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FROM : USLO, Khartoum

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF : Cairo despatch No. 1979, February 18, 1954

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	REC'D	OTHER
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SUBJECT: Egyptian Gift of Arms to the Sudan

Considerable local publicity has been given to a recent gift of arms by the Egyptian Government to the Sudan. On April 3, 1954 a ceremony took place in Khartoum in which Staff Brigadier Mohammed Safwat, Chief Staff Officer of the Egyptian troops in the Sudan, handed over an Egyptian gift of arms to the Sudan Defense Force. The gift was received by the Prime Minister; Khalafalla Khalid, the Minister of Defense, was not present.

The precise character of this gift has not been released, but the public announcements have stated that it is a gift of arms to equip 1,000 men. W.H.F. Luce, Adviser to the Governor General on Constitutional and External Affairs, has supplied the following information with the request that it be treated as secret information. When the Egyptian Government first announced that it would make this arms gift to the Sudan the Governor General let it be known to the Prime Minister that he considered this a matter of external affairs and therefore it should be within the Governor General's province. The Prime Minister paid no attention to this and the Council of Ministers passed a resolution accepting this gift. When the Governor General was formally notified of this resolution, he sent a letter to the Prime Minister stating that he considered the action of the Council of Ministers in accepting the Egyptian gift of arms an unconstitutional action because this was a matter of external affairs. The Prime Minister, puzzled by this letter, sent for Luce and asked him frankly, "What do I do now?" Luce explained to him that the Governor General's letter was "for the record" and was to serve as guidance to the Prime Minister in the future. The Prime Minister made no comment on this but indicated he did not feel he could do anything about the matter now because the Council of Ministers had acted. The Governor General sent a similar letter to the Egyptian Government but has not received an acknowledgment or reply.

Luce has received a tentative report from the Kaid (Major General R. Scoones, the British Officer in command of the Sudan Defense Force) about this arms gift. According to General Scoones, all of the ammunition that has been received will have to be taken to Port Sudan and dumped in the Red Sea as it is of inferior quality and cannot be used. Of the 500 .303 rifles in the gift, all of them are new barrels mounted on very old

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J.Sweeney/mt

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and in some cases damaged stocks. Three small artillery pieces are brand new. The machine guns in the gift are believed to be obsolete. This report is tentative and when the Kaid receives a full report he will present it to the Minister of Defense. Luce has urged him to give publicity to this report if possible. The Minister of Defense is not enthusiastic about this gift and deliberately absented himself from the ceremony at which the arms were handed over, although he gave as an excuse that he was on tour in the Atbara area.

Luce is aware that the Egyptians have indicated that they may make an additional grant of arms to equip 2000 men. If further action on this prospective gift is taken, the Governor General expects to adopt a firmer attitude although Luce would not be drawn on exactly what this meant.

The general Sudanese reaction to this Egyptian gift has been a favorable one and there have been hints in the local Arabic press that Britain should follow suit with a similar gift.

*Joseph Sweeney*

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cc: Cairo  
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