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FROM : USLO Khartoum
 TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
 REF :

February 25, 1954
 DATE

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SUBJECT: Tension in Juba

During the past week a disturbing series of rumors and semi-official reports have reached Khartoum about tension in Juba, the capital of Equatoria Province. The situation is now calm but since the British administration are fearful of trouble in the South as a protest against Northern and Egyptian domination and the Government is fearful of disturbance in the South as an allegedly British manufactured plot, the Juba disturbance is reported as fully as the information here in Khartoum permits.

According to the first reports the Bari tribe were disturbed by the visit of three Egyptian military planes and allegedly gathered for an invasion of the city of Juba. Some Arabic language newspapers in Khartoum alleged that the reason that the Bari tribe gathered was because it was incited to do so by the British District Commissioner in Juba, Peter EVANS-JONES, a particular target of NUP criticism. NUP Government officials intimated to the reporting officer that they seriously believe the British administration might be stirring up trouble. Major Saleh SALEM's statement that he had always believed the only alternative for the British to overcome their poor position in the Sudan was to stir up grudges among the Southern tribes under the influence of British administrators was widely quoted in the local press.

Northern merchants in Juba protested by telegram to Khartoum and in person to the Governor in Juba that they were not being given adequate police protection and stated bluntly that they were concerned over the likelihood of depredations by the Bari tribe and they would have to close their shops and protect themselves the best way they could. These Northern merchants also implied that the British District Commissioner in Juba was at the bottom of this native unrest. At this point DAK DEI, one of the Southern members of the cabinet who was in Juba appealed by telegram to the cabinet to convene a board of inquiries to fly to Juba at once and investigate. The cabinet, through the Prime Minister in his role as Minister of the Interior, requested a report from the Governor of Equatoria Province. In his reply Governor NIGHTINGALE of Equatoria Province admitted the occurrence of assemblages and a certain amount of strain, but described the situation as being light and magnified by rumors. He stated officially that at the moment quiet prevailed. Dak Dei then sent another cable

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to the cabinet which differed from the Governor of Equatoria's report and in this telegram Dak Dei insisted that a state of tension prevailed. A report circulated in Khartoum that Dak Dei had been insulted by local tribesmen and that in order to protect the Southern Minister Dr. Abu AKER, recently appointed to the Sudanization Committee, flourished a revolver and prevented the Minister from being assaulted. The cabinet then decided to send Sayed Ali Abdel Rahman EL AMIN and Nur El DIN, who hold the positions of Minister of Justice and Minister of Public Works, respectively, to Juba by air to obtain first hand information. Upon their arrival in Juba these two cabinet ministers held conferences with the Governor and met with the local Northern merchants. Their first action was to state publicly that the Government would maintain order and that all servants of the Government, meaning the Governor of Equatoria and the District Commissioner of Juba, would be held responsible for public safety. The two cabinet members approved of the Governor of Equatoria's decision to bring in a contingent of the Sudan Defense Force. Following this statement the two Cabinet Ministers then made a tour, one going to the west as far as Amadi and the other going to the east as far as Kapoeta. Although the Ministers were expected to stay only a day or two, they have stayed for almost a week and arrived back in Khartoum on February 24.

Palace officials in Khartoum have informed the reporting officer that the situation is quiet but tension remains. Until an official report is issued, it is impossible to ascribe specific blame for this occurrence. It is a fact that the Bari tribesmen did assemble. According to a young pro-NUP civil servant who is a Northern Sudanese working in Juba, who arrived in Khartoum two days ago, the basis of the trouble was that Dak Dei, the cabinet minister, talked to an assemblage of Bari chiefs and the chiefs complained that the NUP cabinet had appointed a Nuer, a Shilluk and a Dinka to the cabinet but no Bari, and that this was unfair. Furthermore, they accused Dak Dei and the other Southern members of the cabinet of having sold out to the NUP. This accusation started a heated argument between Dak Dei and the Bari chiefs and according to this informant was the reason for the tension. Since the informant is pro-NUP and would normally support the theory that the British were at the root of this, his story sounds plausible and has been partially confirmed by reports which advisors to the Governor General have received.

British administrators claim that this incident is simply an expression of dissatisfaction on the part of Southern tribesmen with the new Northern Sudanese Government. The Egyptian member of the Governor General's Commission, Group Captain Hussein Zulficar SABRY, insisted to the reporting officer that this whole incident was manufactured by the British, specifically, the District Commissioner in Juba, to embarrass the NUP Government. He further claims that the British arranged for 4,000 troops from Uganda to stand ready on the Uganda-Sudan border, but no one else in Khartoum has any knowledge of this claim.

Regardless of the real reason for this disturbance it is generally agreed that this tension will serve as an impetus to the NUP Government to accelerate Sudanization of the administration in the South. It is believed that the

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From _____By *J* NARA Date *3/2/84*

District Commissioner in Juba will be transferred. Whether this will solve the problem remains to be seen. The NUP Government claims that if Northern Sudanese are put in positions of administrative responsibility in the South the situation will be solved. British administrators however, and some Southerners in Khartoum insist that British administrators must be left until Southerners themselves can take over. However, there are not enough trained Southerners to take over the general administration of the South at the present time. Several Southerners have insisted that the problem in the South is not Sudanization of the civil service but "Southernization" of the civil service. Any hint of tension in the South has an extremely disturbing effect on the NUP Government and they are doing their best to take steps to conciliate Southern opinion.

Joseph Sweency

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cc: London
Cairo

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