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FROM : USLO, Khartoum

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TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON. March 11, 1954 DATE

REF : Khartoum 192, March 8, 1954

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SUBJECT:

Chief Justice and the Future of the Sudan

In a long conversation last night the Chief Justice of the Sudan, W. O'B. Lindsay, told me of his apprehension concerning the future of the Sudan. Thoughtful and somewhat legalistic, the Chief Justice is supposed to remain above politics, but, in fact, he is a key advisor to the Governor General because his views are widely respected. He emphasized the necessity for protecting the secrecy of his views.

1. Unless the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement is modified (by giving the Governor General unfettered power in an emergency, allowing the British administration to stay longer than three years if necessary, and allowing more British troops in the Sudan) he believes there will be a civil war.
2. The Sudanese would prefer civil war to allowing the British to administer the country.
3. Britain must get out of the Sudan as a matter of principle, there can be no turning back.
4. Full British occupation would be a retrogressive step.
5. If the situation continues to deteriorate, the British Government is considering the possibility of complete evacuation -- meaning the British would move out completely and leave the Sudanese to settle their problems themselves free from outside, i. e., Egyptian, influence. He was so serious about this possibility, which he claimed Selwyn Lloyd was discussing with the Cabinet, that he asked if I wished to avail myself of facilities for my family and staff to leave in the event the British carry through this evacuation plan.
6. Although evacuation is the thinking if situation deteriorates, the public British line, until a definite decision of action is made, will continue to be adherence to the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement.
7. If all goes well, British will continue to muddle through.

JSweeney/JSweeney

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Comment: This interview is difficult to evaluate from Khartoum. I am convinced of Lindsay's honesty. Selwyn Lloyd made no reference to such a possibility when I talked to him (see USLOTel 50, March 11, 1954), but conceivably might have been hinting at it in comment on possibility of repudiating the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement. If British should pull out I think all the present evidence would indicate a chaotic situation.

Joseph Sweeney

Joseph Sweeney
United States Liaison Officer

cc: Cairo
London

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