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By NS NARA Date 4/8/08

December 4, 1956

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REF 1956-12-4- Khalil, South, overalls To posts on page 33
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SUBJECT: The Southern Sudan

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Enclosure No. 1 - Memorandum on a Trip Through the South

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classes defined. A First Class Magistrate up to six months. Sitting as a court with two other magistrates, of any class, a First Class Magistrate can award any punishment up to death. Appeals can be taken to the Governor and the Chief Justice in Khartoum. In difficult cases, one of the judges at the provincial capital is usually called in to try the case.

The average district, besides the District Commissioner, has only two or three other administrative officers. These men, with all their responsibilities, cannot possibly govern their districts alone in spite of the fact that one or more of them is always "on trek". District government therefore makes extensive use of the tribal organization to carry out most functions of government. Tribal units continue to elect their chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen in the usual way. But these chiefs may not function until they are approved by the District Commissioner and confirmed by the Governor. The wishes of the people of the tribe are carried out in so far as possible but appointments are often disproved and a chief can be dismissed at any time by the District Commissioner. "Election" of a chief is used here very loosely and should not be confused with a democratic process; the elevation of a chief follows tribal tradition. In a few tribes, the process is quite democratic, but almost never so in the larger tribes. In the Azande, for instance, the chief always comes from the Avungara aristocracy and is usually the oldest son of the former chief.

After confirmation, a chief in effect becomes an employee of the government and receives a regular salary. He carries out, according to ancient tribal usage, most of the functions of government. He also sits as a court where most civil and criminal cases are heard. The sentences which he can give are severely restricted and are subject to constant review by the District Commissioner, to whom there is also the right of appeal in every case.

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V. THE DISTURBANCES OF AUGUST 1955

It is not the purpose of this section to describe in any detail the tragic events which occurred in the southern Sudan in August and September 1955. The events of those days were reported as they occurred by the Liaison Office in Khartoum in many despatches and cables. Early in November of this year, the Sudan government released the report by the Commission of Enquiry into the disturbances. This admirably written report describes in great detail the mutiny and the events which led up to it and followed it. Six copies of this report were transmitted to the Department with despatch No. 143 of December 4, 1956. This section is concerned with the underlying causes of the disturbances, which for political reasons had to be fuzzed or omitted from the report, and the probable aftermath of the disturbances. The conclusions are drawn from

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long conversation with Sayed Khalifa Equatoria Projects Board, who was a member who outlined the sections of the report which the Government found it necessary to suppress.

(a) Southern Attitude to Northerners

The attitude of the people of the south toward northern Sudanese is conditioned by three dominant considerations: (a) an automatic reaction of primitive people against organized government by foreigners; (b) the treatment received from the hands of Arabs, particularly slavers during the government of the Khalifa Abdulahi; and (c) the "Southern Policy" of the Sudan Political Service.

Of these, the first is by far the least important and can be dismissed very quickly. The tribes of the south still dislike foreign rule but their attitude is not now nearly so vehement as that expressed by a Nuer chief to the Anglican Bishop GWYNN many years ago. "We Nuer are free men and do not want anything to do with your Government or any other government. You are slaves. We go naked but you, with your clothes, are only the servants of the Government. Look at that policeman in his uniform. That is a sign of servitude. He must do whatever the government orders him to do." This sort of attitude still exists but it is vague and ill-defined. Its strongest advocates are the chiefs and tribal aristocracy who have been stripped of their power. The ordinary people were quick to realize that they were infinitely better off under a foreign government than under their own rulers. That is why the British were almost universally admired and respected in the south.

The hatred of northerners is a deep and pervasive thing which only generations of the most careful demonstrations of fairness and justice will eradicate, if at all. The first penetrations of the south by Arab slavers were made shortly after Mohammed ALI occupied the Sudan in 1821. From then on the raids were continued, although their severity was considerably modified after the arrival of the first British in the 1850's. After the fall of Khartoum to the Mahdi's forces in 1885, the rape of the south began in earnest under such monsters as Zubeir PASHA. The Mahdi died soon after the death of GORDON and was succeeded by his lieutenant, the Khalifa ABDULAH, who inaugurated one of the most vicious governments known to modern times. One of its principle sources of revenue was the trade in southern slaves.

The cruelty with which the slavers carried out their raids in the south was truly monumental. Whole tribes were virtually wiped out. The slightest resistance resulted in wholesale slaughter. Since the prime articles of the trade were girls between twelve and twenty, a large percentage of the potential childbearing women were lost. This is one of the main causes for the decline of the southern tribes at the present time.

