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January 20, 1954
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FROM : USLO, Khartoum
 TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
 REF : Khartoum 129, December 17, 1953

26 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	IN OTHER
	NEA-4	De/18-2 01-6 ECR-S UNA-4
	2-15	CIA-7 Army-3 Navy-3 Air-3

SUBJECT: Prime Minister's Disputed Statement on Unity with Egypt

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A political dispute has arisen as a result of an interview which Ismail el AZHARI, the Prime Minister, gave to a correspondent of the Egyptian newspaper Akhbar Al Yom. In this interview Prime Minister Azhari reportedly pledged "his Government" to work for union with Egypt. This interview was copied from Akhbar Al Yom and appeared in the Rai El Aum. on January 11. A copy of Azhari's interview is attached in translation as Enclosure No. 1, Unclassified. The pro-independence forces immediately set up a cry that Azhari was revealing his true colors and that "his Government" was working to make the Sudan an integral part of Egypt. Umma leaders further claimed that if Azhari said what he was reported to have said, he was violating the Anglo-Egyptian agreement as "his Government" was not allowing the Sudan to decide its future in an impartial and neutral atmosphere.

Azhari indicated to friends that the Akhbar Al Yom story was not an accurate report of what he said. He insists that he is still in favor of union between Egypt and the Sudan but wants this to be a union between two independent countries. Furthermore, he insists, as he has done consistently throughout the election campaign, that this is a decision which must be made by the Constituent Assembly.

On January 15, El Umma, the organ of the Umma Party, claimed that Azhari "denied the statement that was said to have been made to the Egyptian weekly, Akhbar Al Yom correspondent." According to El Umma, Azhari admitted giving a statement but said it was not at all similar to what had been published.

Azhari was in something of a predicament. If he issued an official denial it would complicate his relations with the Egyptian government. If he did not issue a denial, it would make his position with regard to the pro-independence block difficult. At first he apparently appeared content to deny the statement only to those who specifically asked him and this group included members of the Umma Party.

On January 16th
 FEB 23 1954

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29 JAN 1954

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On January 16th Group Captain ZULFICAR, the Egyptian member of the Governor General's Commission pointed out, in a discussion of this incident, that Azhari controlled several papers and if he wanted to deny this statement there was nothing to prevent him. Zulficar's point was assented to by Mabarrouk ZARROUG, Minister of Communications and Leader of the Government side in the House of Representatives who was present. Zulficar implied that Azhari had in fact stated what was attributed to him. The Assistant Liaison Officer was informed by a reliable source that Azhari had admitted to a Sudanese journalist that the statement reported in Akhibar Al Yom was correct.

On January 17, according to the Sudan Press Agency, the Prime Minister denied that his Government will work for the achievement of the unity of the Sudan with Egypt. This denial was made by Azhari following a questionnaire sent him by Sayed Buth DIU, MP and Secretary of the Liberal Party (which represents Southern members of Parliament) as to whether the Prime Minister made a press statement calling for the achievement of that unity.

Azhari reportedly held a meeting with Buth Diu and told him that he had made a counter-statement and preferred that Buth Diu wait until it was published. He also informed Buth Diu that he was free to submit his question in Parliament if he was not satisfied with the answer contained in the counter-statement.

Azhari's counter-statement reportedly was as follows:

"In one of the meetings held at my house I was asked by the correspondent of the Egyptian weekly Akhibar El Yom whether it was true that I had given up the policy of the unity with Egypt. I told him that that was not true simply because the NUP still calls for unity with Egypt in some form and because the NUP won the Sudan elections on that principle. It is not therefore reasonable that I give up a principle I believed in and continued my work to achieve."

The Premier added that he was asked by the correspondent whether the Sudanese Government will strengthen the Sudan army and he replied that the Sudan Army will undoubtedly be strengthened.

Sayed Ismail El Azhari denied all other declarations claimed to have been given by him to the Egyptian correspondent.

