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SUBJECT:

Tentative Plans for a Pro-Independence Front

**954-8-28, ARMI, MAHDI, INDEPENDENCE**

Sayed Abdel Rahman Al Mahdi (SAR) has given tentative approval to a plan amalgamating the Umma Party, the almost extinct Socialist Republican Party, and the pro-independence Southerners into a Pro-Independence Front. He has tentatively agreed that Sayed Siddik, the President of the Umma Party and his son, should resign from Parliament and his Parliamentary seat be taken by Ibrahim Ahmed, former member of the Governor General's Commission. If all goes according to plan, Ibrahim Ahmed would be elected President of the Pro-Independence Front. Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub, now leader of the Parliamentary Opposition, would become Secretary General of the Pro-Independence Front, and the Assistant Secretary General would be Buth Diu, leader of the Southern Liberal Party.

SAR has tentatively accepted these plans because his advisers have convinced him that the Umma Party by itself can gain little further strength and a political structure must be formed in which the leadership is not in the hands of the Mahdi family. Sayed Siddik, who has not enjoyed his time in Parliament and prefers business to politics, has been persuaded to accept this decision and has been told that he will retain a sort of politico-religious position in the Sudan comparable to that now held by his father, SAR.

The guiding genius behind this movement is Mohamed Ahmed Omar, Director of the Sudan Press Agency and Editor of En Nil. Mohamed Ahmed Omar has had a very checkered career in the Sudan and is considered unscrupulous and untrustworthy by most people. He claims to be related to the Mahdi family although the relationship is very tenuous. He was a member of the Umma Party but resigned when Siddik became President. He at one time founded the Sudan Party, which advocated Sudanese membership in the Commonwealth. He now has the ear of SAR and Siddik. He accompanied Siddik during his talks with the Foreign Office in London and also on Siddik's visit to the Gold Coast. His enemies claim he is a paid British agent, but the members of the Governor General's staff have gone out of their way to say unkind things about him, with every appearance of meaning them.

Even though this Pro-Independence Front is formed, it will require an extensive political organization to arouse more support for the non-NUP forces. The Pro-Independence group as such have no leader who is capable of capturing Sudanese political imagination. Ibrahim Ahmed is a good and

 JSweeney/ht  
 REPORTER

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intelligent

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intelligent man but he does not have the capacity for outstanding leadership as his primary difficulty is inability to make up his mind. The pro-independence forces tend to talk grandly of a superstructure of political organization but at the same time they seem unwilling to do the hard work of organizing political movements in the towns and among the common people of the agricultural districts. Hints of this prospective alignment have been released and it is expected that a public announcement will be forthcoming soon.

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Joseph Sweeney  
United States Liaison Officer

cc: Cairo  
London

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