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SUBJECT: Independence Leader Hopes for Rapprochement Between SAR and SAM

Ibrahim Ahmed, former pro-Umma member of the Governor General's Commission and a close advisor to Sayed Abdul Rahman El Mahdi (SAR), has informed the reporting officer that the only hope of securing an independent Sudan is through arranging a rapprochement between SAR and Sayed Ali El Mirghani (SAM). In a lengthy exposition of current planning within the Umma Leadership Ibrahim Ahmed explained:

1. The Umma Leaders are aware of the extent of Egyptian control of the majority of the NUP cabinet and they realize that all of the signs now point toward a victory for the pro-unity with Egypt forces. Such a victory would eventually mean the liquidation of the Ansar sect and the Umma Party, they believe. Therefore, they have concluded that the Umma Party must reorganize itself and an attempt be made to obtain an understanding between SAR and SAM.
2. To reorganize the Umma Party (and the former plan to start an Independence Front has been discarded as too expensive), it has been tentatively decided that Sayed Siddik (SAR's son) will step down as President of the Umma Party and his place will be taken by Ibrahim Ahmed. Siddik has just returned from a trip to the Western Sudan where he prepared the Ansar for this change and also developed clearer lines of command with sub-leaders of the Ansar. Siddik has been elected President of the Umma Party for life. It would be beneath his dignity to resign, so SAR will "permit" the Umma Constitution to be changed eliminating the provision that the President and Secretary-General (Abdulla Khalil) should be elected for life. Siddik will then refuse to stand for re-election. Siddik is more interested in business than politics. SAR believes that Siddik should leave politics and occupy (or succeed to the occupation of) SAR's position as a semi-religious leader who is "above" politics.

a. There are several difficulties to be overcome before this plan which has SAR's blessing can be implemented. The Ansar must be carefully prepared to the point where they approve of Siddik's act. Ibrahim Ahmed, an unusually honest man, poses another problem. He does not feel that he is the best.

J Sweeney:am

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the best type of political leader; he feels that his habit of weighing both sides of a problem is a disadvantage in politics and he does not like political activity. However, SAR has impressed upon him that the Umma Party has no one else to turn to. If he takes over the leadership of the Umma Party, Ibrahim Ahmed will be elected to Parliament from the seat which Siddik would resign from (Kosti). Ibrahim Ahmed further feels that it would be unfair for him to be put in over Abdulla Khalil, the Secretary General, who has been loyal to SAR, even if he is not an apt politician.

3. Ibrahim Ahmed has convinced SAR that his future depends on coming to an understanding with SAM. Ibrahim Ahmed is currently working through Dardiri Mohammed Osman, SAM's advisor. When SAM returns to Khartoum from Egypt Ibrahim Ahmed intends to initiate a series of conversations with him to arrive at a rapprochement. He believes that the accord can come by having SAM and SAR agree that they and their families shall occupy special positions in the Sudan and that these special positions shall be recognized in the Constitution. Furthermore, SAR would be prepared to allow SAM's NUP Government to continue in office for the foreseeable future, provided SAM agreed on complete independence for the Sudan. Ibrahim Ahmed, at heart an optimist, believes he can convince SAM that the Egyptians are not to be trusted and that it would be more to his advantage to come to an agreement with SAR. However, he realizes that SAR has had no previous experience at giving in to anyone and it will be particularly difficult for him to come to an agreement with his arch-enemy.

Comment: Most observers of the Sudan scene believe that the one constant in this country's internal affairs is that SAM and his Khatmia hate SAR and his Ansars and that this feeling is reciprocated. What Ibrahim Ahmed is proposing is a reversal of this constant. It is true that there is no problem in the Sudan which the two Sayeds could not solve in a very few minutes if they both agreed. Ibrahim Ahmed detailed his plans before Neguib's deposition. It seems to me that SAM has more to gain from continued cooperation with the Egyptians, although Neguib's fall may influence him against the Egyptians. A genuine agreement between SAM and SAR would surprise everyone. The moment effective steps are taken to bring SAM and SAR together, the Egyptians will learn of them and do everything they can to prevent a rapprochement. If anyone can bring such an agreement about it is Ibrahim Ahmed, but the odds are very much against him.

cc: London, Cairo

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