"I am aware," Sayed Ismail continued, "that the duty of my Government is the carrying out of the Sudan Agreement, Sudanization of posts, evacuation of foreign troops and the preservation of a free atmosphere for the Sudanese to freely determine their future. The policy of my Government is in fact a national policy - a policy of liberation and not a policy of self-determination."

Azhari concluded.....

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Azhari concluded by saying that his Government will endeavor to establish healthy rule for the country aiming at the raising the standard of living within the potentialities of the Sudan.

The Prime Minister's counter-statement did not satisfy Buth Diu who raised the matter in a parliamentary question on January 18. Azhari's answer evasively referred Buth Diu to a section of the standing orders of the House. Upon finding the specific reference it was discovered that the Prime Minister had taken refuge in a ruling that a Minister did not have to answer a parliamentary question if the interrogator based his question on a newspaper report. Buth Diu denied that he had based his question exclusively on a newspaper report and the Speaker ruled that the Prime Minister had to answer the question. Azhari then replied explaining that his point of view as leader of a political party and as head of Government were not necessarily identical. The implication in his further explanation was that while he personally and his party might work for unity with Egypt, "his Government" would not work for unity but conduct a national policy.

This involved incident is typical of the present tenor of Sudanese politics. The question of precisely what kind of union the National Unionist Party favors is a key one. It has made no definitive statement although as USLO has reported, the trend has been in favor of a union between two independent countries.



Joseph P. Sweeney,
United States Liaison Officer.

cc: London
Cairo

Enclosure: Reported Statement by Ismail EL AZHARI to Akhbar EL Yom.

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(Classification)

BY AS NARA Date 3/20/78Encl. No. 1
Desp. No. 164
From USLO, KhartoumREPORTED STATEMENT BY ISMAIL EL AZHARI TO AKHBAR EL YOM

(Carried originally in Akhbar El Yom, Cairo issue of January 9, 1954 and in Rai El Amm, Khartoum issue of January 11, 1954.)

Union between Egypt and the Sudan is inevitable. I have called for union with Egypt and my party has always stood for this cause. Neither I nor my colleagues have given in an iota from their demands for union despite imprisonment, so it is not likely that we will betray our pledges now. It is true that I have not given a statement on union since my election but I think that union is not just talk in the air from a man with no authority. Now that I am elected as head of the government with powers to realize all that I aspire for I make it clear that my government will work for the end they worked for for a long time -- namely, union with Egypt....union which is demanded by two peoples with equal rights and obligations.

I put my hand forward as a responsible man to every Sudanese whatever his views are. I put it forward to my opponents before my friends and my door will be open for them so that they know that I have no designs nor interests except the unity of the Sudan against colonizers.

All must know that I would not hesitate to act firmly against anyone who speaks against the liberation of the Sudan. What I want now is to liberate the Sudanese people from fear. Our people were subjected to awe and fear by colonists so that people in some of the remote districts look at the colonizer as a sacred god who cannot be criticized. I aim at creating a new spirit in our people and oppose the conceptions by which the colonizers poisoned the people's minds.

The first task before my government is the enforcement of the Cairo agreement. We will die for the sake of the agreement, and the correction of the faults and gaps in it so that the Sudan may reach the ultimate goal of self determination.

The first group of British officials whose services I will have the Sudanization Commission terminate are administrators in the South and West. They have committed greivous acts which resulted in keeping these areas in a state of poverty, hunger and misery despite their rich resources.

Half the work of my government will be directed to the army so that I can build a strong army out of the Sudan Defense Force beside the other armies of the Arab States in the next three years.

I am/

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By *D* NARA Date *3/21/84*

I am not like an ostrich. It is true that we have some competent Sudanese youth in many fields but for the sake of building a new nation I welcome foreign experts sent to us by countries which always stand ready for our aid without a reward.

I cannot doubt that colonizers have left the country with many backward districts and I will do all I can to extend means of communications to these districts.

I will liberate education from imperialist influence. The University College of Khartoum, on which the people of the Sudan spend half a million pounds annually, is regarded as a branch of London University and all its regulations and syllabuses are English.

I declare that my government will start its program by establishing a national university in the Sudan and we will ask our friend Egypt to join hands with us in this big scheme.

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