Policy Brief

March 17, 2015

Building a Culture of Peace through Dialogue in South Sudan

Benjamin Machar

Summary

- Building a culture of peace through national dialogue centered on justice and accountability is the viable mechanism for realizing peace in South Sudan. South Sudan needed a national dialogue immediately after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and it had another opportunity after the declaration of independence, but it was also missed.

- The on-going crisis calls for a comprehensive dialogue to resolve the political, military and civil grievances that lie at the root of the conflict. The ruling elite's manipulation of the military and ethnicity to maximize their power gain remains a serious threat to national cohesion and perpetuates violence. Peace should be anchored on deliberative dialogue at various levels of society with serious consideration for justice and accountability, which are essential to any process to end ethnic conflicts and impunity.

- This nation has inflicted serious wounds on itself and dialogue is a necessary catharsis to reset societal relations. Dialogue succeeds when it employs a participatory approach to tackle the pressing national issues by involving actors at national and local constituencies to achieve justice.

- Dialogue should address deep-seated ethnic rivalry, tackle the separation of the military from politics and treat the civil and cultural spheres as separate spaces from politics. When political actors are engaged in political discourse, these disputes tend to spill into the military; which is a recipe for political instability.

- Peace through dialogue should be anchored on three inter-linked dimensions: 1) Political dialogue—encompassing inter-party and intra-party dialogue, as well as intra-governmental dialogue 2) political-military-civil dialogue and 3) broad-based state-society dialogue. The three-pronged model is utilized to isolate the spillover of political, military or civil issues into each other[1].

I   Introduction

Violence is entrenched in South Sudan—a situation that is attributed directly to decades of civil wars. Many attempts have been made to try and stem out this disruptive social delinquency, but hardly has any success been achieved. The on-going violent conflict, although triggered by political dispute within the SPLM, spread like a wild fire, feeding primarily on the legacy of war from previous conflicts. To bring to an end this unbearable misfortune in the country, a comprehensive national dialogue is necessary and it may be the most viable method to enable the society to come to terms with its past legacies. For it to work, national dialogue should be centered on achieving or restoring justice and accountability as well as enabling the society to reconcile and achieve a solid national unity. Peace without justice and accountability is a recipe for impunity.[2] The concept of peace without justice rests on the fact that "might is right."[3] This is antithesis to building the nation and a culture of peace. A cohesive and peaceful society is one that is anchored on the rule of law. Socrates once lamented that, "an unexamined life is not worth living."[4] The law generates conformity when it is enforced through institutional and social sanctions[5] that are observed and followed by the subjects of the law. For national dialogue to achieve its objectives, it must address societal grievances where certain ethnic groups of that society feel unjustly afflicted by others. Every state or society has its unique political, economic or social problems. The difference is how such problems are negotiated and resolved using an encompassing national deliberation. National dialogue can create a platform whereby different actors can deliberate with each other. Like it is said, "what is not said is what divides."[6]

Dialogue as a means to create a culture of peace in South Sudan can be administered through recognizable institutions and organizations. Social norms that define and govern how members of a given society interact with each other and mediate differences among

---

[2] Johnson, Sterling. *Peace Without Justice: Hegemonic Instability or International Criminal Law?* (Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2003).

[3] Redbeard, Ragnard and Conder, W. Darrell. *Might is Right or the Survival of the Fittest*. (Dil Pickle, 2005).

[4] Plato., Cooper, M. John., & Grube, A. M. G. *The Trial and Death of Socrates*. 3rd ed. (Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000).

[5] Turner, P. Turner & Factor, A.Regis. *Max Weber: The Lawyer As Social Thinker*. (NY: Routledge, 1994).

[6] The quoted statement is intellectual credited to Dr. Francis M. Deng. But this author took it from the work of the Enough Project on the Democratic Republic of the Congo's conflict. Lezhnev, Sasha and Prendergast, John. "What Is not Said is What Divides: Critical Issues for a Peace Process to End the Deadly Congo War." Enough Project. (Washington, DC: December 2012). Retrieved from: http://www.enoughproject.org/files/CongoPeaceProcess_PartTwo.pdf.

them are informed by cultural value systems.[7] To propagate a culture of peace, it ought to be pursued through structured social systems. The reason the SPLM was successful during the civil war (1983-2005) in mobilizing the southern society against Khartoum was because it worked through the established traditional systems. It is true that the political state is formed out of the existing society. To build a culture of peace in South Sudan, one should use an approach that is grounded in the local social context and apply a method of conflict resolution that is recognized by different ethnic groups and is centered on justice and accountability.

