

UNITED NATIONS



الأمم المتحدة

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SUDAN
UNMIS

Office of the Spokesperson

Following is a near-verbatim transcript of the press conference of 22 January 2006 by the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Sudan, Jan Pronk.

Radhia Achouri (Spokesperson): Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this Press Briefing with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sudan, Mr. Jan Pronk. I'm not going to tell you what he is going to brief you about, and will leave the floor for him. However, I would like to tell about that given some very important commitments the SRSG has this afternoon, this Press Briefing will last from now until 02:15. So please when you take the floor to ask questions, make sure you are as concise as possible, so we can give the chance to everybody to ask questions. And without further ado I now give the floor to SRSG Pronk.

SRSG Pronk: Also I will try to be concise. Let me brief you a little bit on the discussions I had during the last week in New York, and also in Washington, and Brussels. I had to deliver the periodical reports on the 3-month report on the North-South developments in Sudan, and the monthly report on Darfur to the Security Council. I was accompanied in the Security Council by Mr. Salem Ahmed Salem, who has been invited also by the Security Council to deliver a briefing. In my speech, which is available for you, I did elaborate on: firstly, the North-South talks one year after signing of the peace agreement in Nairobi. I said everything is going quite well, a bit slow, but there is a progress in the implementation of the CPA, and there is no back-tracking, and parties are quite serious. I would like to ask you to read that specific text where I gave some examples of progress, and also did express some number of concerns with regard to the next stage of the CPA.

I said with regard to Darfur that my judgment was much different. Firstly, as far as the Abuja talks were concerned, I said parties have failed to reach an agreement before the end of the deadline, which had been set or agreed upon by the parties. You remember that the 31st of December was accepted by the parties at the end of the fifth round, June for the end of the sixth round, and October as the a beginning of the seventh round, and in November parties said they wanted to get an agreement before the end of this year. You also remember that I said in the Press Conference I held before going to New York, that I was quite disappointed about the fact that parties had failed to meet that deadline. I

repeated that in New York. In addition to this, and that a second major issue, as far as security on the ground is concerned, I said that it was of concern, in particularly in West Darfur, many parties fighting, and that there are still attacks by militias on civilians. Civilians are still being killed, a stalemate in the talks and on-going insecurity on the ground. As far as I'm concerned, this does require a reconsideration of the strategy. I said to the Security Council: our peace strategy has failed. I did say "our", I did not say that the AU has failed, definitely not; because I praised the AU for whatever they have done. Both in leading the negotiation in Abuja, in providing security support in Darfur itself. I did not say that the Government has failed; on the contrary the attacks are by militias. I only said the Government has not done what they had to do to disarm militias and Janjaweed which is the requirement by the Security Council set out in a number of resolutions of the Security Council.

The Day before the Security Council listened to my briefing to and the briefing by Mr. Salem Ahmed Salem, there was a meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. In that particular meeting the AU Peace and Security Council took the decision to support the transition in principle from AMIS to UN operations. And the AU decided to convene a meeting of the same Peace and Security Council at the Ministerial level before the end of March. That is a decision of the African Union to support in principle a transition from AMIS to UN operations. Again, it's a decision of the African Union. I have not asked for a UN operation in Darfur, the Secretary-General did not ask for it in his report to the Security Council; and the Security Council has not yet taken a decision. The Secretary-General has said, in a press conference, that if AMIS can not continue and if AMIS wants to organize a transition to the United Nations; the UN is bound to react positively. It is not an invitation by the UN; on the contrary the UN has always said we are overstressed. There are at the moment about 14 peace operations by the United Nations in the world. And we hardly know where the resources and troops would have to come from. The UN always has said we have more or less reached the ceiling. So we do not invite anybody to ask us to come; we hardly know how to do it. The AU has done a good job. It is already clear from our operation in the Sudan; I was promised 10 thousand troops in the South, and at the moment I have 5800, which is 19 months after we started. And the African Union did do a better job. In 14 months, from October 2004 when they took the decision until December, they were able to bring 7,400. So they were able to bring more troops in a shorter period. So the United Nations is overstressed, and the United Nations has not invited the African Union to hand over its operations; on the contrary. But if the African Union takes such a decision for any reason, the United Nations will have to answer. And I said in the Security Council that now a statement was made by the Security Council of the African Union: please respond, without a response we can not do anything. That is the present situation. If the African Union confirms the transition decision in principle into a final decision in its final Ministerial meeting, the UN Security Council might have to say we have to do it. Because it was the Security Council who invited the African Union to go to Darfur, and that was in September 2004. In October 2004 the African Union took the decision to accept the invitation by the Security Council. If they can not continue for any reason, then the UN will have to do it itself.

