

Authority AMURK 112  
 By DA NARA Date 3/27/84

745W.00/3-954

FROM : USLO, Khartoum

BIS 195

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

March 9, 1954

REF : Khartoum 192, March 8, 1954

ACTION	I	NEA-4
	N	
For Dept. Use Only	F	OTHER
	O	CIA-7 Army-3 Navy-3
REC'D		3-24

DEPT. OF STATE  
 MAR 24 1954  
 101-6 EUB-5 UN A-4  
 101-6 EUB-5 UN A-4  
 101-6 EUB-5 UN A-4

SUBJECT:

A Sudanese View of the Khartoum Riot

Daoud Abdel Latif, the Town Clerk of Khartoum, is one of the most politically knowledgeable men in the Sudan. As a senior civil servant he claims to be without political affiliation although he belonged to the Ashigga Party as a young man. He must be careful of what he says in a time of crisis. He sometimes exaggerates but in the main USLO has found his information accurate. What follows are his thoughts on the Khartoum riot and its significance given to the reporting officer in confidence. USLO believes his views are sufficiently revealing and stimulating to warrant reporting in detail. Daoud believes this riot can only be understood against a specific psychological background, that it was spontaneous rather than planned, and that it can have the most far reaching consequences of any Sudanese action since the Mahdists beheaded Gordon.

1. The Psychological Background to the Riot.

The Umma defeat in the general election had a profoundly depressing effect on Umma leaders and particularly on Sayed Abdel Rahman EL MAHDI (SAR). SAR and his followers claimed that "Egyptian interference" brought about their defeat. A series of incidents irritated SAR:

- (a). At the opening of Parliament on January 1 Sayed Ali EL MIRGHANI (SAM) could not attend because of illness and he sent his young son to represent him. SAM has precedence over SAR. On this occasion SAM's teenage son was given precedence over SAR and this rankled SAR.
- (b). A statement attributed to Major Saleh Salem circulated in Khartoum to the effect that the elections had proven to the Egyptians that, "the myth of SAR's strength in the Sudan was really a myth." SAR does not consider his power a myth.
- (c). When the ceremony for the opening of Parliament on March 1st was in the early planning stage SAR offered two of his palatial houses to the Government to be used to house distinguished guests. The Government rejected this offer but accepted the house of the pro-Khatmia

JSweeney/JSweeney

REPORTER

CONFIDENTIAL

ACTION COPY - DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MAR 1954

ACTION office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

FILED HO

MAR 7 1954

This Document Must Be Returned to  
 DC/R Central Files

745W.00/3-954

Abou-El-Ela Family. This further irritated SAR.

(d). SAR ordered Advocate Mahgoub, the Leader of the Opposition, to go to the Government and request that the Opposition be given a share in the ceremonies that were to be staged. The Government rejected this request on the basis that the Government was responsible for the ceremonies.

(e). SAR informed a visiting Egyptian dignitary that when he had been in Cairo General Neguib had entertained him and he would like to return this hospitality to Neguib on his visit to the Sudan, but this was no longer possible and SAR felt Neguib should not make the trip. This message was either not properly delivered to Neguib or got lost in the confusion that followed Neguib's fall and reinstatement. When Neguib fell SAR indicated his sorrow and did so merely as a political maneuver, the Egyptians may have mistaken a political expression of sympathy for the real thing.

(f). SAR ordered Sayed Shengeiti who saw Neguib in Cairo the day before his fall to explain again that SAR could not welcome Neguib and did not approve of his visit.

(g). On the day Neguib arrived SAR stood on the roof of his son Siddik's house on the route Neguib was supposed to take from the airport to the Palace. He watched the proceedings through a telescope and, reportedly, this is the first time SAR ever watched a demonstration. At this point, when it became apparent that the huge Ansar throng might cause trouble, Daoud believes that if someone representing the Governor General had gone to SAR and requested him to call off his followers in the interest of public security, SAR would have done so because it would have been publicly known and SAR would have had an opportunity to demonstrate his power.

