

## **SOUTH SUDAN REPUBLIC INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION**

**Hon. David Kilgour Notes**

**Vincent Massey Park, Ottawa**

**14 July 2012**



**The late Dr. John Garang**

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It's an honour to be with you today. Those of you present in Canada's Parliament on 23 March 2011 when speeches were made about South Sudan as a new country to be born on July 9, 2011 will recall the points discussed there, including:

- It is important the Canada's and other governments be engaged fully in Juba, Khartoum, Darfur, and Abyei.
- If the government in Khartoum demonstrates good will after July 9, Canada could remove it from our list of terrorist organizations. This might help build peace in the region (I'm certainly not advocating that Omar al-Bashir's rendezvous with the International Criminal Court be delayed).
- We must continue to maintain focus on Darfur. Peacekeepers there have been urged by UNAMID to be more aggressive in protecting people caught up in the fighting. The international community should be more active in the Darfur peace process, partly because unrest there will create more security issues in the South.

### **Recent Events**

Eric Reeves, a genuine friend of all people of good will in both South Sudan and Sudan, on June 30 (2012) noted:

- While the world's limited attention to Africa momentarily focuses on the popular uprising in Khartoum and other areas of Sudan, the regime continues to deny true humanitarian access to Blue Nile and South Kordofan. Khartoum's highly conditional signing of the "Tripartite Agreement" changes nothing on the ground.
- International attention has focused on the widespread civilian uprising that began almost two weeks ago in (northern) Sudan. Reports suggest that more than 1,000 people were arrested for protesting. (June 29) after evening prayers; hundreds more were injured; and [many have disappeared into Khartoum's infamous "ghost houses."](#) ... This is the most serious challenge to NIF/NCP power in many years, and yet international actors of consequence seem content to take a neutral, indeed agnostic view of developments...

- ...Valerie Amos, UN humanitarian chief, declared emphatically. (UN News Centre, June 29, 2012): 'the Government has laid out operational conditions that do not allow for the delivery of assistance by neutral parties in SPLM-N-controlled areas...I therefore continue to call on the Government of Sudan to deliver on its stated commitment: that assistance can reach all Sudanese people in need'.

### **South Sudan**

In March, 2011 the U.N. independent expert on human rights warned that escalating violence in the disputed and highly volatile area of Abyei could derail the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). The setting of boundaries in oil-rich Abyei region is crucial. Canada should push for the formation of the Abyei referendum commission; this could remove a major obstacle.

South Sudan must ensure that the Khartoum misgovernance model is not transferred to its new capital. One lesson from elsewhere across the world is that economic renewal and democratisation best go hand in hand.

### **Democracy Issues**

- Some people like to pretend that democracy is not for Africa- that it is an imposition from outside, but I'm sure you all disagree.
- Respecting human rights is a universal value; and it can only happen sustainably in a democratic environment.
- Democracy is a 'doing' word, which involves engaging people and participating in the day-to-day activities that impact on our lives. Democracy does not happen once every four years; democracy happens every day! It is not about parliamentarians; it is not about parliamentary staff; it is not about speeches. It's about respecting all citizens.
- Societies that succeed do so because everybody does her/his part to move society forward, and each and every person is held accountable for whatever they are entrusted with; no one is above the law and all take their responsibilities seriously.

### **Governance and South Sudan**

As many Canadians of origin in South Sudan and others have noted, the new country should create an African model of democracy rather than seeking to import practices from elsewhere. Permit me to add some thoughts I share:

- The SPLM must understand and apply the concept of 'servant leadership' in the new South Sudan state.
- The way ahead is creation of a multi-national state that subscribes to the principles of equality, acceptance, respect, freedom, separation of religion from state, peace, collaborative governance, reconciliation initiatives... and an awareness of common values... Failure to do so will cause the 63 plus tribal groups (to) rebel against the South Sudan government because the government is not inclusive.

- It is important that the new government in Juba encourage the role of the Diaspora in the development of South Sudan. Canada's former ambassador to Sudan, John Schram, has noted that Canada and the estimated 40,000 Sudanese-Canadians across this country are willing to help with infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals.
- Women must be fully equal to men in the new South Sudan. The late and revered leader John Garang once said that women are the 'poorest of the poor and the marginalized of the marginalized.'
- The SPLM leadership can talk about unity, but unity will not exist without fighting against tribalism, nepotism, and ethnic favouritism. How about equal representation from all groups?
- Seek to maintain a peaceful relationship with the North.

I would urge the need for cooperation and interaction with the international community based on the principles of representative democracy, equality of all persons and the rule of law. Canada and other nations should assist as requested. Our taxpayers have sent about \$800-million to Sudan since 2006; Canada should keep Sudan as one of its foreign policy priorities.

Permit me as a friend of South Sudan and former prosecutor to urge President Kiir to be tough but fair on corruption. Many governments know that what corrupt politicians and officials fear most is being charged in criminal court.

### **Conclusion**

The people of South Sudan are struggling to surmount the benchmark tests imposed on them by the international community. Now is the time for us to recognize the emerging credibility of South Sudan by actively seeking to engage the Southern Sudanese leadership in governance training in democratic principles and diplomacy as they build their government virtually from scratch. We should permit their leaders to come to Canada to train in the strengths and workings of federalism. A free and accountable nation of South Sudan is at stake.

The South Sudanese Canadians' encounter with multiculturalism in Canada is an example of being able to live and thrive together in a context with differences while sustaining respect for others. This also requires vital unity for Canadian South Sudanese to thrive in relations with each other in the diaspora and in relations with various ethnic and religious groups in South Sudan.

Please don't split into factions. Being united will help your cause to succeed.

God bless the Republic of South Sudan.

Thank you.