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SUBJECT:

Khatmia and Factionalism Within the NUP

The local Arabic press has made a great deal over alleged factionalism within the NUP Party. The press has been particularly insistent that the various factions quarreled over the recent Cabinet reshuffle. This factionalism is generally portrayed as a fight between the Ashigga wing led by the Prime Minister, Ismail El Azhari, and the Khatmia wing led by Mirghani Hamza, the Minister of Education, Agriculture, and Irrigation.

Actually there are four factions in the Cabinet. The Ashigga is divided into two, the strongest is the Azhari wing of the Ashigga Movement. The other and less strong Ashigga wing is led by Mohammed Nur Ed Din. The difference between these two Ashigga wings is that the Nur Ed Din one is more pro-Egyptian than the other. In the middle between the two Ashigga wings and the Khatmia is the Ittihadyeen (Unionist). This group is less pro-Egyptian than either of the Ashigga wings but not quite as pro-independence as the Khatmia. It is led by Hamad Tewfik, Minister of Finance, and Khidr Hamad, Secretary General of the NUP. In most political quarrels the Ittihadyeen would side with the Khatmia wing led by Mirghani Hamza which is the strongest by far of all four and which is the most pro-independence of all the factions in the NUP.

In the course of a general discussion of Sudanese problems with Mirghani Hamza, political leader of the Khatmia, on May 10 he discussed at length the problem of factionalism in the NUP. He made the following points:

1. Factionalism does exist in the NUP but in his opinion it is not as important as the local press makes out.
2. Factionalism can never be of major importance because the political strength of the NUP is based on the Khatmia movement under the leadership of Sayed Ali El Mirghani.
3. If any of the other three factions differed with the Khatmia on a matter of basic principle which could not be resolved, the Khatmia would win because no non-Khatmia member of the NUP could be elected to Parliament without Khatmia support.

J Sweeney/ht
 REPORTER

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4. Khatmia support is dictated by SAM. Fortunately, as Mirghani Hamza put it, SAM's views are similar to the pro-Khatmia political aspirations of the NUP. Unlike SAR, SAM has no personal ambition and therefore in Mirghani Hamza's opinion he can exert his great influence without fear as his followers believe he is doing it for the good of the Sudan.

5. Individual political leaders like the Prime Minister and Yahia El Fadli, a new member of the Cabinet, are politicians and they often take a public stand for the effect it will have on public opinion but what decides matters within the party is voting strength and the only faction that has it is the Khatmia.

6. At the same time, even though it is strong enough to insist on its way on any major issue, the Khatmia is determined to give due consideration to public pressure and rational differences. It does not want a split in the NUP and it will do everything consistent with its basic principles to avoid a factional split.

cc: London
Cairo

Joseph Sweeney
Joseph Sweeney
United States Liaison Officer

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