Dialogue as a method of conflict resolution in Nilotic societies[8], for instance, is centered on the fair administration of restorative justice; reconciliation and forgiveness; and ritual observation to heal the society and realize unity. The on-going political crisis in South Sudan could have been avoided had the government, political parties and the society at large, embraced dialogue. The recurrent political rebellions since 2010 could have been avoided had the political state relied on its societal dialogue and conflict resolution processes.

A key example of how an African state averted a political crisis through dialogue is the case of Benin in 1990. The initiation of national dialogue in Benin in the 1990s saved and prepared the West African nation for the 'third wave of democratization.'[9] The 1989 and 1990 national dialogue comprised various actors including, among others, traditional chiefs, faith-based groups, women groups and the government. These groups successfully convinced the Afro-Marxist[10] regime of General Mathieu Kérékou to peacefully step down with a promise that he would not be prosecuted. General Kérékou accepted the collective plea of his people and stepped down in 1991. The two-year national dialogue (1989-1990) in Benin paved the way for multiparty democratic transition[11] in 1991. Kenya and Zimbabwe, among other African countries that did not employ national dialogues as means to ensure peaceful transitions from authoritarianism

---

[7] Parsons, Talcott. *The Social System*. (Free Press, 1951); Parsons, Talcott. *The Structure of Social Action, Vol. 1: Marshall, Pareto, Durkheim*. (Free Press, 1967).

[8] Nilotic societies of South Sudan comprise of the River Lake Nilotes (Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Anyuak and the various Luo groups); the Hamitic Nilotic people (Bari and its various speakers; Lotuko, etc.); the Plain Nilotes (the Ateteker groups). The Nilotic race of the Black race is founded along the Nile Valley and the Rift Valley. These

[9] Huntington, P. Samuel. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century*. (The University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

[10] Young, Crawford. *Ideology and Development in Africa*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

[11] Bratton, Michael and van de Walle, Nicholas. Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective. (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

to democracy experienced state-sponsored violence throughout the "second liberation"[12] of democratization in 1990s and 2000s.

Dialogue is an important strategy within the wherewithal of the society to resolve its cross-sectional political-military-civil problems. This is because cross-sectional dialogue can bring all the political and non-political actors of a given society to discuss issues that are uniquely cultural, political and spiritual, among others. The example of Benin demonstrates that an African nation can avoid political upheavals if it accepts itself as such.

South Sudan needs participatory national dialogue to bring its multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious constituents together to deliberate with each other based on their sociological and historical understanding of their complex societal issues. Dr. Garang once made it clear to the SPLM rural constituency during the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) tour that one can neither protect nor defend what one does not understand. This is similar to how the European colonial powers commissioned anthropologists to study the African political and family systems[13] to understand, penetrate, and conquer the Africans. The colonial powers had to understand how Africa socially and organizationally functions to subjugate its people.

For the people of South Sudan to build a culture of peace among them, dialogue must be embraced to bring people with different political, economic and social views together to speak with each other. Dialogue works well when it is grounded on certain indispensable societal principles. One of the most cited successful South Sudanese dialogues is the 1999 Wunlit[14] peace conference between the Dinka and the Nuer. It was based on the admission of guilt by the aggrieved warring societies. Despite its failure to address the

---

[12] Schraeder, J. Peter. *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation*. (Cengage Learning, 2003).

[13] Fortes, M. and Evans-Pritchard, E. E. ed. *African Political Systems*. (Oxford University Press, 1940); Radcliffe-Brown, R. A. and Forde, Darryl. *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*. (Oxford University Press, 1967); Seligman, G. C. *The Races of Africa*. (Oxford University Press, 1930); Seligman, G. C. *Some Aspects of the Hamitic Problem in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*. (1913); and Evans-Pritchard, E. E. *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. (Oxford University Press, 1967). The writings of these European anthropologists informed the colonial powers on how to *directly* or *indirectly* the African people in their respective colonized territories. Out of these anthropological writings by the European experts on Africa, thus the colonial systems such as the Britain's indirect rule in Eastern, Southern and Western Africa; France's assimilation in its West and Equatorial Africa; Portugal's assimilado in Angola, Guinea-Bissau & Mozambique; and Belgian evolve in the Belgian-Congo and Rwanda-Burundi.

[14] The Wunlit peace conference was a dialogue between Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups.

blood compensation problem and the ritual cleansing, it legitimately addressed the conflict between the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups within the context of kor-kum[15] (government war), not kor-cieng (home war).