If the UN would have to take that decision -and it is the Security Council which would have to take such a decision, it (UN Mission) will have to take quite some time to be prepared. We do not have the troops. We have to plan. We have to make an assessment. That is the reason why already the Secretary-General of the United Nations, together with the African Union, will try to find ways, means, and financial resources for a continuation of the African Union troops in 2006, which is the present year, after the 31st of March this year, because the African Union has financial resources until the 31st of March 2006. After this date there is no finance. So, Mr. Kofi Annan and the African Union will do their very best in the coming weeks to ensure continuation of the African Union Mission in the next couple of months. The Secretary-General has an answer, and he has said I'm going to ask the countries to make available more resources: finance and equipment, helicopters, crews for helicopters, and whatever is necessary.

That why I went to Washington, because the Americans are a big contributor to AMIS, and that is why I went to Brussels in order to ask other countries to give that support. And in Brussels, I said in a Council of the NATO: "We do not want a NATO operation on the African soil". The African Union intention is to hand over to the UN, not to the NATO, not to any other coalition of the willing or whatsoever; the African Union as an organization of which the Sudan is a member, to the UN as an organization of which the Sudan is also a member, but not NATO. But both the African Union and later perhaps also the UN, will need financial, logistic, resources, and equipment support from countries which have capacity, and those NATO countries also; they have helicopters, people, crews, and money. That why I went to Washington and Brussels; to ask for such supports. Do not let AMIS down; continue, and do not let the UN down; if the UN obliged by the Security Council, which is still has to take a decision- to take over at the request of the African union, not at the request of the United Nations. I read some statements that we are organizing a conspiracy against the Sudan; no, definitely not. I'm not criticizing the Government of Sudan. There is no conspiracy about the Sudan. I'm in favor of an effective approach in Darfur, to help the people of Darfur. There are still two million people in camps, who can not go anywhere; they have to be able to go home. There are attacks still, not by the Government, but by militias on the villages, people are being killed. We want to help in terms of humanitarian, political, and security these people in Darfur, within an organization of which the Sudan is a member, no intervention from outside: AU or UN of which the Sudan is a member. And then on the basis of an agreement, the parties, the Government and the movements, have to reach a peace agreement. I repeat again, I'm so disappointed that the 31st of December was passed more or less unnoticed. And I said to the Security Council, and I repeat what I said here: the parties did not meet the deadline, i.e. the 31st of December. But they made a second commitment; not to go to an eighth round, but to make the seventh round the final round. They have to keep this commitment. They have to continue talking in the seventh round. Stop the clock; think as if it is still the 31st of December. Continue talking within the seventh round, with no pauses, no adjournment to an eighth round. I think parties will be wise together with the African Union, now to set a deadline, which is very short; why not the end of February? There would be slippages two months after the 31st of December; why not the end of February? That means you have another five-week. I have no reason to believe that the Government would not be interested. I think that the Government will