## 2. What Caused the Riot ?

Although this riot had its roots deep in sectarian differences, Daoud believes the actual violence was not planned and was spontaneous. He believes the following sequence of events explains what caused the riot:

- (a). On February 27 Abdulllah Nugdulla, the leader of the Ansar, announced in the hearing of several prominent Sudanese that, the Government's intention to prevent the Ansar from coming into Khartoum was not possible because the Ansar were already in Khartoum.
- (b). From that point on the Government had to deal with the fact that the Ansar were in Khartoum and should have exercised tact and attempted to deal directly with the man who controls the Ansar, SAR.

CONFIDENTIAL

(c). On February 28 a representative of the Khatmia Youth (pro-NUP) came to Daoud in his capacity as Town Clerk and requested permission for 70 Khatmia Youth to camp in Abdel Moneim Square in Khartoum Number Three. Daoud pointed out that this would have to be referred to a higher level of authority. He believes this was a trumped up request to allow the Prime Minister as Minister of the Interior, to state that he could not give permission to the Khatmia to come into Khartoum and neither could he give it to the Ansar in view of the ban he had already imposed. To Daoud this was simply getting on the record.

(d). Whisking Neguib off from the airport by a route not originally intended and announced was a provocative error in Daoud's view. If Neguib had been allowed to make a speech at the airport Daoud believes this would have lessened some of the pent-up excitement of the huge crowd. However, failing this, Daoud believes Neguib and the Governor General should have driven along the agreed route. He insists there would have been no incidents other than slogans against Egyptian interference shouted by the Ansars. When the Ansars saw the pro-NUP crowd surge on to the air strip in defiance of the police Daoud believes many of them thought that this gave them the right to surge through the police lines too.

(e). The Ansars had waited along the agreed route for Neguib and only Neguib. Daoud claims that at least three Cabinet Ministers drove this route and were not bothered. When the Ansars had been denied seeing Neguib they could not, according to their logic, disperse, because they had accomplished nothing and still had to give vent to their feelings. They then went to where Neguib was staying-- "to his home"-- the Governor General's Palace.

(f) Daoud claims that Nugdulla, the leader of the Ansar, then went to police headquarters and asked for a route along which to march. The police suggested the Ansar might march down the Palace road and then turn left before the Palace gates passing between the Civil Secretariat and the Kitchener statue. Nugdulla accepted this. Instead of stationing himself at the turning point to direct his men Nugdulla led them. The advance group turned as they were supposed to but the others seeing crowds rushing toward the Palace thought they were Ansar and followed them.

(g). The Khartoum police, used to the "towns rabble of the Three Towns" who disperse easily in front of a baton, were not prepared for the disciplined Ansar who do not disperse until their leaders tell them to. The police

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM

ordered tear gas bombs. Daoud claims there was no possibility of tear gas dispersing such a crowd and he repeated the story that the Ansar thought the tear gas bombs were real bombs and rushed the police thinking they were going to be bombed anyhow and should try to get the men who bombed them. In Daoud's view the police were not prepared for this type of a crowd and the Sudan Defense Force was not adequately deployed. The police used their batons and to their surprise the Ansar did not disperse. The police used tear gas and to their surprise the Ansar did not disperse. No attempt was made to try to get SAR, Siddik or Nugdulla to call off the Ansar before they went into action. The police and the Ansar lit into each other in a clash that developed into a riot. Only the guns of the SDF could stop it. No one wanted this riot, no one planned it and no one accurately anticipated it.

### 3. The Political Consequences.

No one can now put his finger on the precise political consequences of this riot because developments in the immediate future will mold the significance, but, to Daoud, the following developments and speculations survey the possibilities.