This paper argues that dialogue succeeds when it employs a participatory approach to address the national pressing issues by involving actors with political, economic, social and spiritual constituencies to achieve justice and accountability. There is no political stability in any nation without justice and accountability. It is not the lack of conflict in a given state that guarantees peace. It is the manner in which a given state or society addresses its pressing problems that keeps peace. This paper, therefore, postulates that building a culture of peace in South Sudan can be achieved through a strategic national dialogue that is centered on justice and accountability. The lack of justice and accountability begets impunity. Impunity breeds perpetual revenge and violence, which has seemingly become endemic in South Sudan

Any national dialogue to create peace in South Sudan has to pay attention to issues of justice and accountability. For peace to be cultivated, it must be centered on justice and accountability that is cognizant of South Sudan's history of violence. It is not how the warring parties to the conflict negotiate peace with each other that is the problem, it is the implementation of the agreed peace by the warring parties that is difficult to achieve. South Sudan and its people are very good at pursuing peace. Nonetheless, South Sudan as a society is not very good at addressing impunity.

The success of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa is credited to the fact that it addressed a uniquely South African racial problem between the black and white victims, on the one hand, and offenders, on the other hand. The TRC was centered on forgiveness. As well, the acceptance of the 1999 Wunlit peace by the Dinka and the Nuer ethnic communities was based on the fact that the two antagonistic parties had admitted their culpability in the conflict.

II   Analytical Approach: Looking Backward to Go Forward

---

[15] Hutchinson, Sharon. "A Curse from God? Political and Religious Dimensions of the Post-1991 Rise of Ethnic Violence in South Sudan." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 39, No 2. (2001): pp, 307-331. In this article, Dr. Hutchinson explains how the Nuer developed and employed the concepts of 'kor-kum," which is government war differentiating it from 'kor-cieng' implying a home war between sections or clans. See also Hutchinson, Sharon. *Nuer Dilemmas: Coping with Money, War and the State*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

This paper utilizes analytical method of national dialogue as a means to build peace in South Sudan. An analytical approach is utilized to explore and explain how dialogue succeeded in bringing peace, on the one hand, and failing to ensure justice and accountability, on the other hand. The post-war 1972 blanket forgiveness; the 1984-1987 SPLM/A-Anya-Nya II dialogue; the 1999 Wunlit and 2000 Lilir peace conferences and the mid-2000-2005 South-South dialogue; among others are referenced. These dialogue mechanisms are referenced to explain where they have succeeded in bringing peace, but also show how some of these initiatives failed in restoring justice and accountability. They are briefly referenced to analytically explain how they have secured a united front among the warring southern parties against Khartoum. This paper argues that although it was good to bring peace and unity among the ethnically divided South Sudanese, nonetheless, they have all failed to address issues of justice and accountability, hence impunity grew.

Dialogue as a means to build peace must be employed to avoid confrontational politics. Although traditional chiefs, elderly politicians and faith-based groups initiated the past dialogues to bring peace among the warring South Sudanese during the two civil wars, the dialogues did compromise justice and accountability. The three inter-linkage dialogue model is utilized as a tripartite approach a society can use to dialogue with itself to achieve "human social unity."[16] In other words, dialogue as a means to build peace must be pursued in three inter-linkage clusters of 1) Political dialogue—encompassing inter-party and intra-party dialogue, as well as intra-governmental dialogue 2) political-military-civil dialogue and 3) broad-based state-society dialogue. The model is utilized to isolate the spillover effects of political, military and civil issues into each other.

One of the renowned African political scientists, Claudia Ake states that, 'development has not failed in Africa, but it has not started.'[17] This is because the Africans who are supposed to be the agents of development are not participants in political, economic, social and technological discourse. Overall, building a culture of peace through dialogue must be centered on justice and accountability. Based on the past experiences of South Sudan peace-making, it is the absence of justice and accountability that often led to the recurrence of conflicts.

Historically, the people of South Sudan have often resorted to dialogue as a means to address the politicized ethnic differences. It is often true that post-conflict societies are

---

[16] Mshomba, E. Richard. *Africa and the World Trade Organization*. (Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[17] Ake, Claudia. *Democracy and Development in Africa*. (Washington, DC: The Brooking Institutions, 1995).

infested with broken trusts and impunities.[18] South Sudan as a post-conflict society is not exceptional in this journey. The South Sudanese after the conclusion of the Addis Ababa peace in1972 adopted the Blanket[19] pardon. The so-called Blanket pardon was adopted by the Anya-Nya I to settle the bitter political-military-civil wounds that were inflicted on the society during the war. In the mid-1980s, dialogue as a means to cultivate peace among warring South Sudanese parties was initiated by the Dinka and Nuer chiefs, respected southern statesmen and the faith-based groups in 1985 to stop the fighting between the SPLM/A and Anya-Nya II. The two southern warring parties agreed to unite their rank and file in 1987[20] under the SPLM/A. Out of this unity, the SPLM/A captured many garrison towns from the government forces till the 1991 split.