be interested in getting a peace agreement soon. And they have been to Abuja; and I have also been to Abuja so often, and I got all my reports, and the Government negotiated quite constructively, they were good, tough negotiators but constructive. My main concern at the moment is the movements; who still are choosing and have not made the choice between fighting and talking. At the moment my main concern, and I'm saying that very clearly, is the part of the SLA movement led by Mini Minawi. He has to make a choice. He has to be in Abuja not in Chad, not in Libya, but in Abuja, to talk in order to get agreement. If not, I think that means he is not so serious in terms of negotiation on behalf of these two millions people, who are in the camps and the other who are still in the villages being attacked by militias. So my plea is so strongly made to them. I have also asked in Washington and Brussels to put as much as possible pressure on the movements, in particular on the wing being led by Minawi, to negotiate seriously and to not bet on two horses: a military horse with finance from outside, or a political horse; they have to go for only one. Make it in February, make it possible after the African Union Summit to start again talking very seriously in Abuja. It is still possible. And then I hope that the first priority is a better ceasefire, so that they can continue talking about the other issues: wealth and power. And I repeat what I said here also before, a kind of agreement on wealth and power is necessary in Abuja, but at a certain moment it has to be broadened to a wider group, including the civil society which is trying to speak not fight, and this could take place in the Darfur-Darfur dialogue. And the Darfur-Darfur dialogue should start after the end of the seventh round. Again Darfur-Darfur dialogue should start after, not now, but after the seventh round, which should then take place in Darfur, in order to guarantee that many other groups are also present, not only people with weapons, but also intellectuals, in Al Fashir, for instance, and other tribal leaders in Darfur. This should take place after the seventh round not now. But the seventh round should reach an agreement soon, otherwise it is not serious.

Let me add something on the east; things are going into the right direction. You remember my previous statement that I was concerned about the fact that negotiations did not start before the final date of the 9th of January, which is a date also when the SPLM would have had to move out of east Sudan on the basis of the CPA. I was also very concerned that we were not able to get into Hamishkoreib, which is a major contested area. Well, we are there now for the first time in Hamishkoreib, and we are there to stay. We have our military observers in Hamishkoreib city, they came by Helicopters, they came by roads, and we will send more. We have also humanitarians and others. We sent a delegation again within the last two days to Asmara, to have discussions with the Eastern Front. We told the Eastern Front: you have to talk in Tripoli. Because you have chosen Libya as a mediator, and you may be withdrawing because of internal disputes, but you chose Tripoli/Libya as you mediator and you have to continue the talking there. Because, we should not have a void in the east, when SPLM is leaving. So that you will not be contested by SAF. SPLM is still there, and they can stay there for a while as far as there is agreement between the SPLM and Government of Sudan. But at the same time talks should take place between the Government and the Eastern Front; in Tripoli or in another place, but talks must take place very soon. My delegation came back yesterday with a rather optimistic feeling that the Eastern front is willing to talk again united. And also that the Eastern Front is not betting on the other horse: fighting. My gentleman agreement

last year with the Government and the East that they would not attack each other since May, which continued to hold until last year, may still continue to hold. Talks have not started, we are shuttling at the moment – I can not give you more information yet – and we are on the ground and monitoring the situation in Hamishkoreib. I think it is possible to contain the present situation avoiding fighting. That is the task of the UN wherever, in the South we have been able to do so. In the East I keep my fingers crossed. We been able so far to do so; and we are the only ones. May be at a certain moment we will be asked by the Security Council to do the same in Darfur, which is not our role so far; it is still the role of the African Union, and I'm calling on all countries – as a decision has not been made and until a decision will be made – to continue to support the African Union to carry out their job until that specific date.

Q. & A.

Q: If there will be a UN Mission in Darfur, do you expect the Germans to send soldiers there?

A : No, I do not. That is not necessary – but that is a year later – it is not necessary. What we need is money, equipment, and of course if you send helicopters, pilots, because you cannot send a German helicopter with a pilot coming from South Africa! You have to do a good job. What we need is equipment, resources, logistics, cars. But we do not need German soldiers - definitely not - but support to the African and Asian soldiers who are already in Sudan.

Q: (*BBC*): Mr. Pronk, how closer to a solution to Darfur will it be if Sudan takes over chairmanship of the African Union?

A: That is not for the UN to have any judgment about. That is an internal AU discussion at the moment and I will strongly plead that countries which are not members of the AU shy away from offering a judgment on that internal AU debate. Any judgment, either in favor or against a specific proposal, is creating difficulties in the AU. Let the AU governments take their own decision.

Q: But you didn't really answer the question how big enough will it be to sorting out the Darfur crisis when the GoS is one side of an issue that needs to be arbitrated?

A: I did give an answer to this. It is a very implicit answer and you are a very good listener definitely. Leave it today, tomorrow and Tuesday to the Africans themselves; they are wise and experienced politicians.