The last slave raids took place less than sixty years ago, well within the memory of many now living and as alive in tribal memories and in the Sudan Days and Ways by H. C. Jackson, Macmillan, London, 1954.

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men of a different strive to their fathers and grandfathers. The atavistic hatred of northerners which had been smoldering for many years was reawakened in its full fury and terror when the simple-minded southerners saw their old enemies coming south to replace British administrators who had brought them over half a century of peace and freedom from fear.

The "Southern Policy" of the Sudan Political Service accentuated and deepened the cleavage between north and south. This policy was undoubtedly well-meaning but in the light of later events it proved to be extremely ill-advised. The policy was based on the obvious facts that the north and south formed two distinct racial and cultural units, that the southerners hated the northerners, and that the south required a different approach to government than the north. The policy was designed to show the southerners that the British had no intention of allowing them to be exploited by people they considered their enemies and to give the south an opportunity to develop its own political consciousness and institutions so that it would be ready to assume a more nearly equal role in government when the Sudan eventually achieved some form of independence.

The "Southern Policy" was first stated in a directive from the Governor-General of the Sudan on January 25, 1930. The pertinent section of the directive was as follows:

"The policy of the Government in the southern Sudan is: to build up a series of self-contained racial or tribal units with structure and organization based, to whatever extent the requirements of equity and good government permit, upon indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs."

In order to implement this policy, northerners were practically excluded from the south. A few traders were permitted to remain, but only on condition that they refrained from anything which might tend to arabize or muslimize the people of the south. Practically, few northerners were permitted to take up residence in or even visit the south after 1930. Instead, Greeks and Cristian Syrians were encouraged to become southern traders. It was not permitted to teach Arabic in the schools, Arab dress and names were discouraged and the institutions of Islam were not permitted among the natives in any form. How much the activities of northern merchants, when they were finally permitted into the south in numbers, added to the southern hatred of northerners is debatable. Regardless of how legitimate or otherwise their business activities might have been, the southerners, who contemptuously refer to these men as Gallaba (after the distinctive northern dress, the Gallabia), thought that they were being exploited by them.

The activities of Christian missionaries will be discussed later, but in the present connection there is evidence that they not only taught the natives that Christianity was the only true religion (which was, after all, why they were there) but that they actively disparaged Islam as an unworthy religion.

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As has been stated, the "Southern Policy" was well-intentioned and in different circumstances might have been the proper one. But for it to have achieved its ultimate purpose would have taken many more years than the British had left to them at the time when it was inaugurated. After World War II, it became evident that the Sudan would achieve independence much sooner than had been expected and that there was no hope of attaining the ends of the "Southern Policy" before that happened. Therefore, in December 1946, the policy was abandoned with the statement that "the peoples of the southern Sudan are distinctly African and Negroid, but geography and economics combine (so far as can be foreseen at the present time) to render them inextricably mixed to the middle eastern and arabicized northern Sudan....."

There is no doubt that the "Southern Policy" added materially to the problems of the northerners when they became responsible for government in the south. But not to the extent that is now claimed. Northern administrators tend to blame all their own shortcomings on the policy and use it as an excuse for almost everything that goes wrong. Hatred of the north already existed in full measure in southern minds. The worst that can be said with certainty about the southern policy is that it did nothing to soften this hatred.

(b) The Disturbances

The basic and underlying cause of the mutiny was the southern attitude to northerners described above. The departure of the British after Sudanization of the Political Service was an occasion of near panic. The southerners were aware that a British Governor-General still "ruled" in Khartoum but it appeared that the British administration had abandoned them to an unhappy fate. There was a general feeling that something had to be done quickly before the British left the Sudan altogether.

The immediate cause of the mutiny was the conviction that the south was about to be completely victimized by the north. In the campaign for the first Parliamentary elections, the National Unionist Party, which was then advocating union with Egypt rather than independence, made wild and irresponsible promises all over the south. In this, they were abetted by the Egyptians, who aided the campaign with quite fantastic amounts of bribe money. Major Saluh SALEM came to the south (where he did his famous dancing act) and convinced the literate southerners that if the NUP was elected, they would be complete masters of their own destiny. The NUP came to power and, of course, none of these promises were fulfilled. This convinced the southerners that they had been duped and confirmed their worst suspicions of what would happen under northern rule.

