

National Independence Day of United States of America

Date: 4th July 2012

Time: 18:30pm to 20:30pm

Venue: Embassy of the United States of America- Juba

Remarks by: Hon. Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin
Minister of Information and Broadcasting
Official Spokesperson of the Government of the Republic of
South Sudan

Your Excellency, Susan Page, the United States Ambassador to the Republic of South Sudan

Your Excellencies, the Presidential Advisors, Ministers and Governors here present,

Your Excellencies, Head of Commissions, Hon. Chairpersons of Specialized Committees of National Legislative Assembly and the Council of States,

Hon. Members of Assemblies, National and States,

Your Excellencies, members of Diplomatic Community, the Ambassadors, UN Systems and the Development Partners present on this important occasion,

Your Excellencies, Invited Distinguished Guests,

My Fellow Countrymen and Women here present,

Our friends, Fellow Americans attending tonight on the occasion of this great day of Liberty,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening!

With your permission, Ambassador Suzan Page, I would like to make brief remarks on this important occasion for the celebration of the United States of America Independence Day, the 4th of July 2012.

I am delighted to join you this evening here in Juba, the capital of the Republic of South Sudan, especially on the occasion of American Independence of the 4th of July, 1776. This is to celebrate this great day of freedom for the American people.

Indeed, on behalf of H.E President Salva Kiir Mayardit, the Government and the People of the Republic of South Sudan; we send a thousand congratulations and best wishes to H.E President Barack Obama, the Senate, the Congress and to all the people of United States.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was two hundred and thirty six years ago today when American patriots decided to make the fateful step to break free from the yolk of British Colonial rule and declare a new country founded on liberty. Your victorious struggle to oppose tyranny all those years ago has served as an inspiration to the world for all those who have suffered oppression through the ages. The sentiment of American patriots was represented in the speech of Lawyer Patrick Henry, a delegate from Virginia attending the Continental Congress during the Virginia Convention in 1774. Delegate Henry had proposed an armed resistance in the form of a militia to fight the British colonial rule in order to protect rights and liberties for the American people; and he had this to say “ **Give me Liberty, or give me Death**” These strong words were echoed through the hearts in all the long years of struggle. With this revolutionary favour the **Continental Army** which for us today will be called a guerilla army fought for the Liberation of the American people.

The Commander-in-Chief was George Washington who became the first President of Liberated United States of America.

Ambassador Page, it is true that nations had broken away before 1776. But the American Independence was not to be found in the flags waving or the muskets firing but, on the words of one of your **Founding Fathers, John Adams “in the minds and hearts of the people”**. Yours was a revolution of ideas, independence not just ending tyranny but for liberty, for the historic statement that “**all men are created equal**”. Indeed, a nation conceived in liberty and democracy and to be administered on the principle of, “**Government of the people, by the people and for the people**”. **President Abraham Lincoln.**

Like you, Your Excellency, we have become a free and independent South Sudan which is proving both exhilarating despite all its challenges. Just as the patriots of Concord, Bunker Hill and Saratoga felt.

Today, we are fully an independent state that is about to celebrate its independence on the 9th of July 2012. Indeed a new State that is just one year old. We have now become first class citizens in a country of our own. Incidentally, the lesson we need to learn from your history, the neighbors and the rest of the world are clear to us. **That independence is not just one day, important as it is, but a fierce and urgent battle that needs to be fought always.** Independence from one's oppressors is only worth the sacrifice if it inspires citizens to fight against oppression wherever it is. **As Martin Luther King Said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".**

We the people of South Sudan need to commit ourselves to principles of Freedom and Liberty. It means to ensure everyman and woman maintain the right to elect or reject their leaders in a free and fair voting; to fight for the right of every citizen to pursue their interest without the over mighty interference of the State and reject any abuse of State power. Our independence is a people's quest for dignity and freedom. It is our monumental achievement to build and maintain a free society.

Your Excellencies, the citizens of South Sudan are out to see that all their problems including the challenges are resolved in an atmosphere of peace and within the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In that spirit, the Republic of South Sudan Delegation is engaged in the AU High Implementation Panel Facilitation Peace talks within the context of the **African Road Map based on the requirements of the Security Council Resolution 2046 (2012).**

We are committed to negotiate with the Sudan under the auspices of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel and determined to resolve all the outstanding issues within the time frames as required by the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. The important elements within the road map to be resolved include demarcation of borders, finding amicable solution on all the disputed areas including Panthou (Heiglig) and Abyei. The Republic of South Sudan welcomes the commitment to deploy monitors to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) and we urge this to be done as soon as possible.