Q: (*Sudan Vision*): Mr. Pronk, you said that, in your statement to New York that if there is a peace force, in the UN the first reactions will not be positive. The other thing is that other parties which are not parties in the impending peace agreement in Darfur will have to disarm. This will lead to a confrontation between this new peacekeeping force and some parties in Darfur.

A: You are right. People are not very positive about a UN role. I read that in newspapers. I try to make clear that the UN is not asking for that role. But if the Security Council which is the highest organ in the world takes a decision that the UN should be involved, Kofi Anan will have to say yes to it. Then we will have to prepare. And I have then to explain to everybody in Sudan what our role is. It may be possible that our role will be, like in the South, on the invitation of the parties when they reach an agreement like in Nairobi. It is quite possible that in Abuja the government and SLM and JEM reach an agreement on security inviting the UN to monitor and help them in keeping that agreement. But like you, I know that in Abuja there is no Gibril of the NMRD, there is not the *Janjaweed*, there is not Arab militia who are attacking people in villages. There are many people who fight who are not in Abuja, and a force will have to be able to defend itself. The AU has not been able to defend itself completely because they were lacking the resources - and people have been killed. I also said in my speech that Africans came to Darfur to help other Africans and they became the target themselves and African soldiers have been killed. That should stop. And they were not killed by the government, they were not killed by SLM, they were killed by others. You need a force which is able to defend itself - fair enough, isn't it? And you need a force which is able to protect the villages and also to disarm those who attack villages. The AU has not the capability at the moment to do so but it has to be done. The government was asked and required to do so and they didn't. It has to be done otherwise we continue and these people will never be able to get home. Whether it is the UN or the AU, that is a must. Without a stop to the attacks by those who are not participating in the talks, there will never be peace.

Q: (*Sudan Vision*): I have another question for you. You made some negative comments about Resolution 1591 and the Ceasefire Joint Mechanism. How can you go forward? What is the remedy?

A: There is a Panel of Experts of the Security Council which made an investigation into two elements of that Security Council Resolution and that are, one on the people who are a hindrance to peace, and one on arms deliverers to the parties. I know what's in the report but the report is not public and I can not say anything about it. It is a report which was made by a Panel of Experts not at the request but at the instruction of the Security Council. The Security Council is not discussing it yet because it is still in a Committee and the Committee has not decided to make it public so that it can not be discussed.

In my view, that is the wrong approach. If you have a report with recommendations, the Security Council should discuss the recommendations otherwise everything is constantly being delayed and postponed. And I said to the Security Council that our peace strategy has failed. Which is ours. Ours is, the Security Council - fifteen members - and us, the UN, together we failed. And you, the Security Council, you have to take yourself more seriously. If you take decisions, if you pass a resolution it has to be implemented otherwise people in the field think that the Security Council does not mean anything, because they take decisions which are not decisions because they are not been implemented, and that is chaos because. If you have chaos because the Security Council is not able to take its own decisions seriously, then you get individual countries who are

going to take decisions and that is a very wrong development, a very wrong development. The Security Council is the highest organ. It should take itself very seriously in order to prevent individual countries, whoever, to do it alone.

Q: About the Ceasefire Committee?

A: The Joint Committee should meet. It is not meeting. There was a meeting in February. They ought to meet each month. They didn't and then they met in October. I pushed for it. It was a failure in terms of substance but they decided from now on to meet each month. In November they did. So I went to Abuja and one of our proposals was to organize a meeting of the Joint Committee in December. They were not interested. I went in January again, and I said we need to discuss the violations of the Ceasefire. You have to discuss in Abuja the future arrangements but in N'djamena or wherever you need to discuss what is the implementation of the Ceasefire. Again in January, there is no meeting! I do not see any meeting being scheduled. What is the consequence: That there are violations, and there are violations. But it is not being written down, only somewhere in El Fashir - I don't not see it. They are not being discussed, they are not being addressed, and they are not being sanctioned. Violations of an agreement have to be sanctioned. That is not helpful, to say the least, and if we continue along that path which is a dead-end, you have to reconsider the way you in which you are dealing with the N'djamena Ceasefire. And in my view, parties have to consider bringing together the talks on the basis of the past Ceasefire in N'djamena with the talks which are now present in Abuja with regard to a new peace agreement Peace Agreement and bring that in one way or another together.