The application of dialogue to bring peace in South Sudan was utilized in 1999[21] in Wunlit, after 8 years of the SPLM/A split in 1991. The Dinka and Nuer chiefs, respected elders and the faith-based groups initiated the grassroots based dialogue. The New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) facilitated the Wunlit peace initiative. This is one of the most successful dialogues in the history of South Sudan. Out of the Wunlit peace conference in 1999, the Eastern Nile Bank peace initiative was convened in Lilir, Bor in 2000, with seven ethnic groups in attendance.

The mid-2000-2005 South-South dialogue brought the SPLA and other southern-armed groups together. Under the South-South dialogue, the SPLM/A and the Khartoum sponsored southern militia groups of Tom El-Nour, Martin Kenyi, Clement Wani Konga and Paulino Matip, among others convened in Kenya. Despite their differences with the SPLM/A, some of these militias agreed to be absorbed into the SPLM/A. This demonstrates the significance of dialogue in settling differences without resorting to violence. Without the South-South dialogue, these different armies in the South would have clashed with each other. This would have compromised the South's referendum in 2011. It was under the South-South dialogue that President Kiir absorbed tens of thousands of Paulino Matip's militias in 2006 through Juba Declaration.

---

[18] Mallinder, Louise & McEvoy, Kieran. "Rethinking Amnesties: Atrocity, Accountability and Impunity in Post-Conflict Societies." *Contemporary Social Science: The Journal of the Academy of Social Science*, Vol. 6, No.1, pp. 107-28 or *Transitional Justice Institute Research Paper* No. 11-02.

[19] The so-called "Blanket" pardon or forgiveness was adopted in the then southern Sudan after the conclusion of the Addis Ababa agreement in 1972 those who have wronged others and those who have been wronged against to forgive each other.

[20] The dialogue to unite the SPLM/A and Anya-Nya II between 1985-1987 was initiated by the Dinka and Nuer traditional chiefs, the southern elderly statesmen (Abel Alier, Joseph Lagu & Peter Gatkuoth) and the faith-based groups.

[21] Vick, Karl. "Sudanese Tribes Confront Modern War." *Washington Post*. (July 1999). Retrieved from: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/daily/july99/sudan7.htm.

South Sudan failed to initiate a strategic national dialogue after its independence in July 2011. This was a missed opportunity for South Sudan and its people to deliberate on the contentious political-military-civil problems. It is one thing to sign peace; it is quite another to protect and sustain it. As often, South Sudanese are very good at dialoguing with each other to achieve peace. The problem is not the dialogue as a means to realize peace that has failed. Peace in South Sudan is often achieved at the expense of justice and accountability. This is one of the reasons the previous dialogues that have brought and restored peace in South Sudan did not last. This is because they were not centered on justice and accountability. This ought to change otherwise impunity would persist. Peace without justice and accountability is a recipe for perpetual communal conflicts and political impunity.
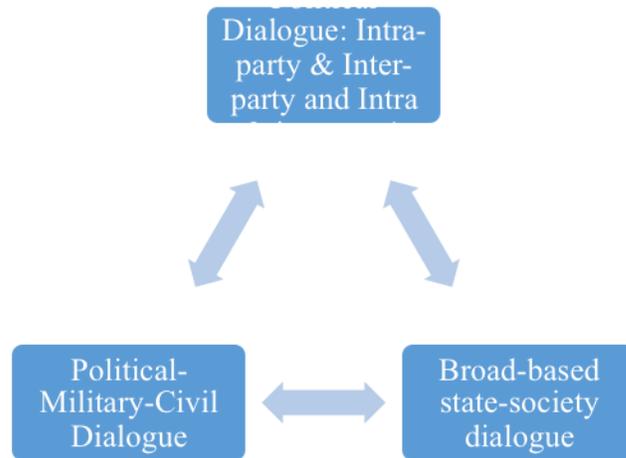
_____The three inter-linkage dialogue model _____

III Taking the Bull by the Horns: Justice and Accountability

Building a culture of peace through dialogue warrants an inquiry about what kind of a society one wants to create a culture of tolerance in. In many parts of the developing world, particularly in Africa, it is state building that dominates at the expense of nation building. One must know that a state does not create a nation. The 1684 Westphalian[22] model entails that nation evolves into nation-state. Philosophically, for South Sudan to utilize dialogue to build a perpetual peace, one must inquire about what kind of an ideal

[22] The peace of Westphalia establishes the concept of nation-state in 1648. See Croxton, Derek. *Westphalia: The Last Christian Peace*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

society the people of South Sudan envision. Normatively, national symbols such as flag, anthem, the coat of arms and the constitution, among others do not determine the direction of the country. It is the philosophical direction of a given society that influences the constitution. Analogously, knowing the kind of a society the people of South Sudan are aspiring for would help in building a culture of peace. If not, impunity would reign. Building peace in the new nation without grounding it on justice and accountability is reminiscent of a carpenter who makes a table without legs. The foundation of peace is justice and accountability as state sovereignty rests on national security.

