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SUBJECT: Mirghani Hamza and the Khatmia Plans for an Independent Sudan

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Sayed Mirghani Hamza, the acknowledged political leader of the Khatmia, stated bluntly and forcefully to me that he and the Khatmia stand for the complete independence of the Sudan. This does not mean an unwillingness to cooperate with Egypt, but such cooperation will only be possible if it is between equals. He is not able to state this point of view publicly at this time because he and the other Khatmia leaders are trying to bring the Ashigga leaders over to their point of view. Mirghani Hamza does not want to split the NUP during the transitional period. Although he is aware that if he came out personally for complete independence he could count on almost unanimous Southern support and an overwhelming vote of agreement from the Umma members of Parliament, he does not want to do this at this time because he feels an allegiance to the NUP which won the elections by cooperation between its different wings and he has an ingrained distrust of the Umma. In short, he believes the political development of the country would be more stable and orderly if the NUP stayed in power during the time of transition than if new alignments were made at this time. However, and he stated this with considerable force, and so far as I am concerned with conviction, if the Khatmia leaders are unable to bring the Ashigga along with them then they will have no alternative but to split. In such a split he is convinced the Khatmia would triumph and form a Government.

Mirghani Hamza carefully explained that in the foregoing views he believed he had the support of Sayed Ali El Mirghani (SAM) the leader of the Khatmia sect, and he had made these views known to Gamal Abdel Nasser and Salah Salem. When pressed as to what he meant by SAM's support he again took refuge in the phrase that he knew SAM's mind. Since SAM has a genius for being all things to all people, this is not as convincing a view as it might be. When the universal view of SAM as a difficult man to understand was stated, Mirghani Hamza explained that once in a conversation with Salah Salem SAM stated that in every case the son wanted to grow strong and leave its father's control. This to him was conclusive proof of where SAM stood on the future of the Sudan.

In talking about the current situation in Egypt Mirghani Hamza came out strongly for Neguib and insisted that Neguib was not involved in the Muslim Brotherhood plot but that Nasser and his group were afraid of Neguib and had to get rid of him. He explained to Nasser that the Sudanese did not stand for

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"Neguib as a person, but they felt a loyalty to him because they thought he had played a great role in allowing the Sudanese to make their own choice about their future. He stressed that if the RCC destroyed Neguib, they would alienate Sudanese support. He claimed that Nasser was jealous of Neguib's position and popularity and gave numerous instances when he had been in Nasser's company of remarks which he felt illustrated jealousy. Mirghani Hamza definitely has a blind spot so far as Neguib is concerned, as they are old personal friends of long standing. Practically all Sudanese share this strong feeling about Neguib. Mirghani Hamza claims that Nasser is an Egyptian patriot but who knows little about the Sudan and is subjected to bad influences in the RCC. He claims further that Egypt has become a police state and the Egyptians are afraid to talk to each other for fear of being reported. There is a terror building up in Egypt which he believes will destroy the RCC. This destruction will ultimately come, in his view, from the army. When it does, what he termed anti-Nasser elements of the army, would appeal to General Neguib to take over assisted by the Wafd organization.

Mirghani Hamza pointed out that a part of his attitude toward Nasser had been formed when he explained to him what he believed to be majority Sudanese opinion. Having stated bluntly to him that the Sudanese people wanted to be independent, Nasser replied that Major Salah Salem was in charge of Egyptian policy toward the Sudan. Mirghani Hamza is well aware that the Prime Minister, Ismail El Azhari, Yahia El Fadli, Minister of Social Affairs, and, in fact, most of the Ashigga leaders have been and still are in Egyptian pay, although he claims not to have understood this clearly until his recent Egyptian visit. He and the other Khatmia leaders distrust Major Salah Salem and he personally believes that the Major's schemes for dominating the Sudan will fail. He is aware that Major Salem is directing a campaign of villification against him at the present time. (As an alleged homosexual Mirghani Hamza is particularly vulnerable to attack.) At the same time, Mirghani Hamza stated as his considered opinion that it would be personally dangerous of Major Salem to come to the Sudan at this time.

In his estimation of the immediate future, Mirghani Hamza believes the NUP leadership will be involved in a series of discussions to bring about a united point of view. He estimates that this will take anywhere from three to four months, although with public opinion as strong as it is he ventured the opinion that a much quicker decision was not impossible. He believes that Azhari and the Ashigga will have to capitulate. Once the Sudan has achieved independence then he prophesied the NUP will have to break up and a more realistic alignment of interests emerge. He envisaged the successor to the Khatmia to be the dominant force in the Sudan strengthened by an alliance with the Southerners and certain less enthusiastic members of the Umma party who are not sympathetic to the dictatorial aims of the Ansar.

Joseph Sweeney
Joseph Sweeney
United States Liaison Officer

cc: London, Cairo

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