Q: (*AlAyyam*): You have mentioned that the government did what it could do in Darfur though the Security Council has requested the government to disarm the *Janjaweed* and till now the government has not done so.

A: The government is not attacking the people. The government has not done what it ought to do to disarm militia and the *Janjaweed*. I said so in my report to the Security Council. They should have done it. If they do not do it, somebody else has to do it. Because the attacks have to stop.

Q: But you know it is supporting it. Everybody says the government is supporting the *Janjaweed*. They say 'government-backed Arab militias'.

A: I didn't say that. I have in no report to the UN Security Council ever said that the government is supporting the *Janjaweed* or the government is supporting the militia. They did so in 2003, in the beginning of 2004. Since the UN came in in the middle of 2004, I have no evidence that that continues. I know that there are many statements but I have no evidence and if I have no evidence I can't. At the same time, we don't have a mandate to monitor that. That is an AU mandate. The problem is that the relation between your question and the question of your predecessor that whatever the AU brings forward on the basis of its monitoring activities is not being discussed in that Joint

Committee but the Joint Committee is not meeting so we are in a vicious circle at the moment.

Q: My other question: It has been said that ceasefire violations have occurred in Eastern Sudan by the militia groups dubbed by the SPLM as Bittai's militias. The situation in South Kordofan is similar to that of Eastern Sudan as there are armed militia that are yet to be disarmed. Another thing is that the SPLM says that the government has disarmed the Nuba in the Popular Defense Forces but is yet to disarm the Arabs of the PDF.

A: There is a difficult situation in Eastern Sudan. So I explain what happened: SPLM ought to have left in the 9th of January, and they didn't. There was a talk between the GoS and SPLM where, I don't know may be in (*indiscernible*) I do not know exactly. But anyway, SAF agreed that the SPLA would not leave before the 9th of January so it was a kind of an informal gentleman's agreement. So the fact that SPLA did not leave was not considered by the GoS, by SAF a violation of the agreement. They more or less agreed together that SPLA could stay for a while. I do not know how long, for a while. If SPLA leaves, the SAF has the right to get in because then, that is part of the CPA like in the South: if the SAF leaves the SPLA can get in that is the CPA. The problem is that if the SAF gets in, then the Eastern Front will say we do not accept that and we are going to fight and you have a war. The fact that the SPLM is still there, may help postponing a confrontation between the government and the Eastern Front and we try to organize talks between them so that they do not attack each other. So that is the present situation.

You are quite right - it is not only the Eastern Front. The SPLM and the SAF but there are also groups. When I was in Kassala in my last visit, I met with representatives of Beja groups who are not part of the Eastern Front, it is very complicated. They said, we want SPLA to leave and we go in on the 10th of January. I said, please wait because you waited already for many years so why not wait for a couple of months more because we may be able to reach an agreement between the parties. Be wise and wait. They did not. On the 10th, they went in with a couple of hundreds. And they organized some support from PDF possibly, possibly. And there was a story about tanks, etc. That is not true. The government is not behind it. The government has decided after discussing with us, not to send their troops in and to stay put. SPLA is not leaving and they are all there in the present situation and we are somewhere in between. There are no tanks of the government. But there are movements based on the people who are living there so you also have to have talks between all parties in order to reach a kind of an agreement. So far, nobody is fighting. Some are moving but nobody is fighting and that is, I hope also, due to the fact that we are there now on the ground to monitor the situation and we are been respected by all parties.

Q: Mr. Pronk, do you believe that if everything is possible, the handover from AU to UN should take place as soon as possible?

A: No, it is not as soon as possible but it is not possible soon.

Q: I mean regardless of the procedures of the UN, if it is at all possible do you want it to happen even now?

A: No, No, No, far from it. Let the AU continue to do its job as well as possible. If they have at a certain moment come to the conclusion that they can not continue for many different reasons, then we will have to do it but we need time, we need time. Do not haste, only haste in making resources, Japanese, German, and US financial and other resources for AMIS and, later perhaps, also for UN.

