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By D NARA Date 3/21/8

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SUBJECT: Egyptian Liaison Office in the Sudan

**1954-12-8, Armai, ESY Ph office**

When Radio Cairo refers to the Egyptian Liaison Office in Khartoum it is referring to Mekteb El Ittasall. This office of liaison is not the same as the liaison offices maintained by the United States, French and Ethiopian governments. Originally it was a sort of public relations department attached to the Egyptian Army in the Sudan and was called a public relations office. Recently its name has been changed and it has been physically transferred to the office of the Egyptian Economic Expert in Khartoum. There is therefore at the present time no such thing as an Egyptian Liaison Office in the sense of the one our Government maintains.

At the same time, however, the Egyptian Government has made tentative approaches through the British Embassy in Cairo to establish a regular Liaison Office in the Sudan. The Governor General has resisted this request, pointing out that legally he is the official representative in the Sudan of both the United Kingdom and Egypt. J. Drinkall, First Secretary of the British Embassy in Cairo, recently put this whole problem to W.H.T. Luce, Advisor to the Governor General on Constitutional and External Affairs, who emphasized that he was revealing a matter that the Governor General considered secret and pointed out that in his view the British Embassy in Cairo was overwilling to make a concession to an intemperate Egyptian demand. As he detailed the history of Egyptian representation in the Sudan he pointed out that the Egyptian Economic Expert's office was established in Khartoum as a result of the 1936 treaty. When the United Kingdom Trade Commission office was established in Khartoum in 1953 the Governor General considered that this squared the matter of representation of Egypt and the United Kingdom. Luce and the Governor General now feel that for the Egyptians to establish a new office and call it a liaison office would leave the Governor General's office open to the charge that it was failing to maintain a neutral atmosphere. Furthermore, since the transition period is well along, it is not felt that there is any real need for an Egyptian Liaison Office. Abdul Latif Ezzat, Egyptian Economic Expert in the Sudan, is, apart from the Egyptian representative on the Governor General's Commission, the only Egyptian official who receives the same diplomatic immunity rendered the foreign Liaison Officers in the Sudan. He is not a member of the Egyptian Foreign Service but has been detailed from the Ministry of Economics. He confided to me the other day that his government has requested that his title

J.Sweeney:am

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Desp. No. 1118  
From Cairo

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUDAN AGENCY

The Sudan Agency was established in about 1902 when the military administration set up after the re-occupation of the Sudan in 1898 began to take on the form of ordinary civil government. As the re-occupation had been mainly organized in the headquarters of the Egyptian Army, and as the Governor General continued to hold for many years the post of Sirdar of the Egyptian Army (equivalent to Chief of Staff) the Sudan Agency to begin with had offices in the Cairo Headquarters of the Egyptian Army. The first Sudan Agents were officers who were appointed as "Sudan Agent and Director of Intelligence." When the work of the Sudan's civil departments increased, it became necessary to separate the two offices. The first civilian, a man who had spent many years in the civil administration in the Sudan, was appointed Sudan Agent in 1922 and the Agency was moved to a separate office in the middle of the town.

From the time of its formation, the Agency's duties were defined for it by the position of the Sudan with regard to Egypt, and the political connection between the two countries. Until about 1910 nearly all persons travelling to and from the Sudan had to pass through Cairo, and the Agency arranged their journeys. The Governor-General exchanged communications with the British Government, represented by the British High Commissioner in Cairo, and the Egyptian Government through the Sudan Agency. At a lower level, the Sudan Agent did considerable business with the Egyptian Government departments, with other official agencies in Cairo, and with commercial firms. Many of the Sudan Agency Staff had first hand knowledge of the Sudan. This and the flow of reports from the Sudan enabled them to answer all sorts of questions about the country.

Changing conditions have naturally added new duties, and reduced others. The number of Sudanese in Egypt has increased steadily. There are probably some 50,000 there now, mostly working as domestic servants, but including some hundreds of students who have failed to qualify for admission to the Sudan's limited high schools. Many of these Sudanese need the Agency's services. Over five hundred Egyptians who have retired from the Sudan Government's service now draw their pensions from the Agency each month. The growing prosperity of the Sudan has made necessary the formation of a Commercial Office. An Information Office has also been organized to spread knowledge of political and cultural progress in the Sudan. A Passports and Travel Office issues visas, travel and identity documents, and arranges bookings and accommodation on Sudan Government rail, steamer and air services. The Agency recruits a few professional or technical men each year for the Sudan's growing public services, particularly for the Ministry of Education. In addition the Agency remains the most convenient link for formal or informal communications between branches of the Sudan Government and Egyptian, British and international offices in Cairo.

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The Sudan Agency has never been directly concerned with the discussions between the British and Egyptian Governments over the political future of the Sudan. The discussions have naturally affected it indirectly to some extent.

In recent years critics of the Sudan Government have urged the closing of the Agency and the transfer of its functions to Egyptian Government Offices. At the same time there are Sudanese who would like to see the Agency become a diplomatic mission on the level of those of Ethiopia and the Arab States.

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