There is a cost-benefit analysis to peace, unity and justice. The desire for peace and tolerance must be centered on building a culture that values justice and accountability. Any dialogue approach to cultivate peace should follow the three inter-linkage dialogue model that brings members of society at national and local constituencies to deliberate on peace, justice and accountability.

The viable strategy South Sudan should have adopted after the formation of the GoSS in July 2005 and the declaration of independence in July 2011 is the initiation of political dialogue that comprises of intra-party and inter-party dialogues as well as intra-government dialogue. This is very important because dialogue is not a one-way process. It is a multi-dimensional approach. Political dialogue would have tackled intra-party and inter-party divergence views in South Sudan before the intra-SPLM power struggle engulfed the country into war on December 15th, 2013. The SPLM as a political party would have benefited from the intra-party deliberation to settle the wartime personal differences. The Nassir SPLM/A faction cited lack of institutional[23] dialogue as a major problem that triggered the 1991 split. The Nassir commanders complained that the SPLM/A Chairman, Dr. Garang and members of the SPLM/SPLA Politico-Military High Command (PMHC) did not meet and deliberate on the issues of the day that concerned the movement. To dispel this claim, the SPLM should have adopted the intra-party dialogue during the CPA implementation and after independence to resolve the old accusations that the party is not open to internal self-evaluation.

The intra-SPLM dialogue would have ushered a new political direction in a post-war society. The intra-party dialogue would have made it easier for the movement's competing camps to bargain with each other by responsibly embracing the internal reforms and policy critiques. Secondly, the SPLM intra-party debate would have helped it from deviating away from its liberation political and developmental vision and strategies, which were the basis for the liberation struggle. Social revolutionaries are not

---

[23] Nyaba, Adwok Peter. *The Politics of Liberation in South Sudan*. (Kampala: Fountain Publ, 1996).

judged based on how they have captured state power.[24] They are judged on how they have substituted the old political, economic and social structures with new political, economic and social systems of working ideas.[25]

It is through a realistic intra-party dialogue that a populous party such as the SPLM can implement its wartime programs. This would have avoided the spillover of political disagreement within the SPLM into the military and civil spheres, as it occurred in December 2013. Dialogue as a means to build a culture of peace in South Sudan would have saved the SPLM and the country, had it resorted to settling its problems through policy deliberations. For instance, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) adopted the intra-party dialogue to advance democracy, economic development and politico-security with the strategic intention to achieve institutional and developmental state in post-genocide Rwanda. Through dialogue, however, the RPF chose the service-delivery model centered on institutional building and politico-security with "illiberal-democracy."[26]

The successful post-1994 genocide Rwandan governments understood the Rwandan society after the 1994 dehumanizing killings. This is one of the reasons why President Paul Kagame's government adopted the traditional Rwandan justice approach known as the Gacaca[27] Courts to try and convict or exonerate those who were accused of having participated in the 1994 genocide. The post-genocidal Rwandan governments have been mindful of the fact that the International Tribunal Court for Rwanda (ITCR) in Arusha is slow to deliver justice and accountability to the victims and survivors of the 1994 genocide.

The SPLM should have adopted and applied dialogue to deliberate within its rank and file to address corruption; the deviation away from the original SPLM vision; the infiltration of the SPLM by the agents of the National Congress Party (NCP); the ideological confusion in post-independence and personal suspicions, among others that have engulfed the country into another cycle of conflict. If the SPLM were committed to its liberation philosophy, it would have applied dialogue as an educational method to rehabilitate, build peace and deliver services to its members and the public.

---

[24] Skocpol, Theda. *State and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[25] Amaza, Ori Odonga. *Museveni's Long March: From Guerilla to Statesman*. (Kampala: Fountain Publ, 1998).

[26] Diamond, Lawrence. *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World*. (St. Martin's Griffin, 2009).

[27] Ipskamp B.V., Enschede. "Gacaca: grassroots justice after genocide: The key to reconciliation in Rwanda?"