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This in the sou in connect were sure that the real reason for the move was to weaken the southern garrison. Stories had got about that northern troops arriving in Juba by air (at the request of the Governor, who sensed the coming trouble) had orders to wipe out southerners wholesale. A fake telegram of unknown origin but purporting to come from Prime Minister Azhari was circulated widely. This telegram, which existed in several versions, was supposed to instruct northern administrators to beat and ill-treat southerners.

The disturbances were almost entirely confined to Equatoria, the most sophisticated and advanced of the southern provinces. The primitive peoples of Upper Nile and Bahr El Ghazal not only were not involved but it is doubtful if the great majority were even aware of them. There were minor disturbances in Malakal, Wau and Rumbek, but they were confined to troops and police, most of whom came from Equatoria. The mutiny was precipitated and led by the most advanced of the natives of Equatoria, those in the army, the police and the civil service. The ordinary villagers and tribesmen eventually joined in, but only after shooting had started and they had been terrorized by wild stories and rumors.

The mutiny began on August 19, 1955 and was touched-off by the refusal of the company of southern troops at Torit to entruck for shipment to Khartoum. The details of the mutiny, which quickly spread all over Equatoria, are contained in the report referred to previously, and will not be repeated here. During the first two or three days, 336 northerners and 75 southerners were killed and many times that number wounded. In addition, there was considerable property damage and the shops of most northern merchants were looted and burned.

(c) Aftermath of the Disturbances

In spite of assurances of northern Sudanese to the contrary, the effects of the disturbances of 1955 are far from having been dissipated and will be felt for many years to come. This was not an incident which is now past and can be forgotten, but a symptom of deep-seated and firmly entrenched hatreds which cannot be removed by radical surgery but only by infinitely patient and slow treatment in the years to come.

The Government reaction to the mutiny was swift and severe. The whole south was declared an emergency area (which it still is). Among the legal effects of this declaration were to close the area to any travel without a special permit and to give District Commissioners summary power in cases involving public security to impose sentences up to and including death. The Government has never disclosed the number of executions which have been carried out under this order, but the District Commissioner in Yei told the reporting officer that in his district alone over sixty men have faced the firing squad. In September of 1956, a considerable body of northern public opinion was outraged when it was learned that

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were burned down because it was sus-
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occurred which have not been disclosed.

Many of the mutineers escaped into the Congo and Uganda. They are still filtering back into the Sudan in twos and threes. A constant hunt for these men goes on, and the regular clashes between them and the police serve to keep alive the events of last August.

The most obvious result of the mutiny was the disbandment of the Southern Corps of the Sudan Defense Force. Today the south is garrisoned exclusively by northern troops. There are no more than a handful of southerners remaining in the SDF and no southern officers. There are still southern policemen, of course, but they are heavily interspersed with northerners and are officered by northerners.

One salutary effect of the disturbances has been a realization by the government in Khartoum that administrators for the south must be chosen with great care. Many of the officers who were serving at the time of the mutiny acted with great stupidity or brutality or both. These men bear a heavy responsibility for what happened. Most of the sections of the report which were suppressed deal with these questions. The men who are serving today in the south are almost uniformly of high calibre. Subject to the defects which were outlined in Section IV, they are doing their best to bring good government to the south. Their greatest handi- cap is mutual lack of sympathy. "Fairness and firmness" are the words most frequently heard from the SAS in the south, but the emphasis is nearly always on firmness.

The question inevitably arises as to the possibilities of further mutinies in the south. The Embassy feels that such possibilities are not great. For one thing, there is no unity among southerners. The basis for unity which once existed in Equatoria, the representatives of every village and tribe in the army, the police and the civil service, has either been destroyed or so effectively controlled that it is not likely again to be effective. For another thing, the quality of government in the south today is such that, while individual frustrations and discontent will recur constantly, it is highly unlikely that a cause of sufficient magnitude to unify any considerable body of southerners into rebellion will be given. But almost certainly, there will be isolated incidents in tribal areas for many years.

The worst effect of the mutiny is the continuation of distrust on the part of both southerners and northerners which will, at the very least, delay the time when the south can assume anything approaching equality with the north in national affairs.

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It must be the most important. These three development needs are only the most important. There are many others which must wait until these problems have been solved. The Sudan is in no position to solve these problems on its own at the present time. If they are to be solved, it must be with outside help of some kind.

