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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

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SUBJECT:

Egyptian Plans for Domination of the Sudan
954-12-8, Azhari, Egypt, Plans

In a depressed mood Hussein Zulficar Sabry, the Egyptian member of the Governor General's Commission, confided to me that he has been shocked of all authority in the direction of Egyptian policy in the Sudan. Gamal Abdel Nasser has ruled for the time being that Major Salah Salem shall direct Egyptian policy in the Sudan. There are two extremes of opinion in Egypt about the future of the Sudan. At one extreme, led by Salah Salem, it is believed that by purchasing influence and Members of Parliament, Egypt can obtain control of the Sudan. This wing has thus far controlled Egyptian policy. At the other extreme, led by Zulficar, it is believed that Egypt should accept the inevitability of an independent Sudan and arrange for friendly cooperation between the two countries in matters of water sharing, defense and economic affairs. Under this policy Egypt would spend no money to influence Sudanese opinion but would cooperate with a close neighbor. In the middle between these two opinions is Gamal Abdel Nasser. At the moment he has accepted the RCC decision that Salah Salem's policy shall prevail. When this decision was made known to him Zulficar at once submitted his resignation. Gamal Abdel Nasser sent for him and after a very long session persuaded Zulficar that he should withdraw his resignation and cooperate by carrying out his duties as the Egyptian member of the Governor General's Commission as his resignation would be too revealing of a difference of opinion in Egyptian thinking. Although Gamal Abdel Nasser is committed for the time being to the Salah Salem policy of "buy and rule", he is by no means convinced that this is the best policy and Zulficar has been given a tenuous assurance that if Salah Salem is repudiated that he, Zulficar, will be given charge of Egyptian policy toward the Sudan. However, he is not optimistic about such an opportunity arising.

In his long talk with Gamal Abdel Nasser at the time he tried to resign from the Governor General's Commission, and on many previous opportunities, Zulficar has insisted that Salah Salem's policy will result in trouble in the Sudan. Trouble in the Sudan is the last thing that Egypt wants, as in this trouble the danger of disrupting the Nile flow of water to Egypt is too great. Furthermore, Salah Salem is identifying Egyptian policy with the most venal elements in the Sudanese body politic. If Salah Salem goes ahead with his plan to purchase Egyptian-Sudanese unity through bribery and intrigue, Zulficar prophesied that there will be a solidification of Sudanese nationalism that will have as its goal the eradication of all Egyptian influence in the Sudan.

J Sweeney:am

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Zulficar believes that Gamal Abdel Nasser agrees with him fundamentally, but is not at the moment in a position to move. Furthermore, Zulficar also counts on the eventual support of Gamal Salem (Salah's brother).

During the past two months Zulficar has not seen Salah Salem more than a total of two hours. He has had no voice in policy or planning with regard to the Sudan. His chief assistant in the Sudan (General Sofwat) has been removed. Personally concerned that Salah Salem will try to destroy him in some way, Zulficar has a very healthy regard for Salah Salem's cleverness as an intriguer. He takes some hope from the fact that Gamal Abdel Nasser and Salah Salem have differed before and he believes they will differ again and that Nasser will triumph. Throughout this long talk in which Zulficar was frequently on the point of tears he made the repeated point that what kept him in this impossible position was his personal loyalty to Gamal Abdel Nasser as he was convinced that Nasser, and Nasser alone, was the key to the salvation of Egypt.

In the few days that he has been in the Sudan Zulficar has already accurately sized up the ground swell of pro-independence feeling. He is aware that Egyptian prestige has been tremendously lowered by the deposition of Neguib and the chicanery of Salah Salem. He is aware that the NUP leaders now which of their colleagues are in Egyptian pay. He is also aware of Mirghani Hamza's role in the pro-independence movement within the NUP but he does not trust Mirghani Hamza, as he insists that Mirghani Hamza only wants personal power and prestige and is not after the welfare of the Sudanese. (This is at variance with USLO's opinion which is that although stubborn, Mirghani Hamza is a Sudanese patriot.) He believes Major Salem may make the mistake of placing too much confidence in wily, devious old Sayed Ali El Mirghani whom he believes would turn on Salah Salem or anyone else if he thought it personally advantageous. Having correctly assessed the current situation, Zulficar nevertheless believes that Major Salem is clever enough to bribe and intrigue his way to a form of Egyptian domination of the Sudan. But he is adamant that if Salah Salem succeeds in securing this kind of unity, there will be serious trouble and the basis of genuine Egyptian-Sudanese cooperation will be destroyed for generations.

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cc: Cairo, London

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