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SUBJECT: Opposition Protests Major Salah Salem's Visit to the South

Major Salah Salem, Egyptian Minister of National Guidance and Sudan Affairs, accompanied by the Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces, Lewa Abdel Hakim AMER, arrived in the Sudan for a short informal visit on January 14, 1954. After conferring with political leaders Salem announced that he would visit the South and this gave rise to protests by the Umma Party and the Southern Liberal Party. The British administration in the Sudan was not pleased with Salem's decision to visit the South maintaining that such a visit would not contribute to a free and neutral atmosphere. The Egyptian explanation of the purpose of this visit, the NUP Government's support of it and the opposition to it are detailed below because this incident immediately became a political issue in the Sudan.

Major Salah Salem explained to the reporting officer on January 16 that he had not originally intended to visit the South on this trip. However, several Southerners representing various points of view had approached him claiming that although he had visited Khartoum several times, he had only gone South once and that this was unfair if he really considered all parts of the Sudan equal. Furthermore, they insisted that the South was anxious to hear what Egypt's plans were and they convinced Salem that it would be advantageous for him to make such a trip. Salem insisted that he would visit the South only to observe, he would not hold meetings, he would call on the Governors of the provinces he visited, and was determined that there should be no incidents. The reporting officer pointed out that it might be helpful if this explanation was given to the British. Salem agreed and claimed that he had made a courtesy call on the Governor General, but that he was away visiting in Kordofan and that he knew no British official well enough to explain his purpose briefly and his schedule was so full that he could not spare the time for a full scale visit with British officials as he planned to leave in two days. He urged the reporting officer to repeat what he had said to the British administration. The reporting officer pointed out that it would be better if Salem did this personally or sent a personal representative, but Salem insisted that he was swamped with interviews and had no one he could send. I agreed to repeat his explanation without comment to

W. H. T. LUCE, Advisor/

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J.Sweeney:md
REPORTER

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W. H. T. LUCE, Advisor to the Governor General on Constitutional and External Affairs. In response to a question as to why the Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Armed Forces was accompanying him Salem explained that Lewa Abdel Hakim Amer had never seen the South, he might never have another opportunity, he needed the relaxation that such a trip would provide, and he was going really as a tourist.

The next morning I saw Luce and repeated to him what Salem had said. Luce told me frankly that he just did not believe Salem and although he was not sure what Salem was up to in visiting the South he was convinced he was up to no good. Luce then explained in confidence that when he learned of Salem's proposed trip he had gone to the Prime Minister and in the Governor General's absence explained to him what the Governor General's attitude "might be." Luce felt the Governor General might properly point out that such a trip by an Egyptian Cabinet Minister would not contribute to the free and neutral atmosphere which was laid down in Article 1 of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement:

In order to enable the Sudanese people to exercise self-determination in a free and neutral atmosphere, a transitional period providing full self-government for the Sudanese shall begin after the signature of the present agreement, as provided in Article 10 below.

Prime Minister Azhari pointed out to Luce that as he read this article the free and neutral atmosphere did not start until self-determination and the Sudan was now in the transitional period. Furthermore, as Minister of the Interior, he had the right to issue closed district permits (necessary to enter the Southern provinces) and since Salem's visit was a private one and not an official one he proposed to issue the permit. Azhari contended that if Salem's visit was official he would be staying at the Governor General's Palace and since he was not, his visit was private. Luce pointed out that Salem had given no advance notice of his visit therefore it was not possible to make advance preparations for him to stay in the Palace. Luce also brought to the Prime Minister's attention that he had received protests against Salem's proposed visit from the Umma Party and the Liberal Party, made up of Southerners. Azhari pointed out that such protests should be made to the Government. Luce countered by explaining that the protests had been addressed to the Governor General and had been transmitted through him as the Governor General's senior advisor. Luce observed somewhat sardonically that the moment he left the Prime Minister's office Azhari had signed the necessary permits for Salah Salem and a party of over twenty Egyptians.

Luce explained that there was no legal way in which Salah Salem could be prevented from going to the South if he had a closed districts permit. All the Governor General could do if he felt this visit was unwise would be to send a communication to the Co-Domini informing them of the event and his reasons for opposing the visit so that he would be "on record."

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The Umma.....

Authority *AM/AR/11/3/21*
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(fiction)

The Umma Party's protest against Salah Salem's visit to the South was submitted to the Governor General by Abdullah Bey KHALIL, Secretary General of the party. Abdullah Bey Khalil informed the reporting officer that the Umma Party was "worked up" about this visit to the South and he warned that the whole pro-independence bloc felt that the continuation of such visits might cause public disorders. Khalil said that the memorandum had stressed the Umma belief that Salem would carry out propaganda in the South advocating the unity of the Nile Valley. The Umma Party protested against what it construed as a deliberate Egyptian violation of the Sudan agreement (by not maintaining a free and neutral atmosphere) and also against Britain for not drawing Egypt's attention to this violation. The Umma Party sent cables of protest against Salah Salem's visit to the South to the British, Egyptian, Indian and Pakistan Governments.

The Liberal Party also protested against Salah Salem's visit to the South along the same lines as the Umma Party. A group of Liberal Party MPs under the leadership of Buth DIU, their Secretary General, met with Prime Minister Azhari on January 18. However, since Salah Salem had already departed for the South this discussion was a review of the Liberal Party's protest.

Approved Sweeney

Joseph Sweeney,
United States Liaison Officer.

cc: London
Cairo

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