

different religions. Citizenship is the basis on which rights and duties will be based. We also agreed that *Sharia* and custom shall be the sources of legislation. Now in the Constitution, it is the same thing that is mentioned. And therefore, the South will be using custom—not only the South; there are people in western Sudan still using custom now, because this is the only way they can operate, even if they are Muslims. So, with that I am satisfied.

But the implementation process is not over. The Coordinating Council is not yet established. The papers will be in front of the President, we hope, before the end of this month; the process shall be over, and therefore, the process of implementing what we have agreed upon will start. But I know there is so much improvement, on the question of religion. There are still problems here and there, which priests or pastors are complaining about. But where were we before the agreement? We were at a different stage altogether. So, I didn't expect all problems to be resolved in one day.

EIR: What do you think the United States and European countries should do, to help this process? What would you like to see come out of the U.S. administration and Congress?

Machar: First, I was disappointed in what the United States did while we were in the peace talks in Nairobi, when they imposed trade sanctions on the Sudan. That was not an incentive for peace talks. It was just telling the SPLA, "don't deal with that government." Therefore the sanctions were imposed while we were talking. Whatever explanation was given, was not satisfactory, because by actions, people will blame the United States. But yet, the United States says it is supportive of peace. It is one of the member countries of IGAD. Now if the United States would take peace as a priority—Sudan is a big country. If there is no peace in Sudan, there will be instability in the region, in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and the rest. We border nine countries. We are the heart of Africa; if we are unstable, the rest will be unstable.

I think the best that the United States can do, is to support the peace process. People change. There is nothing unique or strange in this country: There is a Presidency, there is a National Assembly—elected; the press—you know, when I compare the press from 1986 and today, there is so much freedom. There has been a big change. The country is moving towards constitutionality. The country is moving towards pluralism. What does America want? So, America should support the peace process. Let America support the move towards constitutionality, towards democracy, democratization, pluralism. This is not a communist country. There is a free market economy, which I think would be in the interests of America.

EIR: What do you see as priorities for economic development in the southern states? How do look at projects such as the Jonglei Canal?

Machar: After the ten state governments of the South and the Coordinating Council are constituted, hopefully, before

the end of this month, we are looking forward first to repatriation, resettlement, and rehabilitation, then opening up roads so that those who can produce can get to the markets and the markets can sell to the population. On the economic development in the South, there is extensive oil exploration now. Chevron is the one that started it, but what has been discovered in the last year in the South, is greater than what Chevron had discovered before. So we expect, with these new riches of oil, that we will emphasize agricultural development. What people themselves can do is more important, as our society has an agricultural base. We also want to improve animal husbandry, and the trade interaction with the North and the neighboring countries, place more emphasis on commerce.

Now on the Jonglei Canal, three-quarters of the canal has been dug. Only one-quarter remains to be dug. We need to reclaim land, to develop that area. The Jonglei Canal would bring about development there, so it's one of the projects that we want to revive. The swamp is expanding in the Nile basin, every year, and even taking more land, displacing it. We need water northwards; and also the agreement was with Egypt, they also need it. And on our side, we need development in that area, we do not want a human zoo. We need a highway. There was supposed to be a highway built along the canal, that highway would open the South to economic development and commerce. We have ambitious projects.

But the British are not living up to their historical responsibility. Instead of perpetrating the conflict, they should work to see that the conflict is resolved peacefully, this is what one should expect from their side. Baroness Cox's information is outdated, and I really wished that she would come and visit the country. She would move freely.

Interview: Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin Attabani

An optimistic look at Sudan's future

Dr. Ghazi is the outgoing secretary general of Sudan's National Congress. He was interviewed in Khartoum.

EIR: Dr. Ghazi, could you give us your view of the significance of the second National Congress?

Ghazi: This second meeting has, first of all, come after many significant developments in the political arena, especially the signing of the peace agreement in April last year, so we had to be more inclusive in the conference, in the sense that six factions have joined the peace process and are therefore represented in the Congress. So in terms of membership, it's much



Dr. Ghazi Salahuddin Attabani: "I think in the first decade of the next century, we'll see a much better Sudan."

more inclusive this time, not only for the southerners, but even for the northern opposition forces who came back from the Arab countries where they were, especially from Cairo, and also from London.

Second of all, the papers which were presented before the Congress, included structural changes in the Congress, and they also included a vision of what the Constitution should look like and a vision of how the future should look for the coming three years, in the three-year plan. This is the first time that the Congress has discussed such papers.

EIR: What will be the next steps in the evolution of the political process of the country?

Ghazi: Right now, this evening actually, we have convened a second most important body in the structure of the National Congress, that is the consultative body [*Shura*], which is composed of 650 people. These people are supposed to elect today about 24 members in order to complete the leadership council. The first thing is to complete all the structures of the National Congress, the next is to embark on a national campaign to explain what our view of the Constitution is, and to rally support behind the Constitution, which will be submitted to a referendum later this year. So we will be very busy in the next period to work on the Constitution and to prepare the next phase, leading into the twenty-first century.

EIR: The other big event is the implementation of the 1997

peace agreement with the different forces in the South. What is the status of this right now, and are you confident that this will be fully implemented, despite the fact that John Garang still does not want to be part of it?

Ghazi: I am fairly optimistic, because the agreement addresses all the concerns and ambitions and interests of the southern political forces. The fact that John Garang has not yet joined the agreement relates to some tribal differences between himself and other major tribes in the South. Now he sees the agreement as one between the government and rival tribes in the South, but the content of the agreement itself is quite sound and appealing to southern political forces, so that is the main point of strength.

