he will never join the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) for whatever reason. As monitors of the CPA, I would like your comments on this.

Coming to Darfur, I would like to draw your attention to a statement by one of the leaders of this country that is Imam Sadiq el-Mahdi during his press conference on Sunday in which he described the DPA as a peace born dead. I would like you to comment on this.

At the same time, there are some armed rebel groups in Darfur who have not yet signed the DPA. What do you say about this? Some people in Darfur have not welcomed the DPA and say it is a kind of betrayal.

Finally on the deployment of UN peace troops in Darfur, just yesterday President Bashir reiterated the rejection of his government to UN troops in Darfur when he was addressing the students graduating from military training at the Merriekh stadium in Omdurman. How do you see the possibilities of the UN operating in Darfur with all these statements and sentiments coming out such as: we don’t want the UN to come to Darfur because Darfur is the land of Islam and the land of the Qur’an and not the land to be taken over by foreigners. We would like your comments as representatives of the international community in Sudan on these issues of concern.

SRSG Pronk: Sir, are you new to these press conferences? Because I have made those comments already many times.

Q: I have been absent for a long time.

SRSG Pronk: You were absent for a very long time and you're very much behind then. I would like to invite you to read all my statements in previous conferences because you pose your question in such a fashion as if I have never commented on this and I can only repeat what I said before and that is why I want to be very brief.

Firstly; if you are knowledgeable about the CPA – and I think you should be – you know that in the CPA it has been agreed that Other Armed Groups should declare whether they belong to the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) or to the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) before the 9th of January this year. That is law. A leader did (Paulino Matib). But some of his followers decided not to follow him but to become members of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) – that is possible according to the CPA. Nobody has the freedom to continue as a third army. You have to take an agreement seriously and you can not make your own interpretation. So if Gordon Kong, Ismail Kony and the others say that they are SSDF, they are not. It is over. SSDF does not exist any more. And if they continue fighting then they are just warlords and then they are I would say, people who are acting in violation of law and order in their country and they have to be addressed.

I went further than that and I said that I understand that still some forces in the dark are giving them assistance and I made an appeal on them not to do so any more. But legally they do not exist as SSDF and then they are new warlords who are destabilizing their own country.

You could have, of course, followed another peace negotiation in Nairobi and Naivasha than the peace negotiation as it had taken place but this is how it is. That is number one.

Everybody can use his own language. Sadiq el-Mahdi has his own language. I am not going to comment on the language being used by every political commentator, former Prime Minister or not. I have said, and you heard it, that it is extremely necessary to give new life to the DPA. That was in a well-published article which I have been quoted on by everybody a couple of weeks ago. And if you don't put new life in it, then it may gradually be paralyzed and starve.

But that is not the case. There is still life in the DPA and it is everybody's obligation to revive it; to put more life in it rather than starting all over again and continue the fighting. I have said many times that those who did not sign made a mistake. They were wrong.

People have not been betrayed by the DPA, it is a good text and many expectations have been met in that text. And leaders who tell the people that their expectations were not met betray their own people – let me use that language. But it is very important at the same time to see this as a political debate and those who did sign have to continue to talk to those who did not sign – it is a political struggle. What the ones who did not sign should not do is to continue to fight; what the ones who signed should not do is to exclude the ones who did not sign. Bring them in the CFC; bring them in the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and the other institutions. Talk, don't fight. Talk don't exclude. If you do so – if you fight and you exclude – then many people on the ground will think that the DPA is just another vehicle to exclude them also –

and that was not the intention of the parties and not the intentions of the spirit of the DPA itself.

It is not the text of the DPA which is wrong; it is the behavior of those who have the responsibility to implement their own text which is wrong.

I know there are many people including the President who make speeches about a transition. For me, only one or two things count: after long discussions, the President said to an official high-level delegation of the UN, "This is final". So the discussion was over. Now the Minister of Foreign Affairs has said in an official international conference with Kofi Annan present, the also the Chairman of the African Union present, "The decision has not yet been taken.

We have to take that seriously and not only the statements made for domestic audiences.

Thank you.