The on-going intra-SPLM dialogue in Arusha should have been initiated before the country's independence in July 2011. The intra-SPLM dialogue would have settled the deep-seated political rivalries among the power-contenders from spilling into military and civil spaces. The history of SPLM/A politico-military splits has always resulted into military and ethnic confrontations. The 1984-1987 ideological and personal differences between the SPLM/A and the Anya-Nya II; the August 28th, 1991 SPLM/A; and December 15th, 2013 splits within the SPLM[28] have thrown South Sudan into ethnic killings.

One must realize that it is not the absence of dialogue that often led to internecine violence. Rather, the intra-SPLM dialogues are often not meant to address justice and accountability matters. This is one of the disadvantages the SPLM has done to its brand. For justice and accountability to reign in South Sudan, the SPLM must adopt dialogue anchored on justice and accountability to build just peace. It is not enough to condemn the liberation wrongdoings. Those who have committed gross violations against others or betrayed the people's cause during the liberation wars must be apprehended, even if they are members of the same party, and brought to book to address impunity. Unless the intra-SPLM dialogue is anchored on justice and accountability, then building a culture of peace without justice remains an elusive idea.

The inter-party political dialogue should have been encouraged and nurtured since July 2005 and after independence. This would have created a forum where political parties would freely and responsibly dialogue without fear of reprisals from the government. The national inter-party dialogue should have been used to discuss and settle the negative perceptions between the SPLM and the small political parties. The public perceives these small political parties as agents of Khartoum during and after the war with the Sudan, but with dialogue, their real identities would be established and known.

The inter-party forum should have been strategically deployed to establish the national non-discriminatory rules that govern political parties. The formation of a political party should not be restricted as long as it meets certain national requirements in each of the 10 states. For instance, it is through the inter-party dialogue where every registered political party would be legally required to hold its national convention with either 1000 or 2000 delegates proportionately to the national population in attendance. This would prevent the emergence of ethnic and regional based political parties.

---

[28] There have been three main splits within the SPLM that had resulted into deadly confrontations in South Sudan. These splits included the 1985-1987 SPlM/A-Anya-Nya II; 1991 and December 15th, 2013.

Whenever members of a political party come from one ethnic group, thus that party is not a national party anymore. An ideal national party in South Sudan should have 25% of its political support base in each of the 10 states. According to the 2010 Sudan national elections, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement for Democratic Change (SPLM-DC) won 4[29] parliamentary seats from one ethnic group, the Chollo Kingdom. The emerging of ethnic-based political parties such as the SPLM-DC and other briefcase politics should be discouraged. The inter-party dialogue can be used as a platform to establish rules that can govern the national political parties. Rules that are arrived at through an inter-party deliberation would make it hard for the future political losers not to concede an electoral defeat. This is one of the ways the inter-party deliberation can be used to build a culture of peace with focus on justice and accountability to settle the current conflict and prevent future ones.

The intra-party and inter-party dialogues are important. They are not enough till there is the intra-government dialogue. The intra-government dialogue must be coordinated and carried out in certain ways, especially if the government of the day is based on a coalition. The members of the governing coalition parties would share their views and policies without exclusion or manipulation. Such an approach would build a cohesive culture of peace and trust between or among the governing parties. Another way where the intra-governmental dialogue can be adopted to build a culture of peace is through an inter-agency dialogue model. There is often a bureaucratic competition[30] among the departments of the same government. This bureaucratic ineffectiveness can lead to failure of the government to implement its campaign promises to the public.

Post-conflict societies are often prone to violence as a means of settling their differences. To discourage this war-mentality, dialogue is necessary to cultivate peace with deliberate intentions to decolonize[31] the public's minds. Scholars who have studied the oppressive systems concur that the harder thing to rehabilitate from the minds of the former oppressed people are the old habits of doing things using violence as a means to find a solution. The 'mind of an oppressed person'[32] is the "potent" tool an oppressor can use to inculcate unyielding oppressive attitudes.

---

[29] Sudan National Elections Commission 2010.

[30] See the September 11th, 2001 Commission Report that blamed the terrorist attacks on the US homeland on the lack of inter-US intelligent Community from sharing information with each other.

[31] Wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. (James Currey Ltd / Heinemann, 2011). See also Memmi, Albert. *Decolonization and the Decolonized*. (The University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

[32] Walter, Rodney. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. (Black Classic Press, 2011). Please consult the following authors for further readings: Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Any dialogue that is meant to bring peace in South Sudan should consider political-military-civil polarization that occurred during the war. South Sudan should learn from the Ugandan politics of mixing up or interweaving the military and ethnicity together in the 1970s. The politics of 'soldiers and kinsmen'[33] almost destroyed Uganda from 1972-1979 and 1981-1986. The politicization of the army along ethnic lines in South Sudan triggered the on-going crisis.

