Thank you very much, Senator Richard Lugar, ranking

member, and honorable members of the committee. Thank you

for this opportunity to testify.

As you know, 4 years after the signing of the Comprehensive

Peace Agreement the agreement is holding but remains very fragile

and full-scale war between the North and South is always at risk

of erupting.

Interethnic violence in South Sudan has increased. In Darfur,

violence continues, and in Eastern Sudan a shaky peace deal holds.

On June 28, the National Elections Commission postponed elections,

for a second time, from February 2010 to April 2010. Political

tensions rose in the South when former SPLM Foreign Affairs Minister

Lam Akol created a new political party called the SPLM for

Democratic Change. Despite these challenges, important progress

was made. The Government of National Unity agreed to allow four

international nongovernmental organizations into the country to

replace the NGOs that had been expelled after the ICC indictment

of President Bashir.

Significant advancement toward peace was made in Abyei, as

has already been alluded to. Following last week’s ruling by the

Permanent Court of Arbitration, respect for the tribunal’s decision

and the newly drawn map has been agreed to, and, I think, in part

is a testament to the presence in Abyei of General Gration and to

the senior leadership of the two parties when the ruling was

announced.

NDI has worked in Sudan since 2004. Our focus-group research

represents the most extensive qualitative information on the opinions

of the Sudanese people. NDI has completed 10 focus-group

studies, including 6 in Southern Sudan, 2 in the Three Areas of

Abyei—Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan—and 2 in Northern

Sudan. As part of these studies, focus-group discussions have been

held in 71 locations across the country.

NDI is assisting and developing the capacity of over 75 Southern

nonpartisan civil-society and faith-based organizations to serve as

domestic election observers through a network called SuNDE, the

Sudanese Network for Domestic Elections. The organizations have

stressed the importance of working together across regions and to

coordinate efforts with the North with those of the established network

in the South. Amidst the numerous challenges in Sudan, such

expressions exemplify a desire for collaboration, regardless of the

outcomes of the elections and the referenda, to build a just and

accountable government at all levels.

Our focus-group research in the North, South, and the Three

Areas show that the Sudanese strongly support elections as the

best way to choose their leaders. They are strongly committed to

participating in elections—and expressed a deep desire to hold

their elected officials accountable, something they cannot currently

do with appointed officials.

Interestingly, while many people expect cheating to take place,

a number of participants stated that they would, ‘‘accept the bribe,

yet still vote for the candidate of their choice.’’

Nonetheless, misinformation is widespread, including the number

of positions for which people will be voting. And in Southern

Kordofan and Blue Nile, a number of people erroneously believe

that they will also participate in a referendum.

NDI’s research raises important points and demonstrates Sudanese

citizens’ frustration with the incomplete implementation of

the CPA. Increased technical assistance and governance capacity building

toward electoral implementation, including the two referendums,

are crucial ways to support the Government of National

Unity, the Government of Southern Sudan, and the 25 states of

Sudan in implementing the next critical phase of the CPA.

Additional support for civic and voter education programs is crucial.

In order for elections and the referendums to be viewed as

credible, the electoral framework must be understood and regulations

put in place as soon as possible. Donors should continue to

support the National Elections Commission to ensure that it remains

an independent and viable body. Political parties must be

able to compete and campaign freely, and media must be permitted

to provide equal access to all competing interests. Additionally, domestic

observation of the process—of the electoral process provides

Sudanese citizens the opportunity to participate in the democratic

life of their country, and to make informed decisions about their future.

Collectively, an independent electoral commission, adequate citizen

education, responsible media coverage, political tolerance for

campaigning, and the freedom for domestic Sudanese organizations

to observe the electoral process will contribute to minimizing the

risk of pre- and post-election and referenda violence, as well as

help to ensure respect for the will of the Sudanese people as

expressed through the ballot.

Senator John Kerry, committee chairman, Senator Richard Lugar, ranking member,

and honorable members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to

testify.

As you are all aware, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement ended Sudan’s civil

war on January 9, 2005. Today, the agreement is holding but remains very fragile.

New conflicts emerged, and existing ones changed. Full-scale war between the North

and South is always at risk of erupting.