Q: You were just in The Hague, what did the ICC tell you about when investigations will be on the ground and what are the reactions you have from the Sudanese government on that affecting that?

A: I was in the Hague not now to have discussions with the ICC because I had a meeting with an ICC Delegation very recently who was here in Khartoum. I had a meeting with the Dutch Minister of Defense who promised to send also Dutch monitors and police to Southern Sudan in order to finalize those discussions.

The ICC is cooperating at the moment with the government. They had a meeting here in, I think it was in December, and that was constructive. They discussed both their mandate in the South – the LRA - and they discussed what they are doing in Darfur. They gave me the information themselves so I am only quoting them – they had an informative discussion with the government. You are also aware of the fact that they will send a new delegation in February for talks with a number of people. I don't know with whom. They are not disclosing that with us and I even do not want to know it because ICC and the UN is different. But Mr. Ocampo who is the Prosecutor did inform the Security Council that there is a good cooperation between the ICC and the GoS. He also told me and I also get that same information from the GoS. So, let's continue on that road.

Q: About a possible UN take over, the Sudanese government has always said from the start they do not want UN forces in Darfur. Do you think that if the AU (*indiscernible*)?

A: I do not think there was a statement yet by the GoS. I have seen statements by individual politicians but not by the GoS. You have to make a distinction between a government statement and statement by individual politicians. Moreover, secondly, there is not yet a decision, so do not make premature statements. That would be my advice to everybody. It is not yet necessary to take a position. First, the Security Council has an answer to the Peace and Security Council and as long as the Security Council has not taken a decision, it is not necessary to react. I have my discussions at the moment here in Khartoum with members of the government, informing them like I do with you about my talks in New York, Washington and Brussels and I am meeting a constructive approach after they listened to what I said, because of course you have to inform each other.

Q: The UN is playing a role in bringing peace in the Sudan by monitoring and supporting. Now, the South and the North has reached an agreement. The Darfur is in the round table and soon the East will come down to the government. What strategies does

UN do to make the whole Sudan share power? A sort of explanation: When the GoS and the SPLM signed the Agreement, when they came into implementing power sharing, there was pulling of ropes here and there. Soon Darfur will sign power and they will come in. Power sharing may also take the same trend and the east may also do the same. What strategies does the UN have to prevent further fighting on power sharing?

A: This is a very good question but I have not a full answer because the UN can not develop a strategy to prevent this, it has to be a discussion in Sudan amongst everybody who wants to have a stake, a share in the power and in the wealth in the country. People in the East, people in Darfur, people in the South. They also have to listen to each other and to the government because it is a distribution of power and wealth. And power and wealth are both limited concepts, you can not increase power. In order to have a fair share, you have to talk. What are we doing, firstly, we say, the CPA is a very good basis. Please keep the CPA and that means keep the peace, and keep the constitution which is based on the CPA and the constitution opens many possibilities for others which means a process to make the peace inclusive and we request the government and the government of South Sudan to be very inclusive in the process and ask to step forward.

I am very positive about what has happened on the 8th of January, when the GoSS or SPLM you may call it, has a final agreement with Paul Matib and the SSDF. It was the last day of the first year but there is an agreement now and they are sharing power and they were giving away some part of their own power in order to give it to SSDF, positions for instance. It is very difficult but they did it. It is good. I am positive about the fact that the government opened itself towards political parties which in the past, were considered to be their enemies. The Umma Party is speaking out, El Turabi is speaking out. They do not have the same position as the government but they are speaking out. It is possible. It is important to go for elections and our task also is to help organizing these elections between the third and the fourth year and to make transparent and fair. I know that others are waiting for these elections. I hope and we are constantly discussing that. I hope it will be possible but we are constantly discussing it that civil society can play a role. I am very strongly in favor of freedom of the press. Whatever the press is saying, even if they criticize the UN and me personally to a big extent, they are free to do so and I will stand for it because that is the only way to go forward in this society.