One of the things that should have been sought after the signing of the major cease-fire between Khartoum and SPLM in 2005 is the de-politicization and de-ethnicization of the SPLA through institutional re-organization. Peace through dialogue is achievable in South Sudan with the de-militarization of the civilian minds. When one dissociates the army from politics, as was the case in Kenya in December 2007-early 2008 electoral violence,[34] one creates perpetual peace. Building peace in South Sudan through dialogue needs the separation of the army from the ruling party. The SPLM in South Sudan is the ruling party. However, it is not the state. The ruling party should not be identical with the state. These are scenarios where peaceful political-military-civil relations can be propagated. When such a balance is created, building a culture of peace that is anchored on justice is realizable. Nonetheless, the reduction of political-military-civil tensions from spilling over into each other is realizable through an equitable delivery of service to the public by the legitimate governing authorities.

Political dialogue that focuses on the intra-party and inter-party as well as inter-government dialogue is not enough to settle the deep-seated problems of post-conflict South Sudan. If the government and other societal actors want to address the root causes of the systematic conflicts such actors must examine and understand the state-society relations. The government is one of the actors[35] of the society. The initiation of dialogue to create peace should consider the state-society relations.

As mentioned earlier, Benin avoids the negative woes of multi-party politics through a broad-based state-society dialogue. The reason political, economic or social development fails in Africa is that it is not anchored on the bottom-up approach. The 1999 peace conference between the Dinka and Nuer became the template of the so-

---

(Grove Press, 2005); Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*. (Monthly Review Press, 2001); Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. (Beacon Press, 1991);

[33] Mazrui, Ali. *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda*. (Sage Publication, 1975).

[34] The Kenyan military abstained from the dirty civil politics during the December 2007-2008 electoral violence between the supporters of an incumbent President Mwai Kibaki and the opposition leader, Raila Odinga.

[35] Migdal, Joel. *Strong Societies and Weak States: state-society relations and state capabilities in the Third World*. (Princeton University Press, 1988).

called South-South dialogue. One of the strategic means of building a culture of peace through an inclusive broad-based civil participation is that the local people honestly speak from the bottom of their hearts. When the broad-based participation convenes in the making of peace, such deliberation involves the material compensation of the aggrieved party by the offender. This serves, as deterrence to future would be likely offenders who would not only be apprehended, but would pay economic restitution to the victims.

The GoSS should have built a culture of peace through intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic grassroots dialogue. This approach would reduce intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic tensions. The success of the European Union (EU) in ensuring peace in Western Europe after the World War II is attributed to building a culture of peace among border-state people, which led to a significant reduction of inter-state conflicts. This was the reason the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012[36] was awarded to the EU. Building a culture of peace in Europe was pursued and achieved through dialogue and education. The combination of dialogue and education to achieve peace in Europe was applied to undo the previous deep-seated resentments among European nations. The search for peace did not compromise justice and accountability in post-World War II Europe. The prosecution of the Nazis culprits, the economic reparation and the division of Germany into East-West (1945-1989) were forms of collective justice and accountability that were intended to weaken the German militarism.[37]

IV   Conclusion and Way Forward

Dialogue as a means to build a culture of peace in South Sudan is an important method to achieve politico-economic, politico-military and socio-cultural cohesion. Achieving peace through dialogue is a form of soft power.[38] Building a culture of peace is not the harder thing; the sustainability of the peace is the most difficult thing. South Sudan as a society needs peace through a comprehensive dialogue. The cultivation of a culture of peace needs a philosophical understanding of what kind of a society South Sudan is. Building a futuristic peace in South Sudan ought to be anchored on justice. Peace without justice is a recipe for impunity. The following policy recommendations are suggested as key factors for building a culture of peace in South Sudan.

---

[36] Van Rompuy, Herman and Manuel, José. "From war to peace: a European tale." (Oslo, Norway: December 10th, 2012). Retrieved from: http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/eu-nobel/pdf/npp2013_en.pdf.
[37] Buruma, Ian. *Year Zero: A History of 1945*. (Penguin Press, 2013).
[38] Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power: The Means To Success In World Politics*. (Public Affairs, 2005).