Your Excellency we urge the Security Council to call on the Government of Sudan to complete withdrawal of its forces by removing all its oil police in accordance

with **Security Council Resolution 2046 and the 20 June 2011 Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for security in the Abyei area**. There is need to resolve all the rest of outstanding issues of security, oil, citizenship and enhance the viability of the two states; Sudan and South Sudan within tangible policies of cooperation and good neighbourliness.

It is important that the Security Council expresses and reiterated grave concern about the situation in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile and Dafur States of Sudan. Our Region needs peace and Sudan must be held accountable for waging war against its own citizens that is contributing to the worsening humanitarian situation resulting into an influx of a large number of Sudanese refugees into the territory of South Sudan.

Your Excellencies, since independence, the Republic of South Sudan has fully taken responsibility for the safety and security of our citizens. In fact, the continued principal threat to international peace and security in the region are the outstanding CPA issues and the tensions with the Republic of Sudan, and in particular their recent continued military aggression against South Sudan, including repeated civilian aerial bombardments inside our sovereign territory.

Therefore, it is our view that the situation on which the determination for Chapter VII was made has since progressed and it is no longer appropriate to renew the mandate on the basis of chapter VII as stipulated in the UNSC Resolution 1996 (2011).

There is no doubt that since the establishment of UNMISS; the mission has done a commendable job to support and contribute towards the realization of peace and security in our country. The ethnic violence through cattle rustling in Jonglei State has now dropped by 90%. Indeed, my Government acknowledges with appreciation the symbiotic partnership which has tremendously enhanced our efforts of building **our new nation**. It is important that the position of our Government will be given serious consideration during the debate for the renewal of UNMISS mandate.

Your Excellency, we are aware of the great issues of concern to your government as a super power. These are urgent and important matters of concern and responsibility. This is a period of world economies at large threatened by a looming recession as noted in Europe, America and Asia. The threats to world peace by international terrorism and Islamic extremist including ferocious wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, the ethnic wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali

where “**Qaida**” is engaged in Heritage destruction in “**Timbukutu**”. The same is seen by the acts of **Shabaab** in mayhem of atrocities in Somalia and Kenya. We are also reminded of “**Boko Haram**” suicidal attacks on Christian Churches in Nigeria.

This is not to forget the positive role of the African Union Force composed of Uganda, South Sudan, DRC and Central African Republic to tackle the terrorist attacks of the LRA in our region. We thank the American government for giving logistical support towards the elimination of LRA menace in our countries. We welcome and applaud the United Nation Security Council Resolution 1816 and 1838 that authorizes the use of force to combat the vice of increased terrorist incidences of piracy along Somalia coastline that threatens international trade and humanitarian assistance deliveries to the suffering people of Somalia. We congratulate Kenya and Ethiopia for the role in the front line to contain this imminent threat in Somalia.

Yet again, Your Excellency’s commitment to put African issues on top of your agenda is highly appreciated. Your logistical support towards the eradication of LRA menace in our region is highly welcomed and applauded.

We thank the American various governments and people for their relentless engagement and support for the full implementation of the CPA in spirit and letter. The US government through the USAID has been working towards brokering peace and creating necessary conditions for sustaining peace since 2004 and this in partnership with the SPLM. The USAID is one of the international aid agencies to provide substantial peace dividend resources for health, education and agricultural resources.

Your government has enhanced the capacity of our government institutions through capacity building. These programmes are now at advanced stage and satisfactorily diversified with the Republic of South Sudan plans towards the realization of the (MDGs) Millennium Development Goals. These programmes adequately cover a multiple of sectors, focusing on creating an convenient environment for development, enhances opportunities for renewed hope and livelihoods for our communities in every state across the Republic of South Sudan.

We appreciate the US government financial support for infrastructure essential for economic development, particularly the 192 Km Juba-Nimule paved road construction. Also the 186 Km Yambio–Tombura road rehabilitation. Previously, you did support financially the census, elections, referendum, schools

rehabilitation, donor funding for development, investments, support for CPA, governance and democracy activities, public administration, political parties development, health, infrastructure, multi-donor trust funds actions and funds for development and recovery programmes. The US-government has also supported **anti-corruption measures** both **financially** and **capacity building** for **efficiency of their work**.