Our strategy is to organize talks. We are the only ones in the East really who are trying to organize talks which are effective. I don't know whether we were successful but anyway we are doing it. In Darfur, at the same way, we may have to ask SPLM, which we are doing, also to play a role in the East in the talks; play a role in Darfur, constructively in the talks. Maybe you have to share some of your own power with your former friends in the East and your former or present friends in SPLM and step by step, it is a very painful process after decades of war, very painful. But anyway, do not fight and that is the other part of the issue. Please do not fight while talking; you may talk for a very long period it does not matter but do not fight and that is the other part of it. At the same time, we tell and that is also a part, to tell the Sudanese that you have to do it yourself. Peace is not a commodity which can be imported. It is a commodity which has to be locally produced.

Q: Are you concerned to the world's increasing interests in Darfur because is it not that the fact that the AU is experiencing these problems in continuing its mission because the promised aid is not forthcoming or the aid that there is is too little? Is the EU not thinking of withdrawing or rerouting some of its peacekeeping funding to the AU to other parts of the world? If this is the case, then what about the transition from the AU to the UN in the next three months or the next year? How would the AU, in this situation of under funding and possible demoralization that the world isn't interested, how would that impact on (*indiscernible*).

SRSG Pronk: I am not so concerned that the world is losing its interests in Darfur because I see in the Security Council and around the Security Council a lot of interests in Darfur still. I also see it in the public in the US, the public in the UK, the public in Germany, just to mention three examples. In democratic societies the public still puts a lot of pressure on governments to still continue devoting interests in these political. I am not so much afraid of.

Your second question is exactly the opposite: are you not afraid that they would lose patience. They were very interested but you were too much interested.

I am a bit concerned about that. To lose patience is never wise. You have to be good diplomats, good politicians, and that means you have to lose time but never lose patience. But you can put pressure and you can set deadlines then you also have to help. What I am afraid of, and that is your third element, is that, though they are interested, though they are perhaps wise, they don't deliver the means; they do not deliver the financial resources. We are politically interested but we do not want to pay and that is a problem. I understand of course, that the western countries have to deal with many problems in the world, in financial terms, but that is why they are rich. Good politicians in western countries have to take the lead and make money and resources available to solve the world problems and the world problems are also in the west. But I am concerned that they are not taking place because at the moment you see ideologies in the western countries are very much oriented towards a lower public budget and more market, because all these problems require financial resources. It is an investment in peace. By the way, that is also a message to the government of South Africa.

Q: (AlRay Aam): I appreciate the democratic approach of the SRSG towards the press and towards the criticisms on the different newspapers with regard to the UN intervention in Darfur.

My question is that, the SRSG mentioned that the current situation of the AU needs only financial support, more fund and equipment. Don't you see that this does not suit the force requested, which is 20,000 soldiers, and which is mentioned in the Secretary-General's report? Could you please clarify this?

A: Yes, indeed. I read some critical articles. You are free to write even if I do not like what you are writing but you are free to write. You have to discuss and I try to give information as much as possible and to be as transparent as possible and I try to make a

distinction between facts and opinions. Please have your facts right but you are free to express any opinion. Even if you do not like me, write it down and you are free to say so even if the press wants to say SRSG has to go, they are free to write it but I am not going. That is a different thing. I am only going if I feel that I can not work here anymore because if the government says we do not want to deal with him, then I will tell Koffi Anan, the Secretary-General, please send somebody else because I am no longer effective. But as long as the government says we can work with the SRSG to the UN, I will continue to work.

Secondly, the number and the mandate. Equipment I have said we need more, big, broad, long and strong those were the key words. More, big force, strong, long duration broad. Then they ask me how big, my answer is I am not a military expert. However, twice as big as what we have at the moment, and we have at the moment about seven and a half thousands of the AU soldiers. Twice as big, it is fifteen. So fifteen, twelve and twenty, and twelve is the figure the AU mentioned itself in the third phase. Because all these people will have to go home. Two million plus! They will not go home if they do not feel safe – that is a fact. They tell us, we only feel safe if we see a protection force around us. And I said in my speech that protection force is not a force on calla – take the phone, “we are being attacked, please come to help us” – it is not going to help. That is too late. It should be a protection force in place – not on call, but in place. Then you need a big number big as 12-20 thousand.