- South Sudan needs a national dialogue that can bring different stakeholders to deliberate and bridge on their divergent views without fear in order to resolve political, military and civil issues. The manipulation of the military by ethnic-minded politicians to maximize their power gain over the elite from other ethnic groups politicizes the army and civil population. Building a culture of peace must be anchored on justice to isolate and eradicate tribalism and impunity. Achieving peace without justice compromises it. Dialogue succeeds when it employs a participatory approach to tackle the pressing national issues by involving actors at national and local constituencies to achieve justice and accountability. There is no stability in any nation without justice, as there can be no development anywhere without peace. It is not the absence of conflict in a given nation that guarantees peace, but the manner in which the given nation addresses its pressing problems. Any national dialogue in South Sudan must be tailored on the future prevention of political, military and civil tensions from spilling over. Peace without justice is like having nuclear weapons agreement between the US and Russia without resting it on the mutually assured destruction (MAD) doctrine.[39]

- One ought to understand that the people of South Sudan are very forgiving. This is validated by the previous broad-based societal dialogues that include the 1985-1987 SPLM/A-Anya-Nya II; the 1999 Wunlit; the 2000 Lilir and late 2000-2005 South-South that have brought peace among the warring parties. The past dialogues were intended to achieve peace and a united southern front against Khartoum. The above-mentioned dialogues in South Sudan have brought an unsustainable peace. Peace is only sustainable through justice and accountability.

- The application of dialogue to achieve sustainable peace ought to be centered on restorative justice. Restorative justice is a legal approach by which offenders are required "to repair the harm they have done—by apologizing, returning stolen money, or community service."[40] According to the restorative justice model, however, offenders are rehabilitated and monitored not to become recidivists. Political stability and ethnic co-existence are realizable in South Sudan when impunity is addressed. Dr. Garang once noted that 'we must make the cost of not implementing the CPA expensive than the cost of implementing it.'[41]

- Dialogue has not failed to yield peace in South Sudan. Where dialogue has failed to instill a culture of peace, however, is that they were not based on justice. They

---

[39] The Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) was a military deterrence doctrine between the USA and the USSR that was centered on second capability retaliation from 1940s-1991.
[40] "A New Kind of Criminal Justice," *Parade*, October 25, 2009, p. 6.
[41] Dr. Garang's public pronouncement.

were meant to achieve political reconciliation among political actors. This becomes a recipe for impunity. This is the reason people rebel and kill innocent civilians with the understanding that they would be forgiven and rewarded with positions. Dr. Garang once uttered that for us to build a culture of peace, therefore, we, as a society must calculate whether it is "cheap" or "expensive" to rebel. The absence of justice and accountability in South Sudan makes it easy for one to rebel. Rebellion would be only expensive if South Sudan as a society punishes, not rewards, violence and political opportunism.

- For a culture of peace to be built through dialogue, there are certain societal principles that can neither be opened for negotiation nor compromised. Those who have committed unforgettable or atrocious crimes against the people of South Sudan should not be rewarded through dialogue. They must be made to account for their acts. Achieving peace in South Sudan through dialogue that compromises justice and accountability is like development without transformation.

- South Sudan must take justice and accountability seriously. For instance, the new nation should criminalize corruption. Criminalization of corruption in South Sudan is an important legal strategy because there is no need for a few elite to siphon millions of dollars of public funds for personal use. It is a historical fact that the people of South Sudan took up arms and died in millions against Khartoum because of underdevelopment and marginalization.[42] The worst human rights violations of any kinds a society can self-inflict is in the form of underdevelopment.

- Dialogue as a tool to create a culture of peace in South Sudan is counter-productive if it lacks strategic leadership. It is politically realistic for a ruler to be feared than to be loved.[43] In order to cultivate a culture of peace in South Sudan and avoid political, military and civil issues getting mixed up in the future, the national leadership must separate the army from politics. Separating the army from politics is not enough without separating the ruling party from the state. Any political ruling party in South Sudan must not be identical with the state.

About Sudd Institute

[42] Garang, John. *John Garang Speaks*. (Kagan International, 1987).
[43] Machiavelli, Niccolo. *The Prince*. (Dover Publication, 1992).

The Sudd Institute is an independent research organization that conducts and facilitates policy relevant research and training to inform public policy and practice, to create opportunities for discussion and debate, and to improve analytical capacity in South Sudan. The Sudd Institute's intention is to significantly improve the quality, impact, and accountability of local, national, and international policy- and decision-making in South Sudan in order to promote a more peaceful, just and prosperous society.

About the Author

Benjamin A. Machar is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at Howard University. His areas of interest include international relations and comparative politics with an in-depth focus on Africa & Middle East. His dissertation focuses on *State Monopolization and Discontentment in Post-Independence South Sudan*. Ben is a consultant with the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) on socioeconomic, sociopolitical, state capacity building and foreign policy issues. He participated in the GoSS Comprehensive Evaluation in 2011, which assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of the government and its institutions during the interim period.

Ben is a visiting scholar/fellow at the Sudd Institute.