- (a) Daoud gives the Prime Minister credit for not losing his head and ordering retaliatory measures at once. This, Daoud insists, would have caused a civil war right then and there.
- (b). To give some idea of the emotional excitement following the riot when many people were arrested he related this story. SAR called Daoud personally on the telephone (Daoud knows SAR well, but in his more than 20 years as a civil servant this is the first time he has ever received a phone call directly from SAR). SAR asked two questions: "I want to know if I am threatened with arrest and I want to know who is responsible for the arrest of Sheikh Mustafa EL AMIN?" (Sheikh Mustafa el Amin is an ineffective old follower of SAR's whose only distinction is that he has amassed a fortune of ££ 50,000; he was present at the scene of the riot and was arrested). To Daoud the significance of this story is that if SAR would go to such lengths about the unimportant El Amin imagine what lengths he would go to if Siddik was arrested. If Siddik is arrested Daoud stated categorically that there would be trouble.
- (c). If the Government tried to dissolve the Ansar this too would cause trouble. It is a hereditary kind of organization and Daoud does not believe it would be possible to dissolve it.
- (d). The danger at this point as Daoud and most of the Sudanese see it is that if either the Government or the Opposition should do anything intemperate it could lead to civil war.

CONFIDENTIAL

(e). If SAR intends to start a civil war he will move out of Khartoum to be safe and order his followers to this would force the Government to send the Sudanese armed forces, the Sudan Defense Force, to the North, weakening the public security in the West where the Ansars are in the majority. SAR would start up in the West and call on the SDF to choose its allegiance. Daoud believes he would take at least 60% of the SDF away from the Government. SAR would deal a couple of hard blows against Khatmia strongholds and then appeal to the British to take over, hoping under British protection to gain control of the country in the independence that would eventually follow.

(f). The British have three choices as Daoud sees it:(1) they could leave the Sudan within six months on condition the Egyptians left too. This he believes might fool the Egyptians as it would mean in effect turning the country over to SAR with whom they could come to some sort of treaty agreement later. (2) They could declare a constitutional breakdown and occupy the country -- this would require large expenditure of funds, additional troops, and please no one except the die-hard type of British administrator. Or (3) the British can muddle through hastening the transitional period and move out as gracefully as possible, if no real trouble develops, hoping for the best without a very clear plan of what they are trying to do.

(g). The Egyptian position has been weakened by the events of the past few days. If the Egyptians are wise they will not interfere in the present crisis. The only way they can recoup their position, as Daoud sees it, is to urge the Government to form a coalition Cabinet in order to get the British out and then work behind the scenes to weaken the independents. The Egyptians must do something to assuage SAR and Daoud cannot see anything they can now do that would be effective. If the Egyptians send Neguib down to attend the opening of Parliament on March 10 then Daoud claims, as does every Sudanese I have talked to, it will be civil war with all sides clear as to the issue.

(h). Daoud feels the Government is not as strong as it should be. There is some internal dissension. Azhari commands by compromise and now is a time for action, but temperate action. The Cabinet may split on the issue of punishing the fomenters of the riot. The Khatmia wing wants to arrest Siddik and the Ashigga wing wants to go slowly. If civil war comes Daoud believes the Government will appeal to Egypt for military help.

(i). The Government line, Daoud believes, is to be patient and take no immediate action. The Government must try to achieve a coalition with the Umma and do so on the basis of forgiving

CONFIDENTIAL

Authority *AMDCB 112*  
By *D* NARA Date *3/20/84*CONFIDENTIAL  
(Classification)Encl. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Desp. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
From \_\_\_\_\_

the past. Admitting this sounded fantastic, Daoud claims that there have been discussions about a coalition Government since the riot took place between emissaries of SAM and SAR. He claims that although they hate each other they agree that for Sudanese to kill each other benefits only the Egyptians and the British. Daoud claims on good authority that SAR has said that if his advisors accept the principles involved in a Coalition Government at this point he would be willing to go to SAM in person and discuss the project. At the same time, in an emphasis of the present confusion, Daoud admitted that many of SAR's advisors were talking in terms of possible violence and saying that democracy would not work in the Sudan, i. e., that SAR should be king.

*Joseph Sweeney*

Joseph Sweeney  
United States Liaison Officer

cc: Cairo  
London

CONFIDENTIAL