But again I am not a military expert. However, I am a protection expert and I think that you do not need only a military criteria. There are people who say it is only a question of mobility, small force but very mobile. My answer is that I can't explain that to people returning to a village when they are being attacked by militia on camel or horseback. They do not have a phone to ask a mobile force from outside to come, because after the attack, the militia has gone away leaving dozens of people dead on the ground, so you have to stop that by deterring it – by prevent it – and that means a big number.

Q: With respect to the militia attacking in Darfur, you stressed you didn't think it was the Government involved despite the AU having probably a very (*indiscernible*).

With respect to the east in Hamishkoreib, you said you thought it was armed civilians who were going into Hamishkoreib rather than the government. Your Deputy Force Commander was here last week saying to us that government militias (*indiscernible*) and in the problems with the Darfur peace talks, you stressed you that that the government team was negotiating well but not the rebels. We attended the Foreign Minister's press conference last week and heard remarkably similar things from him. It seems like you must be very pleased by the way the Sudanese government is acting and perhaps you should be commending them for the chairmanship of the AU.

A: I'm not, because I did say this is something for the Africans and not for outsiders.

Q: But you are very please by the way the Sudanese government is acting in this case. You seem to have been perhaps taking the positive eye the way ...

SRSB Pronk: I'm very consistent; sometimes you are here and you are listening, but sometimes you are not here and you do not hear. I'm very consistent. I did mention by the way the PDF by myself in the East. But I also did say that when I was in Kassala, there was a Beja group who said we were going in, and I said please do not go in; and they brought got in, local militia – PDF – and we discussed with the Government, and they said we will not go in with them and we will withhold, and that is happening. Sir, it is extremely difficult on the ground to keep all the parties away from each other. That is what we are doing. Nobody else did so, but we did. I do not know whether I can guarantee that tomorrow we will be as successful as today and yesterday; but we are doing it. If you want to commend; commend us for doing this in the East.

Secondly, we do not have a mandate in Darfur to judge whether there is a violation of a ceasefire; we do not have that, we did not get it. The Security Council did not give me a mandate to judge whether there is a violation of a ceasefire or not so I shy away from that and leave that to the AU. But I'm saying please listen to what I'm saying: that I do not get those reports, that those reports are not being discussed because there is no meeting of the Joint Committee, which has to discuss the reports. I'm asking, "please meet," but they do not meet, so there is no report and there is no judgment. And I'm not taking over from the AU; definitely not, neither on the ground, nor on the political path on the basis of the ceasefire agreement. I'm not taking over of the AU. So I'm not passing my own judgment. I do not have all those eyes on the ground. I am not seeing myself with my staff that there is cooperation between the militias and the Government, and then I'm only here to say that it is not for the UN to pass a judgment.

And as far as the talks are concerned; yes indeed Sir, come with me to Abuja, whether you like it or not, the Government is constructively talking in Abuja, that is the case. And I will not shy away to criticize the decisions of the Government when necessary. And I passed a lot of criticism on the Government since I have been here, but I'm fair, straight, and open. As at the moment, definitely is the case, that one of the wings of the rebel movements is betting on the military horse. It is getting its weapons and finance from outside. It is not seriously negotiating in Abuja. You can see it with your own eyes, and you can hear with your own ears, that is the case. And I put a lot of pressure and I have gone very often to Darfur in order to talk to bring them to Abuja and to bring them together with the other wings, but the outcome is not yet there, because they are still betting on two horses. That is at the moment the most important accomplishment which we have to get, otherwise there will not be a result in Abuja, and without a result in Abuja any presence of any force in Darfur will be unbalanced. We first must get that peace, and we will need all parties for that.

Spokesperson: We have to conclude this briefing now. Before we do, I have an announcement to make. Those of you who were here last week will remember that we announced a special press briefing on Returns for the 23 of January. That briefing will be delayed one week, until January 30th at 12h30, here in the Ramses Building briefing room. Robert Turner, the Director of the UN Returns Unit will give an overview of the UN returns plans and update on going activities, including the status of Bor Dinka movement in Southern Sudan, plans for a pilot project of organised returns in 2006 and

any other questions you may have. My colleague from OCHA, Dawn Blalock, will send out a reminder prior to the briefing and if you have any other questions, you can contact her directly.