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VIII. Southern Politics

Very little more need or can be said about politics in the southern Sudan than has already appeared in Sections IV and V. The report on the "Southern Sudan Disturbance" contains an account of political events in the south. Factually this account would appear to be accurate, although according to one of its drafters, it was revised several times by government officials of both recent governments in order to make its emphasis and interpretation of the facts serve partisan purposes.

The principal fact to remember about southern politics is that very few southerners have political opinions beyond certain vaguely defined desires to be left alone. The southerners who sit in the Sudanese Parliament do not represent the people of the south who, for the most part, are hardly aware of their existence or indeed that of the Parliament itself. Except those from the three largest towns, these southern MP's represent the southern chiefs, all of whom are paid employees of the civil government.

The British administrators did not want the south represented in Khartoum and at the Juba Conference of June 1947, called to determine the degree of southern participation in a national government, favored the assumption by the region of a vague status which might best be described as tentative federation with the right of deciding at a later date the form which participation should take. Because of their position, they could not push this end with great vigor and the northern representatives at the Conference, to whom any suggestion that the two parts of the Sudan might go separate ways was repugnant, prevailed and the south sent thirteen representatives to the first Legislative Assembly in Khartoum in December 1948.

After the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement Regarding the Sudan in February 1953, the political parties began making preparations for elections to the first Parliament. The Umma Party, political arm of Sayed Abdul Rahman El Madi's Ansar Sect, which stood for complete national independence, felt that the south was secure to them, especially since they were supported by the newly-formed Southern Party, and consequently did not bother to campaign there. The National Unionist Party, which favored union with Egypt and had the support of Sayed Ali Mirghani's Khatmia Sect, campaigned vigorously in the south. This campaign was featured by irresponsible, even fantastic, promises to southerners and in this they were ably seconded by a number of Egyptians, the most

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n. This campaign was highly successful. Had expected, the Umma-Southern bloc got NUP elected six and four were independents. These southern seats were an important factor in the small national majority with which the NUP was able to form a government.

Soon after the NUP government took office, it became evident that they had not the slightest intention of even making a gesture at keeping the impossible promises they had made in the south. Realizing that this attitude was being interpreted among literate southerners as a betrayal, they tried to consolidate their gains in the south by employing questionable political means. The Administrative Service was supposed to be above politics, but the NUP immediately set about replacing many administrators with others who were friendly to them. Nearly all present day administrators feel that the mutiny could have been avoided if able men instead of political hacks had been in some of the key posts in the south in August 1955.

The Umma and Liberal (formerly Southern) Parties at this point decided to exploit southern discontent with the NUP and organized a series of political meetings in mid-1954. These meetings, which generated considerable bitterness on all sides, resulted in widespread demands that southern MP's who belonged to the NUP should join the Liberals. A further deterioration in north-south relations occurred in October 1954 when the list of appointees to "Sudanized" posts indicated that few southerners were to occupy positions of any importance. As a result, the Liberal Party called a conference in Juba where resolutions were passed demanding full federal status with the north and presenting a list of posts to be filled by southerners which, when the number of southerners with even a medium of administrative experience is considered, was even more fantastic than the NUP promises. The list demanded all the top administrative and police posts in the south as well as four Ministers and six Permanent Under Secretaries of Ministries in Khartoum.

To counteract the effect of the Juba conference, Prime Minister Azhari and several prominent NUP politicians toured the south, again making promises and announcing a few southern promotions. The tour was a complete fiasco, with the NUP group receiving hostile receptions wherever they went.

By May 1955, the Liberal Party felt strong enough to break the hold of the NUP in the south once and for all. Two of the three southern NUP ministers had left the cabinet and joined the Liberals. The NUP had just declared the abandonment of its policy of union with Egypt and some southerners, by some wierd twist of logic, saw in this an opportunity for advantage by demanding southern federation with Egypt with an independent northern Sudan between them. At any rate, the time seemed ripe to strike and a second conference was called in Juba for June. The NUP made several blundering attempts to block this conference. An NUP District Commissioner in Yambio coerced thirteen chiefs in his district

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into signing the conference. In the resulting confusion, the merger held. Between the end of May and the middle of August, southern affairs were in near chaos. During this period a Liberal MP was illegally tried and convicted by the District Commissioner at Yambio for holding meetings which denounced his actions in the telegram incident. The bitterness and sullen resentment finally exploded into the mutiny.