The agreement is in the process of being implemented, the chairman of the Coordinating Council has been appointed and half of the members of the Council have been appointed—actually not appointed, but have been made known; they were *Walis* [governors] in the southern states. Unfortunately, we had this setback when Kerobino, one of the signators of the agreement, mutinied against the armed forces in the South, but the other political forces and other factions are still committed to the agreement and we expect complete implementation of the agreement very soon.

EIR: Could you give us a sense of the evolution of the economy in the last period? You see an improvement; do you see certain targets that you want to reach?

Ghazi: Over the past eight years, we have lifted the country from a growth rate of 1% to a growth rate of 11.4%, and now it has come down to 7.5%. That gives you an idea of the goals of development in this country. We have been doing it all on our own, without outside help, but now, with the oil production being developed—we have just seen the signing of one of the major agreements on projects with international companies—we expect Sudan's economic future to change dramatically and quantitatively in the coming period, and that will put us in a different perspective. Coupled with the fact that Sudan has embarked also on an ambitious social development program, development banking on the human being, which is evident from the fact that we have 30 universities—compared to any other African country, that is quite a big number—I think in the first decade of the next century, we'll see a much better Sudan.

EIR: Will you revive the Jonglei Canal project?

Ghazi: That is in our thinking, and the whole idea has to be rekindled, the whole idea has to be rethought, together with the Egyptian government, provided that full peace is reached in the South.

EIR: There obviously is an improvement in Egyptian-Sudanese relations; what do you expect from this?

Ghazi: There have been a number of positive signs in the past few months, we still maintain the will and we believe that

in Egypt they maintain the same will, and I think that it's just a matter of putting things in place and discussing details on how to normalize relations; not only to normalize relations, but also to embark on a new stage of integration and cooperation, economically, politically, and in other aspects.

Interview: Mohammad Sa'eed Nua'mani

An Iranian view of Sudan's achievement

For the past four years, Mr. Nua'mani has been the representative of Iran's Imam Khamenei in Sudan and East Africa. He is now the deputy chairman of the Culture and Islamic Relations Organization, which oversees all cultural and Islamic affairs outside Iran. He was interviewed on Feb. 21 in Khartoum.

EIR: What is your evaluation of National Congress here in Sudan over the past week?

Nua'mani: Of course, our view is that each country has its own conditions and situations that are specific to that country. Generally, it is not necessarily the case, that whatever might be undertaken in one country, should be applied in every other country, because there are technical and general issues involved here, such as participation in political matters, and the participation of the people in decision-making, in making its own future, according, of course, to rules and foundations. These issues differ from one country to another. The principal basis here is participation. The principal basis is democratic consultation. But, democracy in the form existing in the West does not necessarily fit for the East, or for the Islamic countries, for example.

While we reject dictatorship and reject despotism and oppression, we say that the practice in each country depends on its conditions and situation. What we saw here, for example, was a beautiful thing, in conformity, of course, with the conditions of Sudan. The ruler and the people sit together and consult and talk with each other. We found representatives of women, men, and youth, and from different regions, talking about their issues, their conditions and opinions, in full freedom. We regard this as a unique value.

EIR: Iranian President Khatami called for a dialogue of civilizations and a dialogue with America, during a televised interview. What kind of response do you think is necessary from the United States and from the West? What would be an appropriate response?

Nua'mani: As a matter of fact, Mr. Khatami's idea is an Islamic idea, emerging from an Islamic viewpoint. We see the world as one family, created, as God said, of "peoples and tribes, so that you may interrelate." And within the one family, there should be a dialogue. Thus, the American people are a member of this human family. The existing problems are not between us and the American people; these are problems between us and the *ruling authority*. For that reason, there have been actually certain problems that prevented the existence of contact between us and the American people. Among these problems, for example, take the propaganda [against Iran]. There are certain Zionist circles that are forming public opinion and influencing public opinion in the United States. It is they who created the barriers between us and the American people. And Mr. Khatami wanted to remove these barriers, and reach the thought and opinion of the American people directly.

EIR: What do you think the consequences in the Islamic world would be, if there were a military strike against Iraq?

Nua'mani: We bear in mind that Iran is currently the chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. A call came from the secretary general of the OIC, Mr. Izziddin Al-Iraqi, who came and met with Mr. Khatami and the officials there [in Iran], and he was assigned the mission of finding the coordination necessary for establishing a unified Islamic stance, because in general we are, first, against aggression against any country, especially as Iraq is a member of the OIC. Moreover, we have other neighbors in a very sensitive region of the world, and if, God forbid, a catastrophe takes place in this region, it will have effects on the whole world. Most of the oil is located in this region, most of the oil the world needs is in this region.

We also want to add that if something takes place, it will not be against the regime only, but also, the lives of innocent women, elderly people, and children will be lost. From an Islamic and human standpoint, we are against any kind of tension. Therefore, we are against any kind of aggression, and we do not see that the U.S. alone has the right to implement what it wants on the world, despite the fact that we have our own thoughts about the right to veto and the permanent members of the United Nations [Security Council]. That is, we have our own thoughts about the fact that there should be any permanent members at all, and that they should have the right to veto. But despite that, even among these five members, there is disagreement. The world is in no need of a custodian, especially if this custodian's weapon is force only. The world cannot be run and administered through the logic of power.

For that reason, we said from the beginning and repeat now: As in one family, the world, the greater family, should have dialogue and consultation. God, praise be to Him, gave man reason and logic, and this should be the tool of removing problems, not force.