I must say, Your Excellency, Ambassador Page that the support of your government has been total and unwavering. You have been with us during the CPA as well as during the crisis. However, challenges remain and we hope to resolve them together and in solidarity. We need to pay attention to wealth and revenue sourcing in order to avoid the threats that can paralyse our credit worthiness and many others. This requires of our friends to assist with budget financial support and development loan on easy and affordable terms.

Your Excellencies, the Leadership and the people of South Sudan have surmounted the challenges of Interim Period from 2005, walking through the challenges of democratic transformation, census, multi-party elections, Institutional and Capacity building, formation of Executive, Legislative and Judicial structures. Here we are today with a functioning government administration, with SPLA and security sectors transforming towards good governance and the rule of law. Yes, we do have problems but, Ladies and Gentlemen, **“Rome was not built in one day”**. All I can say as a citizen of South Sudan is that we are managing despite the problems along the way and one is proud to say in all humility that we shall succeed in our efforts and endeavors to deliver a viable and democratic state to our people. Indeed, like the artist, Billy Ocean who says, **“When the going gets tough, the tough gets going”**

Your Excellencies, we have heard from our friends and foes alike that we should have not closed down our oil since it constitutes more than 90% of national revenue. But tell us, what options are there when the President, Parliament and Government of Sudan took serious steps to block the export of our oil for the International market? Let us think for a moment and reflect on the actions of Khartoum that led to the close down of the oil :

- 1) Preventing ships loaded with two million barrels of the Republic of South Sudan oil to leave Port Sudan for the international market.
- 2) More ships coming in to load more oil at the port were prevented not to enter to dock so as to load more oil belonging to the RSS.

This resulted in incurring more costs to be paid to these ships. This led to republic of South Sudan loosing USD 800 million of our revenue

- 3) The Government of Sudan ordered the oil companies to load oil which belongs to the Republic of South Sudan into ships invited by Sudan Government to sell into the International market. This was carried out with security threats from the Government of Sudan.
- 4) President Bashiir said that he would continue to take the oil of the Republic of South Sudan without any consultations unendingly and orders the closure of its borders with RSS their only big market for their goods and finished products.
- 5) The Government of Sudan insisted to charge \$36 a barrel for the transit fees. There is nowhere in the world with similar circumstances where a transit fees charges even reach a dollar per barrel of oil. Chad and Azerbaijan are known examples.

In fact, the Republic of South Sudan was pushed to the wall. We had already lost 98% of our oil revenue because we were not receiving any revenue from our oil. The question is do you allow our oil to be taken by Khartoum or is it better to close down our oil until we agree on a commercial rate for a transit fees agreed to by both parties. Indeed, any sensible person knows the answer. You keep your oil until you get an offer you can afford to pay for a transit fees that relates to the best business practices. To make matters worse the Khartoum Government declared war on the Republic of South Sudan and classified us enemy No. one for Sudan.

In the light of the list of our main revenue due to oil shut down the Government of The Republic of South Sudan has put in place measures to mitigate for the loss of this important resource. The Republic of South Sudan has put in place an Austerity Budget for 2012-2013. Two important agreements have been signed for the building of two alternative oil pipe lines i.e. LAPSSET with Kenya and Ethiopia and a second pipe line through Ethiopia and Djibouti. The Government is already engaged and committed to see the realization of an alternative oil pipeline through Ethiopia and Djibouti. The Government has also initiated the possibility of building two refineries for both Nile Blend and Dar crude. This is to meet national needs in the petroleum products.

The Government has improved the collection of non-oil revenue by nearly 500%. The government is also working in procuring development loans for major projects as well as budget support from some of our friends. Also our reserves have been our financial safety valve. The government is working day and night to surmount some of these enormous challenges. We have achieved a lot for the last seven years and you can see some success and progress. We do appreciate the assistance of our friends and International Partners in resolving some of these challenges. We do have good record in having succeeded in establishing successful institutions of democratic governance, human rights forums, gender balance, religious harmony and tolerance with reconciliatory policies with various armed groups, ceasefire adherence and resolutions of conflicts internally and externally.

Ladies and Gentlemen, from July 9th 2011 until today July 2012 a year of our independence, we can say that we have scored well in the management of all challenges in our route. We have successfully conducted an internationally free and fair referendum resulting in a peaceful announcement of our independence on the 9th of July 2011 in stability and celebrations. This was done in an atmosphere of constitutionally elected democratic governments both at National and States levels. The institutions of governments are successfully running and being administrated within the rule of law. We have progressed in the areas of trade, industry and investment.