Since the restoration of order to the south, there has been little southern political activity. During the time left in office, the NUP continued to take revenge against individual southerners spasmodically, the most prominent instance of which was the trial of Sayed Staneslaus Paysama, former Minister of Mechanical Transport in June 1956. The NUP Government fell in July due to heavy desertion from their ranks of parliamentary supporters and a coalition government took office headed by the Umma Party and including the Liberals and the newly formed Peoples Democratic Party. One political fact became evident to the reporting officer as a result of his trip to the south -- neither the NUP nor Sayed Ali Mirghani (who has broken with them) now possess a shred of support among the intelligent southerners. Every official who expressed an opinion on the subject was sure that the Umma-Liberal group will make a clean sweep of the south in the next election.

On this fact is based such political power as the south now wields on the national scene. Individual southern politicians are not important at the present time. There is one southerner on the five-man Supreme Commission (Sayed Siricio Iro) and they have three minor cabinet posts as follows: Benjamin Louki, Minister of Works; Alfred Barjuk Aludo, Minister of Mineral Resources; and Gordon Ayoum, Minister of Animal Resources. Twenty-two southerners (one-fourth of the total) sit in the Parliament in Khartoum. But none of these men seem able to assume an important role in national councils either through lack of individual ability or through deliberate neglect by northern colleagues or both. The real power of the south rests in the ability of the Liberal Party to assume the function of a balance between the two major parties. The Liberals will undoubtedly control nearly a quarter of the next Parliament. It would be a near impossibility for either the Umma or the NUP to achieve in the next election a clear majority without the support of a bloc of this size. Such power is considerably vitiated by the moral inability of the Liberals under present circumstances to support the NUP. This situation could, however, change very quickly if the Umma adopted a policy which was clearly at variance with southern interests. At the very least, the Umma is in the position where it must give a respectful hearing to Liberal opinion.

IX. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The observation is sometimes made that primitive peoples are happy as they are and should be left alone, that to impose civilization on them does them a disservice by bringing them frustrations, envy and

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them into low-grade civilized races in-stocrats. This is the "noble savage" of the southern Sudanese, is not realistic. In their natural state these people are prey to the most brutal and oppressive of rulers, practice religions which keep their minds in the thrall of terror and gloom and are subject to all sorts of disgusting diseases which kill at least half their children before adolescence and give them the shortest life expectancy in the world. Civilization does not immediately cure all these ills, but it begins to ameliorate them at once. And after the first years of resentment have passed, as British experience proves, they take to civilized government of a paternal kind readily.

That brings up the question whether the northern Sudanese, whom the southerners hate, are the proper people to inherit the task of bringing civilized government to the south. This question is pointless. The south is now firmly a part of the Sudan for better or for worse, and nothing short of war is going to change that fact. In the light of the handicaps under which they work, the northerners are bringing the south the best government of which they are capable.

Talk of federation between north and south at this time is nonsense. The southerners are simply not capable of governing themselves. But, contrary to the expressed opinions of most northerners, with proper handling, the south could be in a position to make an intelligent choice of its form of government in the next generation. The north has a great responsibility in this regard. If they do not realize that the south can be advanced in political sophistication and will so advance whatever they do, it would seem inevitable that they will face serious trouble again sometime in the future.

Is there any part which the United States Government could or should play in the affairs of the southern Sudan? In this regard, the Embassy has the following comments:

1. Wherever the reporting officer went in the southern Sudan, both northern officials and educated southerners immediately assumed that the visit was a prelude to American economic aid. Great disappointment was shown everywhere when assurances were given that this was not so. These people, both northern and southern, want such aid and are completely out of patience with the government in Khartoum for being reluctant to accept it. Naturally, nothing can be done until the Sudanese government requests it. The Embassy feels, however, that the United States Government should be prepared to give maximum aid in some appropriate form in carrying out the three paramount development needs outlined in section VII(c).
2. There is little scope for direct USIA activity in the south at the present time. The language barriers are too great and the people too scattered and inaccessible. People in the larger towns are given film

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vans an average of twice a week and
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office in Khartoum. The Embassy's Public
Affairs Officer is already supplying films through this medium.

3. Occasional visits by Embassy officers to the south, like the one
on which this despatch is based, would be useful in showing at least a
portion of the people that the United States Government is aware of their
existence and is interested in them.

For the Ambassador:

John E. Cunningham
John E. Cunningham
Second Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure: *DD*

Memorandum

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