Interethnic violence in South Sudan has increased. In one case, armed Jikany

Nuer men attacked an aid caravan going to a Lou Nuer area, cutting off food supplies

for nearly 20,000 displaced people. In June, the U.N. noted that ‘‘the death

rate in Southern Sudan from violent conflict has been higher than in Darfur.’’ In

Darfur, violence continues and two aid workers were recently kidnapped. In eastern

Sudan, a shaky peace deal holds.

On June 28, the National Elections Commission (NEC) postponed elections for a

second time from February 2010 to April 2010. In response to the Government not

holding elections by July 9, 2009, as called for in the CPA, the Darfuri rebel group

Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) allied with some Northern opposition groups

and called for a new democratic, transitional government to be formed. Political tensions

rose in the South when former (SPLM) Foreign Affairs Minister Lam Akol created

a new political party called ‘‘the SPLM for Democratic Change.’’

Despite these challenges, important progress was made. The Government of

National Unity (GoNU) agreed to allow four international nongovernmental organizations

(NGOs) into the country to replace the NGOs that had been expelled after

the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) indictment of President Omar al-Bashir on

March 4, 2009.

Other important progress was made in Abyei. The National Congress Party (NCP)

and SPLM publicly reiterated their agreement to be bound by The Hague’s July

22nd ruling on Abyei’s boundaries. Following last week’s ruling, the parties released

a joint statement and both hailed the agreement. To date, no violence has erupted

in the area, which is a major achievement. However, recently, both sides have begun

to trade accusations over the status of the oil fields based on the ruling by the Permanent

Court of Arbitration.

While violence has not erupted, it is important to note that the reaction may simply

be delayed because all the details of the ruling are not fully understood on the

ground and the Misseriya have not yet returned to Abyei for grazing because of the

rains. Furthermore, the location of the oil wells and final revenue-sharing during

the course of the life of the CPA are likely to be drawn into the broader North/South

border demarcation process currently underway by the Ad Hoc Border Commission.

Respect for the Tribunal’s decision and newly drawn map is, in part, a testament

to the presence in Abyei of General Gration and the senior leadership of the two

parties when the ruling was released.

NDI has worked in Sudan since 2004, before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

was signed. Our focus group research represents the most extensive information on

the opinions of the Sudanese people since then.

NDI has completed 10 focus group studies, including 6 in Southern Sudan, 2 in

the Three Areas of Abyei, Blue Nile, and Southern Kordofan, and 2 in Northern

Sudan. As part of these studies, focus group discussions have been held in 71 locations

across the country. Research consistently found that people do not feel the

CPA has yielded a significant peace dividend. One southerner explained this common

sentiment by noting, ‘‘Peace is just like a slogan. Most of the things in the CPA

are not being implemented.’’ Another woman from the Three Areas said, ‘‘We have

seen very little [improvement in development post-CPA] . . . they should have done

many schools and hospitals, that would have been enough for us.’’ In the North, one

man told researchers, ‘‘Before the peace agreement, the war was sucking our blood

because a high percentage of the budget went to the war for weapons and [a] very

little of the budget went toward serving social needs.’’

Many people who participated in our study in the South and Three Areas feel

their lives have not significantly improved since the CPA was signed; they link this

to an expectation that war will return. A man from the Three Areas explained, ‘‘We

will return to conflict because now there is no development.’’ Northerners also

expressed uncertainty about the current stability, although there was a sense that

development has increased somewhat. ‘‘We cannot say everything is at the right

direction, despite the fact that there is a positive side like development projects,

roads construction,’’ a northern woman said.

NDI is assisting and developing the capacity of over 75 southern, nonpartisan civil

society organizations to serve as domestic election observers through a network

called SuNDE. The organizations have stressed the importance of working together

across regions and to coordinate efforts with the North with those of the established

network in the South. Amidst the numerous challenges in Sudan, such expressions

exemplify a desire for collaboration regardless of the outcome of the elections to

build a just and accountable government.

Focus group research in the North found some variation in opinions about democracy,

but those who participated in the study strongly supported elections as the

best way to choose their leaders. Similarly, Southerners are strongly committed to

elections, and expressed a deep desire to hold their elected officials accountable,

something they cannot do with appointed officials. Interestingly, while many people

expect cheating to take place, a number of participants stated that they would

‘‘accept the bribe yet still vote for the candidate of their choice.’’ Misinformation is

widespread, including the number of positions for which people will be voting; in

Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, a number of people believe erroneously that they

will also vote in a referendum. Without this option, a number of participants

claimed they would ‘‘join the South, declare independence, or go back to war.’’