Improvements in education, health and reconciliatory policies of peaceful resolution of conflicts. We have graduated from the Interim Constitution to transitional constitution which will form the supreme law of our country. We have established between 25 – 35 diplomatic missions and have joined the membership of very important world organizations making the Republic of South Sudan a new member in the family of civilized nations. The Republic of South Sudan refused to be dragged into a senseless war with Sudan.

In fact, we have proved the prophets of doom together with doom merchants wrong with their erroneous propaganda that South Sudan was at the brink of an ethnic ware fare and that we could not govern ourselves and concluded that South Sudan would be a failed state. All this has turned out not to be true.

Your Excellencies, we do recognize the complexity of the challenges facing our country; and sometimes operating together with some of the reluctant and indecisive multiplicity of international actors and who are worriedly alarmed by the enormity of the challenges; our advice is that, they should support our efforts

with confidence and urge full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement outstanding issues.

In fact three months into our independence we protected the territorial integrity of our country and resolutely repulsed the invading forces of Sudan and their allied militias. We stood firm to protect and assert our sovereignty. Here we are today running our country without oil money and no African Spring. I am here also to remind you of the Arab Spring threat to our neighbor.

Your Excellency, my government has also demonstrated its determination, capacity and resilience to address all challenges including corruption. H.E President Salva Kiir Mayardit has taken very serious measures in order to curtail the incidences of any rampant corruption in the Republic. The Anti-corruption measures are being coordinated with authorities in the Ministry of Justice and Anti-corruption Commission. The Parliament has given the Anti-corruption commission the power of arrest and persecution. The government is determined to monitor and persecute those involved in incidences of embezzlement or misappropriation of public funds. The Auditor General has been directed to audit all government institutions and various government institutions have internal auditors to conduct on the spot audit of government accounts.

There is also security and public awareness campaign on the issue of corruption. Already 5000 forms have been issued to all senior public servants starting from Director Generals up to Constitutional post holders to declare their assets publicly including polygamous individuals to declare up to four wives as shown in the forms. May be to find out the assets owned by the madams.

Indeed, the President has taken positive and practical steps to instute see that corrupt officials and individuals are identified and legal measures instated against the wrong doers. Equally, the clean up of ghost names is proceeding together with laws of contracts tender which will guarantee transparency and fairness in awarding contracts.

The Anti-corruption Commission is enhancing recovery of misappropriated funds and which is proceeding unabated as directed by the President.

The President is making clear his resolve in fighting corruption and with his motto of, "**Zero Tolerance to Corruption**". As a young country we are determined to nip this vice in the bud in a robust manner.

At this juncture and once again, Your Excellency, we are all reminded of the successful American Revolutionary war (1775 – 1783), and which is known as the American war of independence. This led to formation of the second Continental Congress and the Continental army which was commanded by George Washington as the Commander-in-Chief. This was truly an armed-struggle that resulted in the Declaration of Independence for a new nation, the United States of America on the 4th of July 1776.

In fact, the war was a culmination of the political struggle from the premises of being a people's Revolution. No doubt, the Treaty of Paris in 1783 ended the war and recognized the sovereignty of the United States as an independent territory. Your Fore Fathers quest for freedom, building and maintaining a free society is, indeed an important American heritage. This was a nation created by the pen i.e. ideas as well as the sword. Indeed, American Fore Fathers of George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln and not to forget John F. Kennedy concluded with Barack Obama; what a role call of American Leadership.

Yes, the Declaration of Independence – the Constitution – the Bill of Rights – and the Gettysburg Address by Abraham Lincoln “**that all men are created equally**”. This is great heritage for the citizen of America to know and cherish.

Your Excellency, we as a people born out of a struggle, we share policies of respect to human rights and full commitment to democratic principles. Our friendship will always grow between the Republic of South Sudan and the United States of America.

Your Excellency, to us as South Sudanese and in our new nation; want to combat oppression, disease and poverty that affect our land. We are ready to work with our international partners to ensure the fruits of our labours and the resources of our country and to be shared by many across the country and not the few. These are constant problems which will be provided by only a commitment to preserve our country's rights and traditions, to protect our borders and to ensure that our citizens are free and able to pursue happiness. The goodness and beauty of democracy is in its philosophy of giving the citizens the right to choose or, change their leaders at a time of their choosing.

In order to do this, we still need to call on the help of many of you here and back in the USA, who have already done so much to make our independence reality. We thank your administration for making South Sudan a friend and foreign policy