

August 18, 2014

Dear President Salva Kiir, Dr. Riek Machar and all South Sudanese military and political leaders,

We write to you as friends of South Sudan and members of the Diaspora. At your request and at the request of the South Sudanese people, we have invested our lives and resources to support your great and costly struggle for freedom, justice, equality and peace.

With you, we envisioned a new South Sudan where a government that reflected and represented the people of South Sudan would govern in a manner that would provide protection, security and stability throughout the country. With you, we believed the resources of the country, including donations from the international community, would be used to build roads and the necessary infrastructure that would enable the development of South Sudan in ways that would protect the near-pristine environment of South Sudan while attracting investors, opening up markets and creating employment opportunities that spurred economic growth. With you, we saw a bright future where every South Sudanese had access to education, healthcare, clean water, proper sanitation, food and basic necessities that would allow them to work beside you to build a strong and prosperous nation.

We were shocked and profoundly saddened by the violence that engulfed South Sudan in December and we are deeply disappointed that it continues today, eight months later, with no resolution in sight. As you are aware, instead of facing the bright future we envisioned together, the people of South Sudan are suffering and dying from violence, disease and malnutrition. South Sudan remains dependent on the international community for assistance and security while it contributes to regional insecurity that threatens the continent.

While the situation is dire and could evolve into decades of conflict that was experienced and is ongoing in Sudan, we believe another way is possible because we have witnessed Southern Sudanese accomplish, through sheer determination, what some believed was impossible. In 2011, Southern Sudanese participated in a near perfect demonstration of the democratic process because of their commitment to a vision of a better future. This Southern Sudanese pride and determination that showed the world then what you can accomplish together is needed today more than ever.

The last eight months cannot be erased and they must be dealt with in order to establish a strong and united country that can weather the storms ahead, but these last eight months do not need to define South Sudan or its future. You can do that by committing now to participating whole-heartedly in the peace process, enforcing the cease fire agreements, ensuring unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid, and by doing whatever is necessary to put South Sudan back on track as quickly as possible. We, as friends of South Sudan and members of the Diaspora, remain committed and stand ready to support any effort that benefits the people of South Sudan.

Please choose peace.

Sincerely,

Andrew Natsios  
Former USAID Administrator  
Former U.S. Envoy to Sudan

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