NDI’s research on the 2011 referendum for South Sudan consistently found that

southerners plan to vote for independence. Within the first year after the CPA was

signed, and despite Dr. John Garang’s call for unity based on a new model for

Sudan, southerners responded, ‘‘We will vote for separation and John Garang will

have to get a passport to visit us.’’ Another noted, ‘‘We will be divided, even children

know that.’’

NDI’s research raises important points and demonstrates Sudanese citizens’ frustrations

with the incomplete implementation of the CPA. Increased technical assistance

and governance capacity-building toward electoral implementation (including

the two referenda) are crucial ways to support the GONU and GOSS in implementing

the next critical phase of the CPA. Additional support for civic and voter

education programs is crucial.

In order for elections and the referenda to be viewed as credible, the electoral

framework must be understood and regulations put in place as soon as possible.

Donors should continue to support the National Elections Commission to ensure

that it remains an independent and viable body. Political parties must be able to

compete and campaign freely and the media must be permitted to provide equal

access to all competing interests. The media can also be an important source of information

for Sudanese citizens in this process. Additionally, domestic observation

of the process provides Sudanese citizens the opportunity to participate in the democratic

life of their country and make informed decisions about their future.

Collectively, an independent electoral commission, adequate citizen education,

responsible media coverage, political tolerance for campaigning, and the freedom for

domestic, Sudanese organizations to observe the electoral process will contribute to

minimizing the risk of pre- and post-election and referenda violence as well as help

to ensure respect for the will of the Sudanese people as expressed through the

ballot.

Thank you very much, Senator.

NDI has received a lot of funding, actually, from USAID, who

has made civic education, and now voter education, really quite a

priority. So, we do have quite a lot of resources. Our research from

the focus groups are consistently published. We publish them, we

do briefings in the field, not just for the political leaders, both

North and South, and at the state level, but also for citizens, so

that they understand where—what people are saying, in terms of

the elections.

I don’t think that—in a country the size of Sudan, that, frankly,

the resources are ever enough, but in order to get to some of those

actions, we need clear regulations passed by the electoral commission.

They need—people need to be educated, but we can’t do all

of the educating until we know exactly what we need to tell people.

So, that, I think, is a—first and foremost, is that the National Elections

Commission is also understaffed and has been slow to publish

the regulations to implement the electoral act.

Thank you, Senator Kerry.

I believe, actually, that some of the suggestions outlined by

Ambassador Shinn are quite right. I think the region really has to

be considered. Africa does not have a long track record of appreciating

other independent states on its borders, and especially the

fact that Sudan—if the South votes to secede, we need to have a

process of how we’re going to help both the Government of National

Unity, which, of course, is an integrated government, but to help

the North and the South put in place the mechanisms that would

make that happen.

So, what General Gration talks about, whether it’s unity or a

peaceful coexistence, a peaceful separation, how do we do that? And

I think that we have to help—it’s partly through elections and the

other political processes. But we have to make it less of a zero-sum

game, so that it’s not only a winner and a loser. And that’s what

they saw with the Abyei ruling, that both sides saw that they won

something. And that’s part of why it has been accepted without any

violence, so far.

I would say it’s a little bit of both. But, ethnic tensions

are very much on the rise. I mean, one quote states that they

were—there was—there were more deaths in Southern Sudan from

ethnic violence than there was in Darfur.

That’s a scary statistic. I don’t think that—I think if

we—if the international community doesn’t, sort of, rally around to

try to take out some of the—again, that zero-sum game, the—making

it an all-win-or-lose, or, you know, all-or-nothing situation, then

we don’t take away the incentives for the government to put spoilers

in the mix. That’s how governments around the world—it’s

nothing unique to the Government of Sudan. But, if we don’t take

away some of those possibilities by giving them some real thoughts

of how they can work through some of these processes so that the

outcome of the elections will be respected, the outcome of the referendums,

the two, for Southern Sudan, as well as for Abyei—will

be respected, and respected without violence.

So, I think if we could get international supporters together, people

with different experience, as Ambassador Shinn has suggested,

I think that that—it’s worth a try to, again—you know, what do

you do, the pipeline is not in Southern Sudan? The oil is there, but

the pipeline isn’t. So, there has to be some sort of mechanism.

What are they going to do with the revenue, post-2011?